The Treacherous Nature of
Flattery

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[Handwritten notes and signatures]
A Man that flattereth his neighbour spicadeth not for his feet.

The weakness of the human heart exacts it to innumerable dangers. Constant attention is necessary to preserve it secure, because it is often attacked on the most unsuspicuous side. Your minds were as pure
purer, and our hearts as
firm, as the perfection of
our nature requires he re
duced.

Would not he

be subjected to

the sad necessity of degrading
not only the vices and failings
of mankind, but their truths.

When it is agreeable and
flattering. But the least
and vanity which all men
have, to some degree,
renders true itself often.
dangerous.

It is the prerogative of God alone to receive praise without danger. How shall not praised and to thee, O LORD, be performed. He hears, and as pleased, the endless hymns of his angels. He hears the Voice of Praise ascending from all nature; the infinite variety of being celebrate him, according to their different powers,
as the great, the merciful, God, and the only object of supreme love, receives those truths without prejudice to his holiness, because being in himself essentially holy and pure, these attributes will always coincide. It is far otherwise with us: unstable ourselves as water, our veryristies
Partaker of this instability, 
wherein ariseth the necessity, 
if we judge wisely, of not 
suspecting every thing 
that flatters us, as, accordin 
g to the custom of the 
world, which we know 
but too well, there is nothing 
in general more seductive and deceitful, and of all delusions, 
there is none more 
charming in the eyes of men.
Men; nor more heretical in the sight of God, than that which, by the suggestions of self-love, makes us take falseness for truth, and think ourselves more highly, than we ought to think.

The words of the prophet, addressed to the Jews, may be universally applied. My people, they who call
On helped arrive you. They who effort to praise to applaud, to call you happy and the best, these
impose upon you, and abuse your credulity? In fact, what are ablutions in the common style of
the world? Obliging fads and fashions, officious exaginations, extravagant signs of
apparent esteem and regard.
norther from reason, nor from the heart; often disguised manifestations, covered with a veil of sincerity, plausible and honorable terms, but signifying nothing, the offspring of vanity, and the deception of self-love.

People tell us, what we ought to be, rather than what we are, and live by a fictitious kindness.
Stumbling into the snare
which is spread for us, deliver
ourseleves tho indeed
what seduction represents us. Flatterings,
Portraits are made after
Persons, they are made
Recollecting, and we believe
in their natural; Oft as a man
are given of our talents,
which are only compliments
and figures, but we
have not to take them
them literally. Virtues are bestowed even on our vices, and passions, and we should not hesitate to count them for vices. Some learned men have very plausibly ascribed the origin of these idolatries, superstitions, that prevail so long in the world, to this abuse, of which I speak. to that inclination, which men have of believing...
What is advantageous, however incredible it may really be. Certain men here told they were gods, and by often hearing this told them, they became accustomed to be honoured and treated as gods. Those who first held that language often knew very well, that it was false. Yet from a thrift of flattery, they performed every action, that they could.
otherwise have done from a spirit of sincerity that they were convinced that what they spoke were true.

We dare not say that this error is entirely destroy-
ed even by stringing stages of it remain over where and a species of the custom of the World.
We tell the rich and the great no more that they are Gods, but we tell them that they are no other men are; that they want those weaknesses which others have, and hope those qualities which others want. We separate them so far from the rest of mankind, that, forgetting what they are, they think themselves gods.
not considering that their
admirers are interested
persons, determined to
please
them. Nor may we confine
ourselves to the great and
powerful ones of the world
to justify this observation.

The Idolatry of Wealth
reigns equally in the
lower conditions, and
Mucacoth therefor-
tioned effects. This
Take or a foolish friend by habitual compliances, becomes obstinate of his friend, hiding from him the most salutary of all views which is, the view of himself, and leading his mind into as many errors as he says himself soft and agreeable things. That are false.
Healing those public
ocasions, those falsehoods
and flattery, and it, the
triumphant eloquence with
infamy, and that with
truth? What are those
public addresses, whereby
the subversion of the author
the most obscure matters
are exalted to the most
shining: where the most
Indifferent Virtue is considered at the most prominent. Where there is no Courtier, who is not worthy of governing the State, no Churchman who does not deserve the trust. What are these, but a mercenary sacrifice of excessive praises to the adulation of men. We know well, that truth is the least thing we need.
need look for in the per
formances, and yet by the
Corruption of Self-love,
which can prevail
over all we easily
imagine them the
Partly true.

The contradiction is,
that in the midst of all
this, those men, so vain,
and so passionat for
Glory, never cease
Corroborate, that the thing they author most, is to 
be deceived: in the 
mean time, they wish 
the marked, flattered, 
and admired, as if flatter 
adulation could possibly 
be separated. They love 
not deceit, but they love 
applause, which suits 
very nature is deceit.

feel: whence it is evi
det
however strange it may seem, that mankind reckoned it a high pleasure to be deceived by one another, and are mutually thankful for this ordinary favour.

What resolutions then can we take to avoid these errors? We must resolve to distrust even truth; when it sounds
To flatter us: because there is no appearance of truth which approaches so near to falsehood, nor is so difficult to be divested from falsehood; and consequently, there is none so much exposed to dangers of falsehood. The duke of Rocker, as we know, is sufficient to make a man desirous of all the world, and the
Most ridiculous Character
on Earth he who is lifted
up with the pretension of
imaginary Worth. However
we had nothing but the
world to fear, perhaps we
might bring ourselves,
by our very pride and
vanity to disregard the
operations. But how shall
we answer God when
he shall reproach us
for seeking Flattery and

Such truths, better were they buried in obscurity, if they render us lightly towards our brethren and forgetful of our God; how many have been poisoned by the concept of their own wealth.

Jesus Himself who according to the Scripture was the firm and immovable Rock to whom the tribes of the Universe were due.
as the attribute of his of his Supreme Perfections. Yet while on Earth, he would not suffer these truths which made for his honour and glory. He wrought wonders. He cured the blind and deaf; he raised the dead. Yet when the People began to celebrate his Name for this, and to cry that he was the Prophet of God, he Enjoined.
them silence, and seemed extremely impatient of applause. Even to the demons did he extend this modesty, and when those spirits, forced by his omnipotent word left the bodies they had possessed, he exclaimed that he was the Lord, who had triumphed over them, and suffered them justly to proceed. Instead of receiving the homage
which was offered to his Power. He used his power to forbid, and reject it. Was there any danger for him, if being treated doubtless there was none? But there might have been for us; and because he came to be our Father in all things, to subject the well-wishes of our nature to the sanctity of his own.
He shunned worldly praise
that we might be instructed
to dread those who big hate.
Lying deceive and destroy
us: for perfection being a
book of constancy and diffi-
culty whose principal
exercise consists in adver-
sing, we must every day
Labour with care and if
we could intermit this to
with honour and safety.
we could certainly do with
joy. But to this, the imme-
clerate praise of men
imbecility leads us, for it ma-
bles us believe ourselves to
be far advanced, and dan-
gers an immediate
recoil. As Paul continued,
as he was in grace, notes
Thus to the Philippians.
Brothers, I blent and myself
to have attained...
But this I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth those things which are before. For our high calling. We observe a conduct very different and very opposite to that of the apostles. We regard with secular satisfaction the little good we have.
already done, and almost entirely forget the great things, which remain for us yet to do.

To avoid so fatal a blindness, let us grapple with great maxims: know minds that after every vote than a declared enemy, and yet every truth must be destroyed or at least not receive.
With eagerness when it shall us. Let us forget our good works. God is just and will remember them. But let our sins be ever in our sight. The contemplation of our own merit may be pleasing, but it is dangerous. It tends to overweening pride. Good deeds sanctify us, and wicked deeds corrupt us.
and nothing is so proper to sanctify us, as the remembrance of our sins: as God, by a particular providence, had inclined to give this consolation to the sinner, that the severe remembrance of his sin may be made the remedy, while there was remembrance of his good deeds, is a sufficient
Temptation to the first.

But even this temptation serves a great end, viz.

It obliges us to continual watchfulness and constant cry, to dread the tongue of the flatterer, to distrust our own claims, and to depend alone upon the God of eternal merit, which that all may do good.
His infinite mercy grant through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.