

**DISCOURSES: TRANSLATED FROM
NICOLE'S ESSAYS. WITH VARIATIONS
FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH.
1. ON THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD. 2. ON
THE WEAKNESS OF MAN. 3. ON THE
WAY OF PRESERVING PEACE**

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Discourses: Translated from Nicole's Essays. With Variations from the Original French. 1. On the Existence of a God. 2. On the Weakness of Man. 3. On the Way of Preserving Peace by Pierre Nicole & John Locke

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PIERRE NICOLE & JOHN LOCKE

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1 H. 1828

DISCOURSES:

TRANSLATED FROM NICOLE'S ESSAYS,

BY JOHN LOCKE,

WITH IMPORTANT VARIATIONS FROM THE
ORIGINAL FRENCH.

1. ON THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD.
2. ON THE WEAKNESS OF MAN.
3. ON THE WAY OF PRESERVING PEACE.

Dedicated to the Countess of Shaftesbury.

Now first printed from the Autograph of the Translator,
in the possession of
THOMAS HANCOCK, M. D.

London:

PRINTED FOR HARVEY AND DARTON,
GRACECHURCH STREET.

1828.

63.



PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

THE manuscript, of which a printed copy is now given to the public, as remarkable for its beauty as for the eminence of the writer, has been but a few months in my possession. It is an undoubted autograph of the celebrated John Locke, written almost without a blot or erasure, for the purpose, as it is stated in the Dedication, of being presented to the Countess of Shaftesbury, the wife of his great friend and patron. The volume is a small 12mo, neatly bound in the fashion of the time, with silver clasps, and consists of 376 pages, which are almost as uniform, in the breadth of margin and the number of

lines, as a page of typography. There is no date; but the probability is, that Locke presented it to the Countess some time between the years 1670 and 1680. It has never before been printed.

I should not be disposed to say any thing of the manner in which this interesting relic has come into my possession, did I not apprehend that the reader would expect to be informed of every circumstance which might have a tendency to satisfy him on the subject of its authenticity. The book was bequeathed to me by Lady Medows, widow of General Sir William Medows, who distinguished himself in India, under the Marquis Cornwallis. This excellent lady finished a life of exemplary piety and Christian benevolence last year. Of her motives for conferring upon me such a favour, it neither becomes me, nor is it necessary, to enter into an explanation. In a note accom-

panying the gift, addressed to a mutual friend, (for to herself I was personally a stranger,) she states that she obtained it from the nephew of a lady who was intimate in the Shaftesbury family.

As a confirmation of the hand-writing being that of Locke, if any thing were wanting to establish its identity, an original letter of this eminent man to the Earl of Shaftesbury, on the political occurrences of the time, accompanied the manuscript.

In his dedicatory address to the Countess of Shaftesbury, Locke states, that the work is a translation from the French: "a new French production, in a dress of his own making;" and further, that he thought, "he could not meet in all France, any thing fitter to be put into her hands, than what would make her see so rare and extraordinary a sight as a draught of her own virtues."

This address has undoubtedly a warm

colouring of panegyric, perhaps too much after the spirit of the time. The encomiums may notwithstanding have been deserved. But the turns of compliment and expression so strongly resemble the dedication, in the "Essay on Human Understanding," to the Earl of Pembroke, that no one, who compares the two specimens of composition together, can doubt that they were the productions of the same mind.

Notwithstanding the declaration of Locke above quoted, it was, I believe, a tradition in the Shaftesbury family, handed down with the manuscript, "that Locke himself composed these treatises, with a view to the religious welfare of his friend the Earl of Shaftesbury; and that the story of their being a translation was but a modest fiction, to gain a perusal of the work by the Earl, through the medium of the Countess, and to avoid the appearance of personality." This

opinion is quoted on the authority of the present learned Editor of "The Christian Observer," who, upon seeing a public notice, which was inserted without my knowledge, in some of the daily papers, of such a manuscript being in existence, obligingly favoured me with a call, and communicated some interesting information on the subject; referring me at the same time to the 18th vol. of the periodical above named, for further particulars*.

To the judgment and literary research of this gentleman, we are indebted for a knowledge of the French author. He obtained a loan of the manuscript from Lady Medows, about nine years ago; and happily succeeded in meeting with a translation, by *another* hand, of the

* See "The Christian Observer," for 1819. No. 2, vol. xviii. Article entitled, "Extracts from an unpublished Autograph of Locke."

original work, from which the three Discourses now printed are selected. It was at a public sale-room that the Editor accidentally saw a set of books, entitled, "Moral Essays, on many important Duties. Written in French by Messieurs du Port Royal. Done into English by a Person of Quality. 4 vols. Fourth Edition. London, for Parker, at the Bible and Crown, 1724;" and having soon discovered that these volumes "*contained, among a variety of treatises, the individual three, which had long been sought for in vain by the different possessors of Locke's translation**", he immediately purchased them. The Editor conjectures, with some show of reason, that the "Person of Quality" was no less a writer than Boyle, the distinguished philosopher. If so, it is not a little remarkable, that two

* See the Christian Observer, *ubi supra*.