No. 154.3

On the mistakes of mankind.
Isaiah v, 20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

The solemnity of this declaration sufficeth as sufficient evidence that the sin against which this woe is denounced is not trifling or unimportant thing. Among the remnant of the Jews, wh awakened the indignation of the prophet, was that of a most perverse and depraved judgment concerning the principles of moral actions. They had arrived at that pitch of corruption, where they saw every thing through a false and distorted medium. Their iniquity had penetrated even to the sources of moral feeling. They had become polluted, so that they had lost the perceiving of the real nature and qualities of actions. What was good they called evil, and what was evil they termed good. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness, bitter for
sweet & sweet for better. Thus the grounds & foundations of right conduct were utterly broken up. & total disorder & confusion introduced into the state of their minds & hearts. And what could be the consequence, but such a condition of moral wretchedness & degradation, as is the natural fruit of such completely corrupting sentiments?

But the fault of erroneous judgments in morals is by no means confined to any nation or age. There is at all times the same distortion, mere of his pleasing & good, to fall into mistakes concerning the fundamental principles of action & opinion, the objects for which we should live. & that is still called good & good & light is still put for darkness & darkness for light, bitterness for sweetness, & bitterness. The minds of men appear sometimes darkness & confused, a moral continuance of passing, & without it. Color & So are assumed, these lead to the use of false means. The foremen of faculties seem to be uncertain or out of tune, though his designs? them to set forth a harmonious, beginning on good principles, ending in harmony of life, yet they do but too often send forth a sound discordant, as the confused tongues of Babylon. The source of these
the will sometimes goes back of influences the judgement. Doubtless it does so; whence it is, that what we wish to be true, we generally believe to be true. You may dash water into a fountain, that shall pervade the mass of water, but still it is the fountain itself, which feeds the river. Do the will may corrupt, is present the judgment, but after all, it is the judgment, which dictates the will, as soon as the receiver there. Such being the case it is manifest that the moral judgments of mankind are of vast importance: since these give the water into the will, and shape its course. We cannot wonder then that the prophet denounced more often than false and dangerous judgments, which had men to enslave to one thing after another, good for evil, and evil for good. The subject merits as to unwind some offtimes of these mistaken views, and light is justly v.

1. We may remark that even manifest a great number of judgments, in misjudging the objects of life. This is because it is a great, tremendous mistake; but great and tremendous as it is, it is nevertheless not uncommon. This is indeed strange, which is going astray for the whole of the journey. But only, let observation among mankind, even upon their favorite strings, with the standard of truth, then say, whether they have not in fact mistaken their object of life. Of the multitudes, who are thinking, the different marks of life, eagerly interested, hurriedly employed, more suddenly arrested, brought to a pause, how few only tell what they are living for, or if they could tell, how for would answer on one object, as would be at all to an immortal mind. Does not truth compel us to acknowledge, that many live either with no purpose, or with a bad purpose? And is not this calling evil good, or good evil? When upon ourselves, we find created man in his own image, that he has made them but a little less than the angels, crowned them with glory and honor, also the marvellous works of his hands. That he has made them as a work from heaven, that this earth is not infinite, nor the earth, that we are made for eternity, belonging to eternity. That he has placed within their souls of eternal life, and by due care, ye there may be made to expand its flourish in never ending kindness, beauty, that he has given in as fountain of mind to the creation of all, there are no bounds to the bounds of affection of the heart of moral being, which may be subjected to sorrow.
indefinite degree of refinement & heavenly mindfulness. When you thus consider what God has made man, & in what purpose, then consider what man has made himself, of what purpose he has devoted himself, that he has often acts as if he were finely formed. That death is the intention of being, that one day of reckoning may after it. that he seems to enforce the Duty to have from this wonderful frame of body & still more wonderful frame of mind for nothing but to gratify the idle passions of a few short days on earth, that he lives over his busy, hurried scene, careless unconcerned about his destination, contracts with present gratifications & present enjoyments. you feel you put these considerations together, you will acknowledge that with regard to the great object of life, man, do, like the ancient Jews, call evil good, & good evil. Does darkness, for light, or light for darkness, better for sweet, for sweet for bitter? What the mistake in this respect, as manifest, as he would make, who should take a machine constructed with wheels, springs, of heave, of movement, for a certain purpose & should apply it to a purpose directly the reverse? - Speaks more nearly of the errors of judgment. For some other considerations, the comparison would very much fail of illustrating the importance of the subject. Don't say, that no man would know and or purposely mistake the great object of life: if he does so practically, it is enough to gratify the appetites to them of the prophets description in the text. It is enough to show that blindness has in fact happened to his mind's eye. Darkness consequently came over the soul.

2. Another great mistake another man in the men part evil for good, & good for evil, is with regard to the means of happiness. And this error is the more important, because it regards an object of universal interest, the cry of the whole world is for happiness. It is the forming man. From the infant to the hoary head, it makes the strongest desires, excites the keenest striving, is the root of the most unceasing exertions. But with regard to the means of obtaining this much desired good, there is almost as great a variety, as there is of individual characters, & yet, 'seek it where it alone it is to be found.' There are those, who, as the number does, is not small, who seek it in sense- gratification. They drink off the cup of pleasure out
a bright, gay heart; till they come to the bitter days, do they find something sharper than the sting of the adder; the tooth of the serpent. The gratification is soon exhausted; the very sources, with which it is furnished, from the fatigue of activity, of disappointment; the mind is left avaricious, with just inducements, with no taste for better things, no energy for the task of reformation, weak, despairs, is a pestilence. Like me, why does the storm, when the flood has taken from the earth, spare it half helpless? The drought goes to its roots for pleasure, till appetite becomes calling to excitement, thirst is a raging disease. If I am weak, then, look at this system, this toiling, this century, its vices, its deceptions, their frauds, its perfidy; its rage, its desperation, their envy, their envy; their envy, their envy, their envy. If I am weak, then, look at these things, and despairing will be answered. Other times, are, who can find happiness only in the excitement of honours, high stations. The common cause of life runs too fast; it is too tame; it is unbounded. They want something in high places, or beauty; at least, it is too fast; they cannot be happy. But think you they are happy? While their life is one long struggle, one ceaseless chase after what probably cannot be caught; after what, is not worth the labouring? While they spend their hours in days of conflict, part into regaining all the resources of art, so that they may not plant a rival, to bring down an empire. This surely is not happiness. Others find their trust in riches; for happiness, all only facility they mean in reflecting from their having treasures. Wealth, when used as a means, may be a great blessing; yet, if lost in an end, it will think for itself, and looks to it for happiness, true pleasure. It multiplies wants, of course, multiplies the chances of uneasiness yet happiness. Everything teaches us not to accept in the pursuers of it. She who rests; her hope of enduring good upon it, does not rely more carnely than he, who seeks a firm foundation in the nothingness. Others find their happiness in confidence, peace; they think it; the great point of solitude to spend their days in dead oblivion. But she would talk; to stupidity for enjoyment, or considers doing nothing as a privilege for a natural being. But she would not grant to enumerate the mistakes in men made in this great search. I may confidently ask you, whether, with regard to the sources of happiness, men do not call evil good.
good evil, put darkness for light & light for darkness, hatred for love & love for hatred? When you consider above true happiness is to be found, where men seek for it, you will meet with many wrongs. Virtue alone is happiness, the heart purified by the influence of religion, actuated by the motives of the love of God, filled with the love of goodness, is the fountain where are stored up the treasures of felicity. This is the only fountain of true enjoyment. Here only will you find true & permanent peace, such as the world cannot give. The love of God cannot be taken away. He does not live who forgets the place of this delicious passion, empty joys, violent indulgences, vain & idle pursuits, does not the just darkness for light & light for darkness? Hence if it is a most unhappy errors, some whose consequences extend to the whole of character & the whole of life. 3. Another important errors is in the use of application of words; it is a more important errors, than might at first appear. Words are instruments of great mischief. Power, we are nearly aware that against our whole mode of thinking, & acting, depends upon them. Like the figures used in ac-

counts, they are nothing of themselves, but they stand as the representatives of large and complex sums. They are the currency used in the mental world. From the statements of the man of learning down to the most ignorant of men, all are liable to be captivated & enslave. They may serve to many of this verbal magick. extends from the highest to the lowest, though it is of course stronger over the more ignorant, it is in this way that moral distinctions are sometimes lost sight of, & actions without principle s called by many names. The boundary lines between virtue & vice are sometimes very delicate & almost imperceptible; short is it a step from one to the other? Minds not accustomed to observe those distinctions are easily led aye by fresh views imposed upon by words, the who transcends his property in mere manners, the thoughtless, without discretion & benevolent feeling, who gives indiscriminately without reflection, will be called liberal, yet his conduct deserves no better name, than the merest frivolity. So the advance heart is shut safe by aversion & closed against compassion, whose hand is close, whose disposition
mean, may be called prudent; yet instead of being prudent, he is in fact mischievous. The man, that leaves himself open to charges, unless he acts unnecessarily, may be termed by the world a courageous man; but, in truth, his conduct should be called rashness: it should receive no praise; so the word may cover this shame under the name of a heroism regarded to the laws of self-preservation. So depth of force of enemy’s steamers may be called gravity, when very often they are nothing but a trifle of big pretension. These are but a few of the instances of the abuse of language, & the deception of words, instances certainly in which it is called self-god, height is called fleshiness, darkness for light, bitterness for sweet, & sweetness for bitterness. The same mistake, I might almost call it delusion, occurs upon much frequenter on religious objects. Words are used either with no meaning, or with a very imperfect meaning: it is this misuse may be attributed much of the folly of much of the groundlessness about religion. Those who have taken very little pains, or have had few opportunities to acquire information on the subject, can use the current words of forgery, whether to have any sense attached to them or not. This is particularly true of the language of Scripture. The words and phrases of the Bible are frequently used in the most base and ingrate manner, so are made to convey a meaning quite different from their original sense. Such terms for instance, as grace, regeneration, sanctification, faith, are moulded into almost any shape, and the fancy of the writer or often as many distinct, so were the sacred authors to meet these words in some modern books & discover they would not be able sometimes to recognize their own meaning under the interpretations put upon them, would wonder at the alterations they had undergone. It is most amazing thus to call evil good, & to substitute light for darkness, darkness for light, bitterness for sweet; & sweet for bitterness. The understanding is bewildered, if people are led to imagine that they differ where in fact they agree; & if they could but come to an explanation, they would find they had been deceived by sounds. If, after all that, this meaning was nearly or quite the same. The artful & ignorant, frequently jostle Scripture dross upon the soul, sometimes with, sometimes without, design, by taking no care to be distinct from in their use of words...
And in many cases, the process of assigning good or evil, or of judging upon the motives and actions of others, is by mistaking or misrepresenting the principles, actions, motives, or qualities of others. When we rely upon our judgment, we are often in that judgment influenced by caprice, envy, partiality, or bias. Again, we see the same habit of mind, essentially so it is to the stunts; the man is apt to see in every man traits of character. We see a favorable temperament, favorable circumstances, favorable opportunities, good friends, or enemies may dictate. Even the same action shall appear very different to us, when performed by different persons under the same circumstances. When the conduct of these, when we like or with whom we are connected, is under examination, we offer no breath of suspicion to rest upon it, we exterminate every fault, till it vanishes into something innocent, or perhaps harmless, or agreeable every excellence, till it assumes the character of the most shining virtue. But let it be an enemy upon whose character we are called to judge, the case is reversed. Attention is paid to those given to every whisper of calumny, the invention is allowed to be burying in making the worst of every thing. Matters of good appears is not treated any or assigned to a bad motive. Every fault is swelled into a crime, made to mean the blackest and most detestable. This is the fault, in falsehood, in light, in strong, in deceit, and in dishonesty. All these are the unhappy effects of jealousy, revenge, hatred, and perpetuated. A strong, a weak, and a thoughtless society. And what is worse, this wreath of prejudice of judgment is too often allowed a place in religious matters. The bigot calls evil good, bad evil, so these of the other may happen to be of his own and the other. It is with difficulty he will give credit even for moral virtues to those who in his estimation are not sound in the faith, of the greatest crime, that under I think, all other crimes is to differ from him in opinion. He esteems for himself his standard of truth, and it may be, of doctrines he has never examined, or of all the things but the name; he advances to them apparently with the strongest attachment, in opposition to the doctrine of the evidence by which they are supported, making up in zeal what is want. In argument, in supplying the truth, in the place of reason. When he has this chosen his system, he will adhere within it, it forms the basis.
Does his charity does not extend? - he has but little mercy for one, who cannot come a taker refuge in it, as well as himself. He can see virtue of justice of her kindness, even in those of his own sect, whom they do not think, at least, to be distinguished by those qualities; if he can find nothing but sinfulness, not deserving a moment of reverence for God or the Scriptures, in those who cannot square their faith by the dimensions of this own. Does not he call evil good? Does he not put darkness for light, light for darkness? Better for sweet, sweet for better? Most surely he does. And is it not so? One such exclusive spirit, ah has oversight of one who with such bitter effects in the thin church - setting the followers of the Prince of peace at oars, making them buck in each other with a jealous or malignant eye, so employing their incensed animosities, guarding and defending his own little enclosure, instead of sending them abroad to adorn with their devotion. The common cause of their love to their Master. May but care less, from the spirit, that would set a sour standard as the rule, by which others are to be tried, then forestalling the judgment of heaven, supposing for tenders to take out of his hands the work of the omniscient judge, who only looks through the heart, who will enough to see the petty distinctions, which shall set up a centurio for so苑.isdirately.

These, my friends, are a few of the errors of judgment, into which men fall. A few of the ways in which they mistake good for evil, and for good, light for darkness, darkness for light, better for sweet, sweet for better. And, when one considers the dangerous and destructive consequences of these errors, are we not with justice that these denounce we are upon them? Do we not in truth all pay, more to those who judge in such errors? To be it our care to keep our understanding clear, enlighted, our hearts true and candid, so that there will be little danger, that we shall make fatal mistakes in errors in judgment is. Then, not to be bad as an error in heart, but both are to be shunned, both are criminal, as far as they are voluntary. By delights in it, it takes his religion he becomes, as the Nys, expresses it, the object of persons, of love, of a sound mind."

August, 1822.
We implore thee, O Lord, of thy holiness, to sanctify us by thy truth. May we be true to truth. Save us, O Lord, from wandering in the mazes of error, especially from errors and habit of objects. May it never be ours to mistake the true nature of the objects before us, to call evil good, or vice versa, to discern the things that differ, to approve the things that are excellent. May we keep in view the great object, for all things have pleased in this world it given us the means of preparing for eternal glory, remembering that we seek for pleasure and pleasure, where and only to be found, in the cultivation of virtues and in the possession of the graces of God. What in us is dark with the illusing, what is low raise us up, to preserve strength from thee, who art the source of everlasting strength, so that grace should be sufficient for us, d.e.

At home. Aug. 4th, 1827 - forenoon.

At home. Aug. 12th, 1827 - afternoon.