DIRECTIONS FOR A CANDIDATE OF THE MINISTRY

Wherein, FIRST, a Right FOUNDATION is laid for his Future Improvement:

And, THEN, RULES are Offered for such a Management of his ACADEMICAL & PREPARATORY STUDIES;

And thereupon,

For such a CONDUCT after his APPEARANCE in the World; as may Render him a SKILFUL and USEFUL MINISTER of the GOSPEL.

\[ Nunquam meum, juvante CHRISTO, fiele: \]
\[ Eloquium; legant, qui volunt; qui volunt, absti. \]
\[ Hieronym. \]

BOSTON, Printed for Thomas Hancock, and Sold at his Shop in Ann-Street, near the Draw-Bridge. 1726.
The Angels preparing amiss for you, to know what this Paganism is; and therefore you may, if you please, bestow a short Reading upon a Goliath, or a Moral: But be more of a Christian, than to look on the Embri- dion of the Author last mentioned, as, Next the Bible, the best Book in the World. Study no other Ethics, but what is in the Bible; and consult such Books, as the, Verna Christianismus of an Arndt, whereby Hundreds of Thousands have been bro't into the Life of GOD.

So much Ethics as treats, De Decoro, may instruc' you in the, Rules of Behaviour, I heartily commend unto you. And yet, even these are best learnt by a Wile Observation of what you see pass'd in the Conversation of Politer People: And by wisely considering how they are indeed all Embry'd in that one Word, MODESTY; which Renders every one his Due, and assumes nothing undue to ones self: Or, comprized in that one Maxim, Do and Say nothing that may be justly offensive to the Company. The Truth is; The most exact and constant Rules of Behaviour, will be found Rules of Christianity: For which Cause it pleased our Glorious Redeemer more than once to give them. Every Christian as far as he keeps to his own Rules will be so far a Gentleman. And for this Cause, I again advise you to a Careful Study of them.

§ 8. POETRY, whereof we have now even an Antediluvian Piece in our Hands, has from the Beginning been in such Request, that I must needs recommend unto you some Acquaintance with it. Though some have had a Soul so Unmusical, fical, that they have decried all Verse, as being but a meer Playing and Fiddling upon Words; All Versifying, as if it were more Unnatural than if we should chuse Dancing instead of Walking; and Ryms, as if it were but a sort of Morisco Dancing with Bells: Yet I cannot wish you a Soul that shall be wholly Unpoetical. An Old Horace has left us an Art of Poetry, which you may do well to bestow a Perusal on. And besides your Lyric Hours, I wish you may so far understand an Epic Poem, that the Beauties of an Homer and a Virgil may be discerned with you. As to the Moral Part of Homer, 'tis true, and let me not be counted a Zealous for saying so, that by first exhibiting their Gods as no better than Rogues, he set open the Flood-gates for a prodigious Inundation of Wickedness to break in upon the Nations, and was one of the greatest Apostles the Devil ever had in the World. Among the rest that felt the Ill Impressions of this Universal Corrupter, (as Men of the best Sentiments have called him,) One was that overgrown Robber, of execrable Memory, whom we celebrate under the Name of Alexander the Great; who by his continual Admiring and Studying of his Iliad, and by following that false Model of Heroic Virtue set before him in his Achilles, became one of the worst of Men, and at length inflamed with the Ridiculous Pride of being himself a Deity, exposed himself to all the Scorn that could belong unto a Lunatick. And hence, notwithstanding the Veneration which this Idol has had, yet Plato banishes him out of a Common-Wealth, the Welfare whereof he was concerned for. Nevertheless, Custom or Conscience obliges him to bear Testimonies
The Angels preparing

Testimonies unto many Points of Morality. And it is especially observable, that he commonly pro-
pounds Prayer to Heaven as a most necessary Pre-
face unto all Important Enterprizes; and when the Action comes on too suddenly for a more ex-
tended Supplication, he yet will not let it come on
without an Ejaculation; and he never speaks of
any Supplication but he brings in a Gracious An-
swer to it. I have seen a Traveleering High-Flyer,
not much, to our Dishonour, Scoff at Homer
for this; as making his Actors to be like those
whom the English call Dissenters. But then, we
are so much led into the Knowledge of Antiqui-
"ities, by reading of this Poet, and into so many
Parts of the Recondite Learning, that notwithstanding
some little Nods in him, not a few Acute Pens
besides the old Bishop of Thessalonica's, have got a
Reputation by regaling us with Annotations upon
him. Yea, Tho' one can't but mifle at the Fan-
cy of Croce's, who tries with much Ostentation of
Erudition, to show, That Homer has all along ten-
dred us in a Disguise and False, the History of the
Old Testament, yet many Illustrations of the sacred
Scriptures, I find are to be fetched from him; who
indeed had probably read what was Extant of
them in his Days; Particularly, Our Eighteenth
Psalm is what he has evidently imitated. Virgil
too, who so much lived upon him, as well as after
him, is unaccountably mad upon his Fate, which
he makes to be he knows not what himself, but
Superiour to Gods as well as to Men, and thro' his
whole Composures he so afferts the Doctrine of
this Nonfigifical Power, as is plainly inconsistent
with all Virtue. And what fatal Mischief did

Fascinator do to the Roman Empire, when by De-
ifying one Great Emperor, he taught the Success-
ors to claim the Adoration of Gods, while they
were perpertrating the Crimes of Devils? I will
not be a Carabius upon him; nor will I say any
thing, how little the Married State owes unto
One who writes as if he were a Woman hater:
Nor what his Blunders are about his poor-spirited
and inconsistent Here, for which many have taxed
him. Nevertheless, 'tis observed, That the Pagans
had no Rules of Manners, that were more Laudable
and Regular than what are to be found in him.
And some have said, It is hardly possible seriously to
Read his Works without being more disposed unto Good-
ness, as well as being agreeably entertained. Be sure,
had Virgil Writ before Plato, his Works had not been
any of the Books prohibited. But then, This Poet
also has abundance of Rare Antiquities for us:
And such Things, as others besides a Servius, have
imagined that they have instructed and obliged
Mankind, by employing all their Days upon,
Wherefore if his Error which tho' it were once
near twenty times as big as he has left it, yet he
has left it unfinished, may not appear so valuable
to you, that you may think Twenty seven Verses of
the Part that is the most finisshed in it, worth One
and Twenty Hundred Pounds and odd Money,
yet his Georgicks, which he put his left Hand unto,
will furnish you with many things far from Des-
picable. But after all, when I said, I was willing
that the Beauties of these Two Poets, might become
Visible to your Visible Faculty in Poetry, I did not
mean, that you should Judge nothing to be Ad-
mitsable into an Epic Poem, which is not Autho-
G
The Angels preparing
rised by their Example; but I perfectly concur
with One who is inexpresibly more capable to
be a Judge of such a Matter than I can be; That
it is a false Critic who with a petulant Air, will insinu
Reason itself, if it presumes to oppose such Authority.

I proceed now to say, That if (under the Gui
dance of a Vida) you try your young Wings now
and then to see what Flights you can make, at
least for an Epigram, it may a little sharpen your
Sense, and polish your Style, for more important
Performances; For this Purpose you are now even
overstock'd with Patterns, and —— Poemata
Paffim. You may, like Nazianzen, all your Days,
make a little Recreation of Poetry in the midst of
your more painful Studies. Nevertheless, I cannot
but advise you, Withhold thy Throat from Thirst.
Be not so set upon Poetry, as to be always poring
on the Passionate and Measured Pages. Let not
what should be Sauce rather than Food for you, En
grosl all your Application. Beware of a Bound
less and Sickly Appetite, for the Reading of the
Poems, which now the Rickets Nation swarms with-
al: And let not the Circean Cup intoxicate you.
But especially beware the Cabbage of your Soul
from the Dangers you may incur, by a Conversa
tion with Muses that are no better than Harlots:
Among which are others besides Ovid's Epistles,
which for their Tendency to excite and foment
Impure Flames, and call Coals into your Bosome,
deserve rather to be thrown into the Fire, than to
be laid before the Eye which a Covenant should be
made withal. Indeed, not merely for the Impu
rities which they convey, but also on some other
Accounts
The Angels preparing
to converse with the Holy Oracles of GOD your SAVIOUR.

But there is, what I may rather call a Parent he-
sis, than a Digression, which this may be not al-
together an Improper Place for the introducing of.

There has been a deal of a do about a STYLE; So much, that I must offer you my Sentiments upon it. There is a Way of Writing, wherein the Author endeavours, that the Reader may have something to the Purpose in every Paragraph. There is not only a Vigour sensible in every Sentence, but the Paragraph is embellished with Profitable References, even to something beyond what is directly spoken. Formal and Painful Quotations are not studied; yet all that could be learnt from them is insinuated. The Writer pretends not unto Reading, yet he could not have writ as he does if he had not Read very much in his Time; and his Compositions are not only a Cloth of Gold, but also stuck with as many Jewels, as the Gown of a Russian Ambassador. This Way of Writing has been decried by many, and is at this Day more than ever so, for the same Reason, that in the old Story, the Grapes were decried, That they were not Ripe. A Lazy, Ignorant, Conceited Sett of Au-
thors, would perwade the whole Tribe, to lay aside that Way of Writing, for the same Reason that one would have perwaded his Brethren to part with the Encumbrance of their Busby Tails. But, however Fashion and Humour may prevail, they must not think that the Club at their Coffee-House is, All the World; but there will always be those, who will in this Case be governed by In-
dispensable Reason; And who will think that the real Excellence of a Book will never lie in saying of little; That the less one has for his Money in a Book, 'tis really the more Valuable for it; and that the less one is instructed in a Book, and the more of Superfluous Margin, and Superficial Har-
rangue, and the less of Substantial Matter one has in it, the more is to be accounted of. And if a more Maffy Way of Writing be never so much disguised at This Day, a Better Gust will come on, as will some other Thing, que jam Cecidere. In the mean time, Nothing appears to me more Impertinent and Ridiculous than the Modern Way, [I cannot say, Rule; For they have None!] of Criti-
cising. The Blades that set up for Critics, I know not what constituted or commissian'd 'em! — they appear to me, for the most part as Contempible, as they are a Superfluous Generation. For indeed no Two of them have the fame Style; and they are as intolerably Cross-grain'd and severe in their Censures upon one another, as they are upon the rest of Mankind. But while each of them, conceitedly enough, lets up for the Standard of Perfe-
cion, we are entirely at a Los which Fire to fol-
low. Nor can you easily find any one thing wherein they agree for their Style, except perhaps a perpetual Care to give us Jeune and Empty Pages, without such Touches of Erudition (to speak in the Style of an Ingenious Traveller) as may make the Discourses less Tedious, and more Enrich-
ing, to the Mind of him that peruses them. There is much Talk of a Florid Style, obtaining among the Pens, that are most in Vogue; but how often would it puzzle one, even with the best Glasses to find the Flowers! And if they were to be Chai-

tized for it, it would be with much what as much of Justice, as Jerem was, for being a Ciceroian. After all, Every Man will have his own Style, which will distinguish him as much as his Gate: And if you can attain to that which I have newly described, but always writing so as to give an Easy Conveyance unto your Idea's, I would not have you by any Scourging be driven out of your Gate, but if you must confess a Fault in it, make a Confession like that of the Lad, unto his Father while he was beating him for his Versifying.

However, since every Man will have his own Style, I would pray, that we may learn to treat one another with mutual Civilities, and Confessions, and handsonely indulge one another in this, as Gentlemen do in other Matters.

I wonder what ails People, that they can't let Cicero write in the Style of Cicero, and Seneca write in the (much other!) Style of Seneca; and own that 'Bab may please in their several Ways.

But I will freely tell you; what has made me consider the Humours that set up for Criticks upon Style, as the most Unregardable Set of Mortals in the World, is This! Far more Illustrious Criticks than any of those to whom I am now bidding Adieu, and no less Men than your Erasmus's, and your Grotius's, have taxed the Greek Style of the New Testament, with I know not what Solecisms and Barbarisms; And, how many learned Folks have Obliquely run away with the Notion! Whereas 'tis an Ignorant and an Inoffent Whimsy; which they have been guilty of. It may be (and particularly by an Ingenious Blackwell, it has been') Demonstrated, That the Gentlemen are mistaken

mistaken in every one of their pretended Instances; All the Unquestionable Classics, may be brought in, to convince them of their Mistakes. Those Glorious Oracles are as pure Greek as ever was written in the World; and so Correct, so Noble, so Sublime is their Style, that never any thing under the Cope of Heaven, but the Old Testament, has equal'd it.]

§ 9. What we call NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, is what I must encourage you to spend much more Time in the Study of.

Do it, with continual Contemplations and agreeable Acknowledgements of the Infinite GOD, whose Perfections are so display'd in His Works before you, that from them, you cannot but be perpetually ravished into the Acclamations of, How Great is His Goodness and His Beauty!

Do it, with a Design to be led into those Views wherewith you will in Ways most Worthy of a Man effectually Show yourself a Man, and may with Unutterable Satisfaction answer the main END of your Being, which is, To Glorify GOD; and therein also Discharge the Office of a Priest for the Creation; Which, how sweet a Token for Good, must it be unto you!

When I said, Natural Philosophy, you may be sure, I did not mean, the Peripatetic: For I heartily subscribe to the Censure of Christianns Tomastus upon it; Omne Tempus pro Perdas judicandum, quod in Physicam Peripateticorum impenditur; ita inepta et falsa, ibi sunt Omnia. It is indeed amazing to see the Fate of the Writings which go under the Name of Aristole. First falling into the hands of thos;