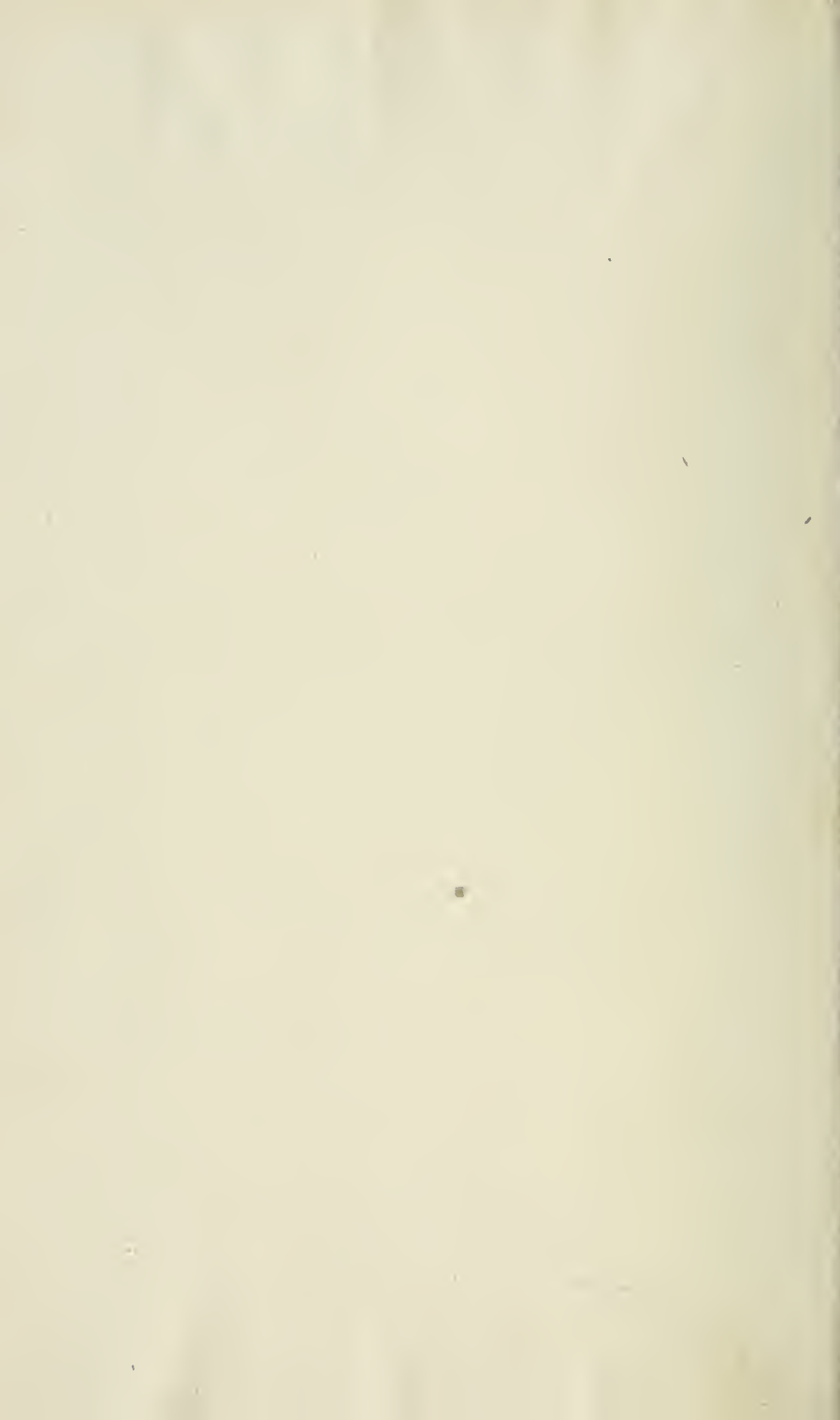
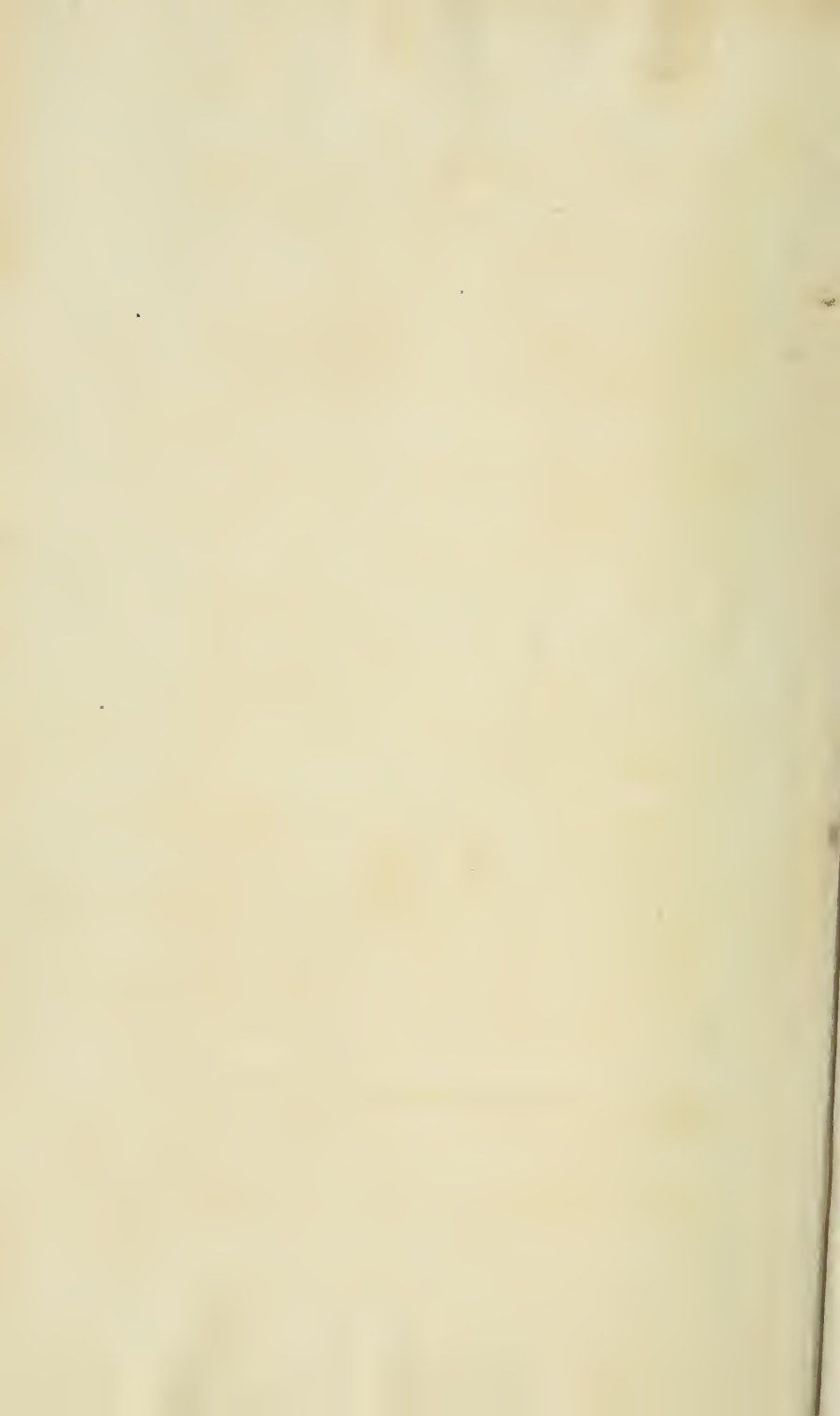


John M. Yellon
Jan 1979





A N
E X A M I N A T I O N
O F

Dr. REID's *Inquiry into the Human Mind
on the Principles of Common Sense,*

Dr. BEATTIE's *Essay on the Nature and
Immutability of Truth,*

A N D

Dr. OSWALD's *Appeal to Common Sense
in Behalf of Religion.*

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F.R.S.

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

*As some men have imagined innate ideas, because they had forgot
how they came by them; so others have set up almost as many
distinct instincts as there are acquired principles of acting.*

Preliminary Dissertation to Law's translation of King's
Origin of Evil.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, N^o. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
M. DCC. LXXV.

*To Dr. REID, Dr. BEATTIE, and
Dr. OSWALD.*

GENTLEMEN,

I Take the liberty to present each of you with a copy of my remarks on your writings, requesting that you would give them that attention which, according to your own ideas, the subject deserves.

You cannot be justly offended at me for treating you with the same freedom with which you have treated others. If the public voice, which has hitherto seemed to incline to your side, should, notwithstanding, finally determine in my favour, you will be considered

a 2

iv THE DEDICATION.

dered as bold and insolent innovators in what has hitherto been the received doctrine concerning *human nature*, and in the fundamental principles of *truth* and *reason*. But if your tenets be admitted, and my objections to them be deemed frivolous, I must be content to cover my head with infamy, and fall under the indelible disgrace of a weak or wicked opposer of new and important truth.

I should not have written this book, Gentlemen, if I had not meant to call you forth to defend the ground which you have boldly seized and occupied. It is, therefore, my expectation, and my wish, that you would all of you, either jointly or separately, enter into an open and free discussion
of

THE DEDICATION. v

of the questions which are now before the public. I promise to proceed with equal *fairness* and *freedom*, acknowledging, with the greatest frankness, any mistakes or oversights of which I shall be convinced; and, judging by your professed liberality and candour, I and the public shall expect the same conduct from you.

Sincerely wishing you all possible success in your laudable endeavours to serve the cause of *truth*, *virtue*, and *religion*, though my writings, and myself, should be the victims at their shrine,

I am, GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Calne, August 10, 1774.

THE

T H E
P R E F A C E.

NOTHING could be more unexpected by me, but a very few months ago, than this publication. *Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the principles of the human mind* fell into my hands presently after the first publication of it; but being at that time intent upon my electrical pursuits, and others of a similar nature, I did no more than look very slightly into it. Finding his notions of human nature the very reverse of those which I had learned from Mr. Locke and Dr. Hartley (in which I thought I had sufficient reason to acquiesce) I did not give myself the trouble to read the book through.

It appeared to me to be an ingenious piece of sophistry, and had it been written

to the third volume of my *Institutes*. And there would have been a sufficient propriety in it; because, if this new scheme of an immediate appeal to *common sense* upon every important question in religion (and which superseded almost all *reasoning* on the subject) should take place, the plan of my work, with which I had taken some pains, and which I hoped would be of some use to young persons, was absurd from the very beginning.

Accordingly I made some notes upon Dr. Oswald's treatise with this view; but finding that I had entered upon a copious, amusing, and not uninteresting subject, I determined to consider it more at large. I therefore contented myself with a few general remarks upon the subject, and an extract or two from Dr. Oswald, in the preface to that third volume, just to give some idea of the nature and spirit of the principles I meant to oppose; promising to discuss the subject more at large in a separate work, in which I might
also

also take some notice of Dr. Reid, who first advanced the principles of which Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald had made so much use. This has produced the present publication, in which I have introduced several of the remarks and quotations contained in the above-mentioned *preface*; supposing that, as this work is of a very different nature from that, the same persons might not be possessed of them both.

Thinking farther upon this subject, it occurred to me, that the most effectual method to divert the attention of the more sensible part of the public from such an incoherent scheme as that of Dr. Reid, and to establish the true science of human nature, would be to facilitate the study of *Dr. Hartley's Theory*. I therefore communicated my design to the son of that extraordinary man, who was pleased to approve of my undertaking. Accordingly I have now in the press an edition of so much of the *Observations on Man* as relate to the doctrine of association

ation of ideas, leaving out the doctrine of *vibrations*, and some other things which might discourage many readers ; and introducing it with some dissertations of my own.

Also, to show the great importance and extensive use of this excellent theory of the mind, I thought it might be of service to give some specimens of the application of Dr. Hartley's doctrine to such subjects of inquiry as it had a near relation to, and to which I had had occasion to give particular attention. And as I had, on other accounts, been frequently requested to publish the *Lectures on Philosophical Criticism*, which I composed when I was tutor in the Belles Lettres at the academy at Warrington, this was another inducement to the publication. For it appears to me that the subject of criticism admits of the happiest illustration from Dr. Hartley's principles ; and accordingly, in the composition of those lectures, I kept them continually in view.

But

But the most important application of Dr. Hartley's doctrine of the association of ideas is to *the conduct of human life*, and especially the business of *education*. I therefore propose to publish some observations on this subject, perhaps pretty soon; and I shall reserve for a time of more leisure, and more advanced age, the throwing together and systematizing the observations that I am from time to time making on the general conduct of *human life and happiness*, and on the natural *progress and perfection of intellectual beings*.

This work, if I be able, in any tolerable measure, to accomplish my design, will contain not merely *illustrations*, and the most important *applications* of Hartley's theory, but may contribute in some measure to the *improvement and extension* of it. Speculations of this kind contribute to my own entertainment and happiness almost every day of my life; and were philosophers in general to attend to them, they would find in them an inexhaustible

haustible fund of disquisition, abounding with the most excellent practical uses; more especially inspiring the greatest elevation of thought, continually leading the mind to views beyond the narrow limits of the present state, and filling it with the purest sentiments of benevolence and devotion.

I am fully aware how exceedingly unpopular some of the opinions advanced in this work will be, not with the vulgar only, but also with many ingenious and excellent persons, for whom I have the highest esteem, and who are disposed to think favourably of my other publications. But as they have not disapproved of my usual freedom in avowing and defending opinions in which they concur with me; I hope they will bear with the same *uniform freedom*, and love of truth, though it should lead me to adopt and assert opinions in which they cannot give me their concurrence.

As

As to the doctrine of *necessity*, to which I now principally refer, it may possibly save some persons, who will think that I would not speak at random, not a little trouble, if I here give it as my opinion, that unless they apply themselves to the study of this question pretty early in life, and in a regular study of Pneumatology and Ethics, they will never truly understand the subject; but will always be liable to be imposed upon, staggered, confounded, and terrified, by the representations of the generality of writers, who, how speciously soever they declaim, in reality know no more about it than themselves. The common Arminian doctrine of *free will*, in the only sense of the words in which mankind generally use them, viz. *the power of doing what we please, or will*, is the doctrine of the scriptures, and is what the philosophical doctrine of necessity supposes; and farther than this no man does, or need to look, in the common conduct of life, or of religion.

If

If any person, at a proper time of life, with his mind divested of vulgar prejudices, possessed of the necessary preparatory knowledge, and likewise of some degree of *fortitude*, which is certainly requisite for the steady contemplation of great and interesting subjects, should chuse to inquire seriously into this business, I would recommend to him, besides the *study* (for the *perusal* is saying and doing nothing at all) of Dr. Hartley's Observations on man, Mr. *Jonathan Edwards's treatise on free will*. This writer discusses the subject with great clearness and judgment, obviating every shadow of objection to it, and, in my opinion, his work is unanswerable. But the concurrence of the philosophical doctrine of *necessity* with the gloomy notions of Calvin appears to me to be a strange kind of phenomenon; and I cannot help thinking that had this ingenious writer lived a little longer, and reflected upon the natural connection and tendency of his sentiments, as explained in his treatise, he could not but

but have seen things in a very different light, and have been sensible that his philosophy was much more nearly allied to Socinianism than to Calvinism.

In reality, I can hardly help thinking it to have been a piece of artifice in Mr. Edwards to represent the doctrine of philosophical necessity as being the same thing with Calvinism, and the doctrine of philosophical liberty as the same thing with Arminianism. Both Arminians and Calvinists had certainly the very same opinion concerning the freedom of the human will in general, though they differed in their notions of it where religion was concerned. In fact, the modern question of *liberty and necessity* is what those divines never understood, or indeed had so much as heard of. The Arminians maintained, in general, that it depends upon men themselves whether they will be saved or not, and the Calvinists maintained the contrary opinion, asserting that it depends wholly upon an arbitrary decree of God. At least, this

was the case till, in the course of the controversy, they were led to refine upon the subject, and at length Mr. Edwards hit upon the true philosophical doctrine of *necessity*, which I scruple not to assert, that no other Calvinist ever did before.

Zealous Calvinists, who regard my writings with abhorrence, will be surprized to hear me so full and earnest in my recommendation of a book which they themselves boast of, as the strongest bulwark of their own gloomy faith. And they must continue to wonder, as it would be to no purpose for me to explain to them why they ought not to wonder at the matter. What I should say on that subject would not be intelligible to them.

Those who are not fond of much close thinking, which is necessarily the case with the generality of readers, and some writers, will not thank me for endeavouring to introduce into more public notice such a theory of the human mind

as

as that of Dr. Hartley. His is not a book that a man can read over in a few evenings, so as to be ready to give a satisfactory account of it to any of his friends who may happen to ask him what there is in it, and expect an answer in a few sentences. In fact, it contains a new and most extensive *science*, and requires a vast fund of preparatory knowledge to enter upon the study of it with any prospect of success.

But, in return, I will promise any person who shall apply to this work, with proper furniture, that the study of it will abundantly reward his labour. It will be like entering upon *a new world*, afford inexhaustible matter for curious and useful speculation, and be of unspeakable advantage in almost every pursuit, and even in things to which it seems, at first sight, to bear no sort of relation. For my own part, I can almost say, that I think myself more indebted to this one treatise, than to all the books I ever read beside; the scriptures excepted.

On the other hand, such a theory of the human mind as that of Dr. Reid, adopted by Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald (if that can be called a *theory* which in fact *explains* nothing) does not, indeed, require much study; but when you have given all possible attention to it, you find yourself no wiser than before. Dr. Reid meets with a particular sentiment, or persuasion, and not being able to explain the origin of it, without more ado he ascribes it to a *particular original instinct*, provided for that very purpose. He finds another difficulty, which he also solves in the same concise and easy manner. And thus he goes on accounting for every thing, by telling you, not only that he cannot explain it himself, but that it will be in vain for you, or any other person, to endeavour to investigate it farther than he has done. Thus avowed ignorance is to pass for real knowledge, and, as with the old Sceptics, that man is to be reckoned the greatest philosopher who asserts that he knows nothing himself, and can persuade others that they know no more than

than he does. There is this difference between the ancient and these modern sceptics, that the ancients professed neither to *understand* nor *believe* any thing, whereas these moderns believe every thing, though they profess to understand nothing. And the former, I think, are the more consistent of the two.

Those of my readers who have not been much conversant with metaphysical writers, and are not acquainted with the artful manner in which some of them draw consequences from their doctrines, in order to enhance the value of their speculations, cannot possibly be aware how much, in the opinion of those whose sentiments I am opposing, depends upon the controversy in which I am now engaged. I shall, therefore, in order to excite his attention to the subject (besides what I have observed of this nature in the body of the work) quote a few passages from Dr. Reid's *Dedication*, which show what important service he imagined he was doing to mankind by his performance; and his disciples Dr. Beattie and

Dr. Oswald are not behind their master in the ideas they entertain of the value of their respective writings.

He begins with observing, p. 3, that, though the subject of it had been canvassed by men of very great penetration and genius such as Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, Berkley, and Hume; yet he has given a view of the human understanding so very different from them, as to be apprehensive of being condemned by many for his temerity and vanity. p. 4.

A whole system of scepticism, he says, p. 5, has been fairly built upon the principles of Mr. Locke. Then he observes, p. 6, that if all belief be laid aside, piety, patriotism, friendship, parental affection, and private virtue appear as ridiculous as knight errantry. Upon the hypothesis that he combats, he says, p. 8, the whole universe about him, body and spirit, sun, moon, stars and earth, friends and relations, all things without exception, vanish at once, and, *like the baseless fabrick*

fabrick of a vision, leave not a track behind. He therefore informs his patron, that he thought it unreasonable, upon the authority of philosophers, to admit an hypothesis, which, in his opinion, overturned all philosophy, all religion, and virtue, and common sense. And finding that all the systems concerning the human understanding that he was acquainted with were built upon this hypothesis, he was resolved to inquire into the subject anew, without regard to any hypothesis; and the leisure of an academical life, p. 10, disengaged from the pursuits of interest and ambition, the duty of his profession, which obliged him to give lectures on these subjects to youth, and an early inclination to speculations of this kind, enabled him, he flatters himself, to give a more minute attention to the subject of this inquiry, than had been given before.

He concludes with hinting to his patron, p. 11, who, with many others, had approved of his sentiments, that in it

he has justified the common sense and reason of mankind, against the sceptical subtilties which, in this age, have endeavoured to put them out of countenance, and to throw new light upon one of the noblest parts of the divine workmanship; and therefore that his Lordship's respect for the arts and sciences, and his attention to the improvement of them, as well as to every thing else that contributes to the felicity of his country, leaves him no room to doubt of his favourable acceptance of his Essay.

According to this view of the subject, the interest and happiness of mankind are nearly concerned in this business; and therefore it behoves me to proceed with the greatest caution. If I deprive the world of the benefit of Dr. Reid's important services, I do them an irreparable injury; but, on the other hand, if I undeceive them with respect to the confidence they have been induced to put in one, who, notwithstanding his professions, in which I doubt not he is very sincere, cannot

cannot in reality be of any use to them, I shall be intitled to some portion of their gratitude, though I should confer upon them no positive benefit.

I have a slight apology to make to those persons who have not read the writings on which I have animadverted, for the *freedom* with which I have sometimes treated them. Those who have read them, and have observed the airs of self-sufficiency, arrogance, and contempt of all others who have treated, or touched upon, these subjects before them, and the frightful consequences which they perpetually ascribe to the opinions they controvert (and which are generally my own favourite opinions) will think me to have been very temperate in the use that I have made of such a mode of writing, as tends to render metaphysical speculation not quite tedious, insipid, and disgusting. At most I have treated them as they have treated others, far superior to themselves.

As

As to Dr. Oswald, whom I have treated with the least ceremony, the disgust his writings gave me was so great, that I could not possibly shew him more respect. Indeed I think him in general not intitled to a grave answer; and accordingly have for the most part contented myself with *exhibiting* his sentiments, without *replying* to them at all. This will probably confirm him in the opinion which he has already expressed, viz. that *he sees I have not studied the subject of this controversy.*

As my remarks on these three writers are necessarily miscellaneous, I thought it would not be improper to prefix to them a *preliminary essay*, on the nature of judgment and reasoning, with a general view of the progress of the intellect, especially with respect to our knowledge of the external world. By this means I hope my reader will enter upon the *particular remarks* with the advantage of a pretty good general knowledge of the subject; but for a more particular knowledge of it, I must refer him to the edition of Hartley
above-

above-mentioned, and the dissertations that I propose to prefix to it.

Some may wonder that I should be so severe on these three christian writers, and take no notice of Mr. Hume, whose sophistry, being deemed by them to be unanswerable on the common principles, compelled them to have recourse to these new ones. And others may even think it wrong that, being a christian myself, I should not join the triumph of my friends, though the victory was not gained with my weapons.

To the former I answer, that, in my opinion, Mr. Hume has been very ably answered, again and again, upon more solid principles than those of this new common sense; and I beg leave to refer them to the two first volumes of my *Institutes* above mentioned, and especially the second, which relates to the evidences of christianity. Besides, though I have not, in this treatise, answered Mr. Hume directly, I have done it, in some measure,
indirectly

indirectly, when I show that there was no occasion to have recourse to this new mode of defending religion, the old being abundantly sufficient.

To the latter I would reply, that I respect christianity chiefly as it is the cause of *truth*, and that the true interest of christianity is promoted no less by throwing down weak and rotten supports, than by supplying it with firm and good ones.

After I had announced my intention to animadvert upon Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald, I was told of an anonymous pamphlet, written to show that Dr. Beattie's Essay on Truth is *sophistical and promotive of scepticism and infidelity*. Though I do not approve of what seems to have been the design of this writer, I think his remarks are, in the main, just with respect to Dr. Beattie. My observations are frequently the same with his.

It is necessary for the sake of verifying my quotations to observe that I have
made

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made use of *Dr. Reid's Inquiry*, third edition, London, 1769; *Dr. Beattie's Essay*, fifth edition, London, 1774; and *Dr. Oswald's Appeal*, vol. 1, second edition, London, 1768; vol. 2, the first edition, Edinburgh, 1772; *Dr. Price's Review*, second edition, London, 1769; *Harris's Hermes*, London, 1751.

When no particular volume of Dr. Oswald is expressed, the first is always intended.

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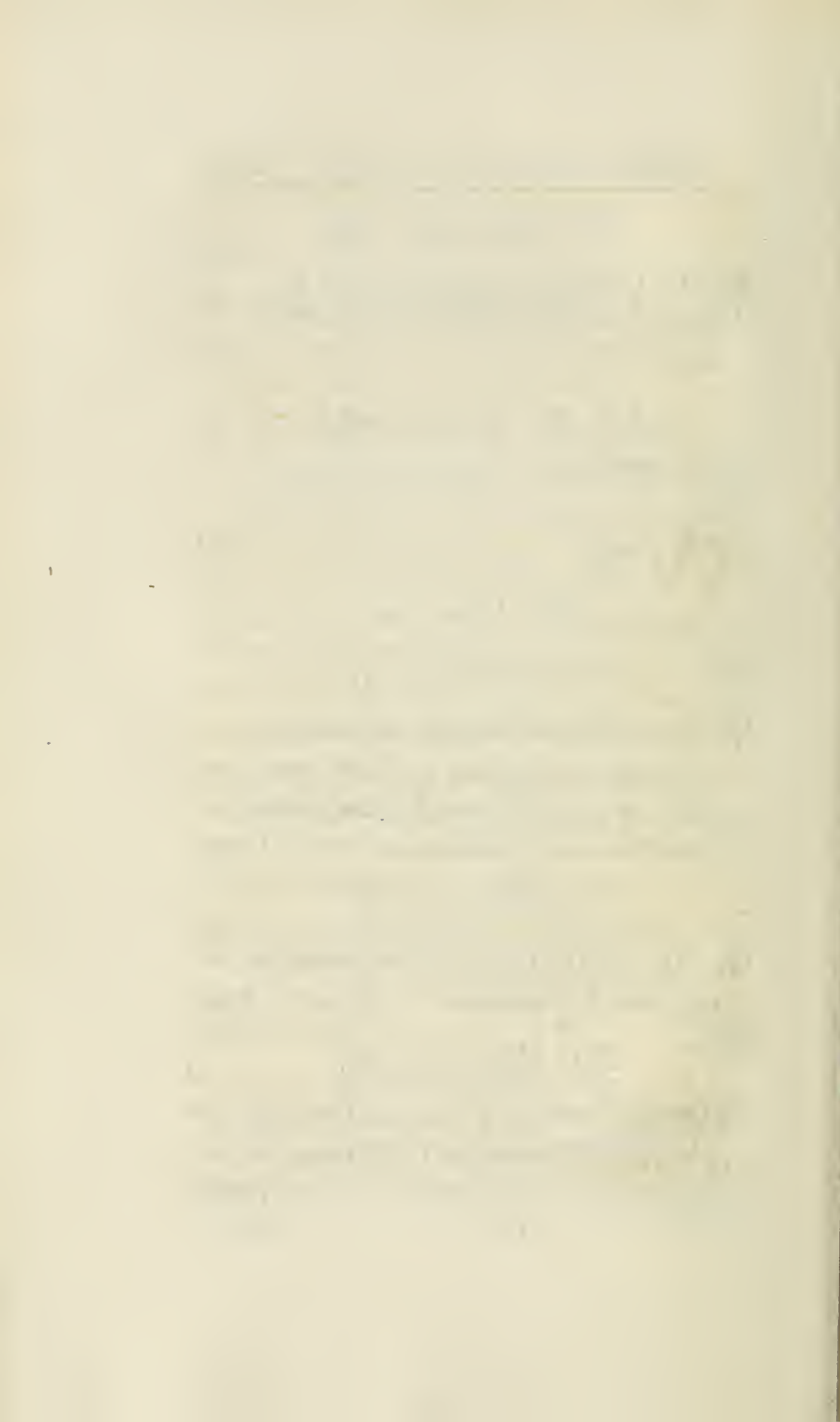
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Introductory Observations on the nature of judgment and reasoning, with a general view of the progress of the intellect, with respect to the principal subjects of this treatise.

WHEN our minds are first exposed to the influence of external objects, all their parts and properties, and even accidental variable adjuncts, are presented to our view at the same time ; so that the whole makes but one impression upon our organs of sense, and consequently upon the mind. By this means all the parts of the simultaneous impression are so intimately associated together, that the idea of any one of them introduces the idea of all the rest. But as the necessary parts and properties will occur more often than the variable adjuncts, the ideas of these will not be so perfectly associated with the rest ; and thus we shall be able to distinguish between those parts or pro-

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perties

perties that have been found separate, and those that have never been observed afunder.

The idea of any thing, and of its necessary inseparable properties, as those of *milk* and *whiteness*, *gold* and *yellow*, always occurring together, is the foundation of, and supplies the materials for *propositions*, in which they are affirmed of one another, and are *said* to be inseparable; or, to use the terms of logic, in which one is made the *subject* and the other the *predicate* of a proposition; and nothing is requisite but *words* to denote the names of things and properties, and any arbitrary sign for a *copula*, and the proposition is complete; as, *milk is white*, *gold is yellow*, or, *milk has whiteness*, *gold has yellowness*. This class of truth contains those in which there is an universal, and therefore a supposed necessary connection between the subject and the predicate.

Another class of truths contains those in which the subject and predicate appear,
upon

upon comparifon, to be, in reality, nothing more than different names for the fame thing. To this clafs belong all *equations*, or propofitions relating to number and quantity, that is, all that admit of mathematical demonftration, as, *twice two is four, and the three angles of a right lined triangle are equal to two right angles*. For when the terms of thefe propofitions are duly confidered, it is found that they do not really differ, but exprefs the very fame quantity. This is, in its own nature, a conviction or perfuafion of the fulleft kind.

Thefe two kinds of propofitions, being very different in their natures, require very different kinds of *proof*.

The *evidence*, that any two things or properties are neceffarily united is the conftant obfervation of their union. It having always been obferved, for inftance, that the milk of animals is white, the idea of *white* becomes a neceffary part, or attendant of the idea of *milk*.

In other words, we call it an *essential property* of milk. This, however, only respects the milk of those animals with which we are acquainted. But since the milk of all the animals with which we are acquainted, or of which we have heard, is white, we can have no reason to suspect that the milk of any new and strange animal is of any other colour. Also, since wherever there has been the specific gravity, ductility, and other properties of *gold*, the colour has always been *yellow*, we conclude that those circumstances are necessarily united, though by some unknown bond of union, and that they will always go together.

The proper *proof*, therefore, of universal propositions, such as the above, that milk is white, that gold is yellow, or that a certain degree of cold will freeze water, consists in what is called an *induction of particular facts*, of precisely the same nature. Having found, by much and various experience, that the same events never fail to take place in the same circumstances,

stances, the *expectation* of the same consequences from the same previous circumstances is necessarily generated in our minds, and we can have no more suspicion of a different event, than we can separate the idea of *whiteness* from that of the other properties of *milk*.

Thus when the previous circumstances are precisely the same, we call the process of proof by the name of *induction*. But if they be not precisely the same, but only bear a considerable resemblance to the circumstances from which any particular appearance has been found to result, we call the argument *analogy*; and it is stronger in proportion to the degree of resemblance in the previous circumstances. Thus if we have found the milk of all the animals with which we are acquainted to be nourishing, though the natures of those animals be considerably different, we think it probable that the milk of any strange animal will be nourishing. If, therefore, the evidence of a proposition of this kind be weak, or doubtful, it can be strengthened
only

only by finding more facts of the same, or of a similar nature.

If the truth of a proposition of the other class be not self evident, that is, if the subject and predicate do not appear, at first sight, to be different names for the same thing, another term must be found that shall be synonymous to them both. Thus, to prove that the three internal angles of a right lined triangle are equal to two right angles, I produce the base of the triangle; and having, by this means, made it evident that all the internal angles are equal to three angles formed by lines drawn from the same point in a right line, which I know to be equal to two right angles, the demonstration is complete.

This process exactly corresponds to the method of learning and teaching the signification of words in an unknown language, by means of one that is known. I may not know, for instance, what is meant by the Latin word *domus*; but if
I be

I be informed that it has the same meaning with *maison* in French, with which I am well acquainted, it immediately occurs to me, that it must have the same signification as *house* in English. And as the idea of a *house* was perfectly associated with the word *maison*, I no sooner put the word *domus* in its place, than the idea that was at first annexed to the word *maison* becomes connected with the word *domus*. For some time, however, the word *domus* will not excite the idea of a house without the help of the word *maison*; but by degrees it gets united to the idea immediately, so that afterwards they will be as inseparable as the same idea and the word *maison* were before.

In like manner, when *syllogisms* become familiar, the subject and predicate of the proposition to be proved unite, and coalesce immediately without the help of the *middle term*; in which case the conclusion is as instantaneous as a simple judgment. In this manner it is that *authority*, as that of a parent, or of God,
pro-

produces instant conviction. We first put confidence in them, and then the moment that any thing is known to have their sanction, it engages our assent and acquiescence.

I may see no natural connection, for instance, between this life and another, but firmly believing that the declarations of Jesus Christ have the sanction of divine authority, which I know cannot deceive me; the moment I find that he has asserted that there will be a resurrection of the dead to a future life, it becomes an article of my faith; and not the least perceivable space of time is lost in forming the two syllogisms, by which I conclude, first, that what Christ says is true, because he speaks by commission from God; and secondly, that the doctrine of the resurrection is true, because he has asserted it.

In fact, both *propositions* and *syllogisms* are things of *art* and not of *nature*. The ideas belonging to the two terms
of

of *milk* and *whiteness*, out of which is formed the proposition, *milk is white*, were originally impressed, as was observed before, at the same time, and only formed a single complex idea. So also the moment that any two terms coalesce, as *lac* in Latin, and *milk* in English, the ideas annexed to the word *milk* and that of *whiteness* among the rest, are immediately transferred to the word *lac*, without any formal syllogism.

The word *truth*, and the idea annexed to it, is also the child of art, and not of nature, as well as the ideas annexed to the words *proposition* and *syllogism*. Ideas coalesce in our minds by the principle of association, these associations extend themselves, and ideas belonging to one word are transferred to another, without our giving any attention to these mental operations or affections. But when these processes have taken place in our minds many times, we are capable of observing them, as well as the ideas which are the subject of them; and we give names to these

these mental processes just as we do to the affections of things without ourselves.

Thus the perfect *coincidence* of the ideas belonging to different terms, as *twice two* and *four*, and likewise the universal and necessary *concurrence* of two ideas, as those of *milk* and *whiteness*, having been observed, we make use of some term, *truth*, for instance, to express either of those circumstances; for being very much alike, it has not been found necessary to distinguish them by different appellations.

Since propositions and reasoning are mental operations, and, in fact, nothing more than cases of the *association of ideas*, every thing necessary to the processes may take place in the mind of a child, of an idiot, or of a brute animal, and produce the proper affections and actions, in proportion to the extent of their intellectual powers. The *knowledge of these operations*, which is gained by the attention we give to them, is a thing of a
very

very different nature, just as different as the knowledge of the nature of vision is different from vision itself. The philosopher only is acquainted with the structure of the eye, and the theory of vision, but the clown sees as well as he does, and makes as good use of his eyes.

Suppose a dog to have been pushed into a fire and severely burned. Upon this the idea of *fire* and the idea that has been left by the painful sensation of *burning* become intimately associated together; so that the idea of being pushed into the fire, and the idea of the pain that was the consequence of it are ever after inseparable. He cannot tell you in words, that *fire has a power of burning*, because he has not the faculty of speech; or, though he might have signs to express *fire* and *burning*, he might not have got so abstract an idea as that of *power*; but notwithstanding this, the two ideas of *fire* and of *burning* are as intimately united in his mind, as they can be in the mind of a philosopher, who has reflected upon his
 mental

mental affections, and is able to describe that union, or association of ideas, in proper terms.

If you endeavour to push the dog into the fire, he will instantly spring from it, before he has felt any thing of the heat ; which as clearly shows his apprehension of danger from a situation in which he suffered before, as if he could have explained the foundation of his fear in the form of regular syllogisms and conclusions. No philosopher, who can analyze the operations of his mind, and discourse concerning them, could reason more justly, more effectually, or more expeditiously, than he does.

Words are of great *use* in the business of thinking, but are not necessary to it. In like manner though the knowledge of *logic* is not without its use, it is by no means necessary for the purpose of reasoning. And as the doctrine of *syllogisms* was deduced from observations on reasoning, just as other *theories* are deduced

deduced from facts previously known ; so the doctrine of *propositions* and *judgment* was deduced from observations on the coincidence of ideas, which took place antecedent to any knowledge of that kind.

There is hardly any thing to which we give the name of *opinion*, or *belief*, that does not require some degree of abstraction, and knowledge of what passes within the mind. And the common actions of life, which may be *analyzed* into opinions and reasoning, and which discover what we call sagacity in a very high degree, may be performed without any such thing, that is, without any explicit knowledge of such mental affections and operations. Let us, for an example of this, take *the belief of an external world*. This is thought to be universal ; and yet it appears to me to be very possible, not only that the lower animals, but even that children may not have reflected so much as that, properly speaking, they can be said to have formed any such opinion.

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When sensation first takes place, the child has no notices of any thing but by means of certain impressions, generally called *sensations*, which objects excite in his mind, by means of the organs of sense, and their corresponding nerves. Supposing the senses to be perfect, and exposed to the influence of external objects, the child is immediately sensible of these impressions; some of which give him pleasure, others pain, and others sensations between both. At the same time the muscular system is peculiarly irritable, so that those muscles which are afterwards most perfectly subject to the voluntary power are almost continually in action, but in a random and automatic manner, as long as the child is awake and in health.

Let us suppose now that his own *hand* passes frequently before his eye. The impression of it will be conveyed to the mind; and when, by any kind of mechanism (vibrations, or any thing else) that impression is revived, he will get a
fixed

fixed idea of his hand. Let now any painful impression be made upon his hand, as by the flame of a candle. The violence that is thereby done to his nerves will throw the whole nervous and muscular system into agitation, and will more especially occasion the contraction of those muscles which are necessary to withdraw his hand from the object that gave him pain, as Dr. Hartley has shewn by curious anatomical disquisitions in a variety of instances. Admitting then the principle of the association of ideas; after a sufficient number of these joint impressions, the action of drawing back his hand will mechanically follow the idea of the near approach of the candle.

In a manner equally mechanical, described at length by Dr. Hartley, the motions of *reaching* and *grasping* at things that give children pleasure are acquired by them. And in time, by the same process, the ideas of things that give us pleasure or pain become associated with a variety of other motions, besides the mere

III I N T R O D U C T O R Y

withdrawing of the hand and thrusting it forward, &c. and these also, as well as many circumstances attending those states of mind get their own separate associations; so that, at length, a great variety of methods of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain is acquired by us.

When the different impressions nearly balance one another, the ideas, or motions in the brain, interfering with and checking one another, some sensible space of time intervenes before the final determination to pursue any particular object, or to use any particular method of gaining the object takes place. To this state of mind, when we observe it, we give the name of *deliberation*, and to the determination itself, that of *will*. But still that motion, or connected train of motions, will take place which is the most intimately connected with, and dependent upon the state of mind, or impressions, immediately previous to it.

It will readily be concluded from this, that the more extensive are the intellectual powers, that is, the greater is the number of ideas, and consequently their associations, the oftener will this case of *deliberation*, or *suspence*, occur. Brutes are hardly ever at a loss what to do, and children seldom; so that to explain their actions we have hardly any occasion for the use of the terms *deliberation*, *volition*, or *will*; the ideas of every pleasurable and painful object being immediately followed by one particular definite action, proper to secure the one and avoid the other; the tendencies to other actions having never interfered to check and retard it. Now it can only be during this state of deliberation, and suspence, that we have any opportunity of perceiving, and attending to what passes within our own minds; so that a considerable *compass of intellect*, a large stock of ideas, and much experience, are necessary to this reflection, and the knowledge that is gained by it.

We see, then, that a child, or brute animal, is in possession of a power of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, and, in like manner, a power of pursuing other intermediate and different objects, in consequence of impressions made upon their minds by things external to them, without their having given any attention to the affections or operations of their minds; and indeed, consequently, without having such an idea as that of *mind* at all, or hardly of *self*. Some brute animals may possibly never advance farther than this; excepting that, their pleasurable and painful impressions being associated with a variety of particular persons and circumstances, they will necessarily acquire the rudiments of all the *passions*, as of joy and sorrow, love and hatred, gratitude and resentment, hope and fear, &c. each of which may be as *intense*, though less *complex* than they are found in the human species. Indeed they will be more sensible, and quick in their operations and effects, from the want of that variety of associations which take place in our minds,
and

and which check and overrule one another.

It is evident, however, that if time and opportunity be given for the purpose, (which, for the reason assigned above, can only be obtained where there is a considerable compass of intellect, and much exercise of it) the *affections* of our ideas are as capable of being the subjects of observation as the *ideas* themselves, just as the attractions, repulsions and various affections of external bodies may be observed as well as the bodies themselves. And it is possible that, at length, no affection or modification of ideas shall take place, without leaving what we may call an *idea* of every part of the process. And as we give names to other things which are distinguished by certain properties, so we give the name of *mind*, *sentient principle* or *intellect*, to that within ourselves, in which these ideas exist, and these operations are performed.

At first a child can have no notion of any difference between external objects themselves, and the immediate objects of his contemplation. He has no knowledge, for instance, of impressions being made by visible things on his eye, and still less has he any knowledge of the nerves or brain. But having given sufficient attention to the phenomena of vision, and of the other senses, he is convinced, first, that the eye, the ear, or some other sense is necessary to convey to him the knowledge of external objects; and that without these organs of sense, he would have been for ever insensible of all that passed without himself.

By attending to these observations he is likewise convinced, that the immediate objects of his attention are not, as he before imagined, the *external things themselves*, but some affection of his senses, occasioned by them. Afterwards he finds that his eye, his ear, and other organs of sense, cannot convey to him the knowledge of any thing, unless there be a communication

communication between these organs and the brain, by means of proper *nerves*; which convinces him that the immediate objects of his thoughts are not in the organs of sense, but in the *brain*, farther than which he is not able to trace any thing.

This kind of knowledge is gained by observation and experiment, as much as the theory of the eye and of light, though we ourselves are the subject of the observations and experiments. And our thinking and acting, in the conduct of life, is as much independent of this branch of knowledge, as the powers of air and light are independent of our knowledge of them.

Having, by this process, gained the knowledge of the distinction between the immediate objects of our thoughts, and external objects, it may occur to some persons, that, since we are not properly *conscious*, or *know in the first instance*, any thing more than what passes within ourselves,

ourselves, that is, our own sensations and ideas, these may be impressed upon the mind without the help of any thing external to us, by the immediate agency of the author of our being. This no philosopher will say is *impossible*, but, of two hypotheses to account for the same phenomenon, he will consider which is the more probable, as being more consonant to the course of nature in other respects.

Half the inhabitants of the globe, for instance, may be looking towards the heavens at the same time, and all their minds are impressed in the same manner. All see the moon, stars, and planets in precisely the same situations; and even the observations of those who use telescopes correspond with the utmost exactness. To explain this, Bishop Berkley says, that the divine being, attending to each individual mind, impresses their sensoriums in the same, or a corresponding manner, without the medium of any thing external to them. On the other hand,

hand, another person, without pretending that his scheme is impossible, where divine power is concerned, may think, however, that it is more natural to suppose that there really *are* such bodies as the moon, stars, and planets, placed at certain distances from us, and moving in certain directions; by means of which, and a more general agency of the deity than Bishop Berkley supposes, all our minds are necessarily impressed in this corresponding manner.

It is sufficient evidence for this hypothesis, that it exhibits *particular appearances*, as arising from *general laws*, which is agreeable to the analogy of every thing else that we observe. It is recommended by the same *simplicity* that recommends every other philosophical theory, and needs no other evidence whatever; and I should think that a person must have very little knowledge of the nature of *philosophy*, who shall think of having recourse to any other for the purpose. Dr. Reid, however, not satisfied with this evidence,

evidence, pretends that the certain belief of the real existence of external objects is arbitrarily connected with the ideas of them. The hypothesis of *knowing things by means of ideas only*, he says, ‘Dedication,’ p. 7, ‘is antient, indeed, and has been generally received by philosophers, but of which I could find no solid proof. The hypothesis I mean is, that nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it: That we do not really perceive things that are external, but only certain images and pictures of them, imprinted upon the mind, which are called *impressions* and *ideas*.’

In fact, it is not true that we necessarily believe the existence of external objects, *as distinct from our ideas of them*. Originally, we have no knowledge of any such thing as *ideas*, any more than we have of the images of objects on the retina; and the moment we have attained to the knowledge of ideas, the external world is nothing more than an *hypothesis*, to account for those ideas; so probable, indeed,

deed, that few persons seriously doubt of its real existence, and of its being the cause of our ideas. But still the contrary may be affirmed without any proper *absurdity*. Thus, also, the revolution of the planets round the sun best accounts for the appearances of nature, but the contrary may be supposed and affirmed without subjecting a person to the charge of talking *nonsense*. This, however, is the language that is now adopted when any of the dictates of a pretended principle of *common sense* is controverted; and one of the arbitrary decrees of this new infallible guide to truth is, it seems, the reality of an external world.

Such is the leading principle of that philosophy which I principally mean to combat in the ensuing Remarks on the writings of Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald.

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O F T H E

H U M A N M I N D.

T H E

INTRODUCTION.

THE great business of philosophy is to reduce into classes the various appearances which nature presents to our view. For by this means we acquire an easy and distinct knowledge of them, and gain a more perfect comprehension of their various natures, relations, and uses. Nature presents to our view *particular effects*, in connection with their *separate causes*, by which we are often puzzled, till philosophy steps in to our assistance, pointing out a similarity in these effects, and the probability of such similar effects arising from the same cause. Having got into this track of *simplifying* all appearances, and all causes, we are able to predict new appearances from their known previous circumstances; and

B thus

thus we add to our own power, convenience, and happiness, by availing ourselves of the powers of nature.

A very considerable advance has been made in this truly philosophical and useful progress with respect to the knowledge of the world around us, and the laws by which it is governed. And the knowledge of *ourselves*, both body and mind, has likewise advanced in the proportion that might have been expected from the natural order of our thoughts; which are first engaged by an attention to external objects before we reflect upon ourselves. Something was done in this field of knowledge by Descartes, very much by Mr. Locke, but most of all by Dr. Hartley, who has thrown more useful light upon the theory of the mind than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world.

But while some are employed in making real advances in the knowledge of nature, there have always been others possessed not always, perhaps, of envious
but

but of little and contracted minds, who, instead of doing, or attempting to do any thing themselves, are busily employed in watching the footsteps of others, and cavilling at every thing they do; which is not without a good effect, as it obliges philosophers to use greater caution and circumspection, to review their steps, and tread upon surer ground than they would otherwise do.

Every discovery in natural philosophy made by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, was disputed inch by inch; and can we be surpris'd that the labours of Mr. Locke should share the same fate? As to Dr. Hartley, his *day of trial* is not yet come, and one of my views in this publication, and some others that I have projected, is to bring it on; not doubting but that it will stand the test, and be better known, and more firmly established after such a scrutiny.

The fate of Mr. Locke's principles of the human mind has, however, been ra-

ther singularly hard. The systems of other philosophers, after having been fully and rigorously criticized, and then generally acquiesced in, have passed without much controversy; but his, after having undergone this strict examination from all the learned of his own age, and having been acquiesced in for near a century, has of late met with a more rude, and more pertinacious set of adversaries; who, instead of allowing the knowledge of the mind to advance with the knowledge of nature in general, appear to me to be throwing every thing into its pristine confusion, and even introducing more darkness than naturally ever belonged to the subject.

The outlines of Mr. Locke's system are, that the mind perceives all things that are external to it by means of certain impressions, made upon the organs of sense; that those impressions are conveyed by the nerves to the brain, and from the brain to the mind, where they are called *sensations*, and when recollected are called *ideas*; that by the attention which the mind, or sentient principle, gives to these sensations

sensations and ideas, observing their mutual relations, &c. it acquires other ideas, which he calls *ideas of reflection*, and thereby becomes possessed of the materials of all its knowledge. Other things he has adopted, and taken for granted concerning the mind, which are not well founded; and I think he has been hasty in concluding that there is some other source of our ideas besides the external senses; but the rest of his system appears to me, and others, to be the corner stone of all just and rational knowledge of ourselves.

This solid foundation, however, has lately been attempted to be overturned by a set of pretended philosophers, of whom the most conspicuous and assuming is Dr. Reid, professor of moral philosophy in the university of Glasgow, who, in order to combat Bishop Berkley, and the scepticism of Mr. Hume, has himself introduced almost universal scepticism and confusion; denying all the connections which had before been supposed to subsist

between the several phenomena, powers, and operations of the mind, and substituting such a number of *independent, arbitrary, instinctive principles*, that the very enumeration of them is really tiresome.

It is very possible, indeed, and no person can deny it, that we may proceed too rapidly in simplifying appearances, and therefore such writers as Dr. Reid are an useful and seasonable check upon us. But, on the other hand, so loose and incoherent a system as he would substitute in the place of Mr. Locke's, ought not to be adopted without the most urgent necessity; since it wants the recommendation of that agreeable *simplicity*, which is so apparent in other parts of the constitution of nature. Appearances and analogy being so much against this system, we are justified in requiring the stronger evidence for it.

It is impossible to contemplate such a theory of the human mind as that of Dr. Reid

Reid with any satisfaction, and the farther study of the subject is thereby rendered exceedingly disgusting and unpromising. I flatter myself therefore, that I may be doing some service to future inquirers, by endeavouring to show that this new system has in it as little of *truth* as it has of *beauty*, that we may safely take up the subject, where Mr. Locke left it, and proceed to attend to what Dr. Hartley has done by following his steps; when, if I have any foresight, we shall smile at Dr. Reid's hypothesis, or rather string of hypotheses, as a mere puzzle, and look back upon it as upon a dream.

To proceed with as much perspicuity as I possibly can in this perplexed subject, I shall first present my reader with a view of all the unconnected instinctive principles which Dr. Reid pretends to have discovered in the mind, and I shall then examine, in distinct sections, his objections to Mr. Locke's doctrine, and the foundation he has laid for his own peculiar hypotheses.

That I may preserve at the same time the greatest distinctness with respect to my reader, and the greatest fairness with respect to the author on whom I am animadverting, I shall enumerate all the pretended instinctive principles of which he has given any account in this treatise, and exhibit them in the form of a *table*, subjoining my authorities, in quotations from those different parts of his work from which I have collected them, and also numbering the articles, so that they may correspond to one another, and be easily compared together.

S E C.

SECTION I.

A Table of Dr. Reid's instinctive principles.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | { A present sensation suggests | { the belief of the present ex- istence of an object. |
| | { Memory ——— | { the belief of its past existence. |
| | { Imagination. ——— | { no belief at all. |
| 2 | Mental affections ——— | { the idea and belief of our own existence. |
| 3 | { Odours, tastes, sounds, and cer- tain affections of the optic nerve } | { their peculiar corresponding sensations. |
| 4 | A hard substance ——— | { the sensation of hardness, and the belief of something hard. |
| 5 | An extended substance ——— | the idea of extension and space. |
| 6 | { All the primary qualities of bo- dies } | their peculiar sensations. |
| 5 | A body in motion ——— | the idea of motion. |
| 6 | { Certain forms of the features, ar- ticulations of the voice, and at- titudes of the body } | { the idea and belief of certain thoughts, purposes, and dispositions of the mind. |
| 7 | { Inverted images on the retina } | upright vision. |
| 8 | { Images in corre- sponding parts of both eyes* } | single vision. |
| 9 | { Pains in any part of the body } | { the idea of the place where, the pain is seated. |

He also enumerates the following among instinctive faculties or principles, viz.

- 10 The parallel motion of the eyes, as necessary to distinct vision.
- 11 The sense of veracity, or a disposition to speak truth.
- 11 A sense of credulity, or a disposition to believe others.
- 12 The inductive faculty, by which we infer similar effects from similar causes.

N. B. All these separate instinctive principles Dr. Reid considers as branches of what he terms *common sense*.

* Different Animals are subject to different laws in this respect.

Authorities

Authorities for the preceding table.

1. 'SENSATION compels our belief of the present existence of a thing, memory the belief of its past existence, and imagination no belief at all. These are all simple and original, and therefore inexplicable acts of the mind.' p. 31.

'The connection between our sensations and the conception and belief of external existences cannot be produced by habit, education, or any principle of human nature that has been admitted by philosophers.' p. 91.

'A third class of natural signs comprehends those which, though we never before had any notion or conception of the things signified, do suggest it, or conjure it up, as it were, by a natural kind of magic, and at once give us a conception, and create a belief of it. p. 90. This class of natural signs is the foundation

‘ foundation of *common sense*, a part of
‘ human nature which has never been
‘ explained.’ p. 91.

‘ Sensation, and the perception of ex-
‘ ternal objects by the senses, though very
‘ different in their nature, have commonly
‘ been considered as one and the same
‘ thing.’ p. 288.

‘ I know that the perception of an
‘ object implies both the conception of
‘ its form, and a belief of its present ex-
‘ istence. I know, moreover, that this
‘ belief is not the effect of argument and
‘ reasoning. It is the immediate effect
‘ of my constitution.’ p. 290.

2. ‘ The idea of our own existence
‘ precedes all reasoning and experience.’
p. 48.

3. See p. 84, quoted below, and his
treatise passim.

4. ‘ By

4. ' By an original principle of our
 ' constitution a certain sensation of touch
 ' both suggests to the mind the concep-
 ' tion of hardness, and creates the be-
 ' lief of it, or in other words, this sen-
 ' sation is a natural sign of hardness.'
 p. 86.

5. ' Space, motion, and extension,
 ' and all the primary qualities of bodies,
 ' have no resemblance to any sensation or
 ' any operation of our minds, and there-
 ' fore cannot be ideas either of sensation
 ' or reflection. The very conception of
 ' them is irreconcilable to the principles
 ' of all our philosophical systems of the
 ' universe. The belief of them is no less
 ' so.' p. 102.

' The notion of extension is so familiar
 ' to us from our infancy, and so con-
 ' stantly obtruded by every thing we see
 ' or feel, that we are apt to think it ob-
 ' vious how it comes into the mind; but
 ' upon a narrower examination we shall
 ' find it utterly inexplicable. It is true
 ' we

‘ we have feelings of touch, which every
 ‘ moment present extension to the mind;
 ‘ but how they come to do so is the que-
 ‘ stion: for those feelings do no more re-
 ‘ semble extension than they resemble
 ‘ justice or courage, nor can the existence
 ‘ of extended things be inferred from
 ‘ those feelings by any rule of reasoning;
 ‘ so that the feelings we have by touch
 ‘ can neither explain how we get the no-
 ‘ tion, nor how we came by the belief of
 ‘ extended things.’ p. 96.

6. ‘ The thoughts, purposes, and dis-
 ‘ positions of the mind, have their na-
 ‘ tural signs in the features of the face,
 ‘ the modification of the voice, and the
 ‘ attitude of the body. p. 87. In these
 ‘ natural signs,’ he says, *ib.* ‘ there is, as
 ‘ in artificial signs, often neither simili-
 ‘ tude between the sign and the thing
 ‘ signified, nor any connection that arises
 ‘ necessarily from the nature of things.’
 Of these particular natural signs he says,
 p. 89, that ‘ they are not only esta-
 ‘ blished by nature, but discovered to us
 ‘ by

‘by a natural principle, without reason-
 ‘ing or experience. An infant, he adds,
 ‘may be put in a fright by an angry
 ‘countenance, and soothed again by
 ‘signs and blandishments.’

7. See ch. i. section xi. passim.

8. ‘The correspondence of certain
 ‘points in the retinae is prior to the
 ‘habits we acquire in vision, and conse-
 ‘quently is natural and original.’ p. 261.

‘Since there is a prodigious variety
 ‘in the structure, the motions, and the
 ‘number of eyes in different animals and
 ‘insects, it is probable that the laws
 ‘by which vision is regulated are not
 ‘the same in all, but various, adapted to
 ‘the eyes which nature has given them.’
 p. 233. See also ch. vi. section xiii.
 passim.

9. ‘How do we know the parts of
 ‘our body affected by particular pains?’
 ‘not

'not by experience, or by reasoning, but
'by the constitution of nature.' p. 209.

10. 'The parallel motion of the eyes
'we resolve into an original power and
'principle of the human mind, and not
'to be referred to custom, to anatomical
or mechanical causes.' p. 185. He
also calls it a *natural instinct*, p. 187.
But see ch. vi. section x. passim.

11. 'There is in the human mind an
'early anticipation, neither derived from
'experience nor reasoning, nor from any
'compact or promise, that our fellow-
'creatures will use the same signs in lan-
'guage when they have the same senti-
'ments. This is, in reality, a kind of
'prescience of human actions, and seems
'to me to be an original principle of the
'human constitution, without which we
'should be incapable of language, and
'consequently incapable of instruction.'
p. 336.

'The

‘ The wise author of our nature has
 ‘ implanted in our natures two prin-
 ‘ ciples that tally with each other, the
 ‘ first is a propensity to speak truth, and
 ‘ to use the signs of language so as to
 ‘ convey our real sentiments, p. 335.
 ‘ Another original principle implanted
 ‘ in us by the supreme being, is a dispo-
 ‘ sition to confide in the veracity of
 ‘ others, and to believe what they tell
 ‘ us. This is the counterpart to the
 ‘ former; and as that may be called *the*
 ‘ *principle of veracity*, we shall, for want
 ‘ of a more proper name, call this *the*
 ‘ *principle of credulity*.’

12. ‘ The belief of the continuance
 ‘ of the present course of nature must be
 ‘ the effect of instinct, and not of reason,
 ‘ p. 343. All our knowledge of nature
 ‘ beyond our original perceptions is got
 ‘ by experience, and consists in the in-
 ‘ terpretation of natural signs. The ap-
 ‘ pearance of the sign is followed by the
 ‘ belief of the thing signified. Upon this
 ‘ principle of our constitution not only
 ‘ acquired

‘acquired perception, but also inductive
 ‘reasoning, and all our reasoning from
 ‘analogy is grounded; and therefore,
 ‘for want of another name, we shall beg
 ‘leave to call it the *inductive principle*.
 ‘It is from the force of this principle that
 ‘we immediately assent to that axiom,
 ‘upon which all our knowledge of nature
 ‘is built, that effects of the same kind
 ‘must have the same cause, p. 347.
 ‘Take away the light of this inductive
 ‘principle, and experience is as blind as
 ‘a mole. She may indeed feel what is
 ‘present, and what immediately touches
 ‘her, but she sees nothing that is either
 ‘before or behind, upon the right hand
 ‘or upon the left, future or past.’ p. 349.

It will be observed, that in this table I
 have connected the name of the thing or
 circumstance that gives rise to the corre-
 sponding feeling by the word *suggest*.
 This, however, is not to be mistaken for
 a mere form of connection. Our author
 would have us to consider it in a much
 more serious light, as a real power of the
 C mind,

mind, which had escaped the notice of all the philosophers who had gone before him in these researches. ‘*Suggestion*,’ he says, p. 49, ‘is a power of the mind which seems entirely to have escaped the notice of philosophers, and to which we owe many of our simple notions which are neither impressions nor ideas, as well as many original principles of belief.’

My reader will, I suspect, imagine with me, that this catalogue of original instinctive principles is pretty large, and that when nature had gone so far in this track, but little could be wanting to accomplish all her purposes; and that, with respect to *principles*, little remained to be done by any other means. But our author, it seems, thinks differently. ‘The original perceptions which nature gives are insufficient,’ he says, p. 351, ‘for the purposes of life, and therefore she has made men capable of acquiring many more perceptions by habit.’ Now my view in the following inquiry is to relieve
dame

dame nature of the unnecessary load which Dr. Reid has laid upon her, by ascribing a little more to habit, and to the necessary connections and consequences of things than he has done.

When my reader shall have given sufficient attention to the preceding table, and the authorities from which it was collected, I hope that he, our author, and myself, may proceed with a perfectly right understanding of one another. However, to complete this good understanding, and to prevent the possibility of a mistake, I shall subjoin a few more extracts, which show how perfectly independent of one another Dr. Reid imagined the principles enumerated in this table to be.

‘ No man can give a reason why the vibration of a body might not have given the sensation of smelling, and the effluvia of bodies affected our hearing, if it had so pleased our maker. In like manner no man can give a reason why

‘the sensations of smell or taste might not have indicated hardness, as well as that sensation which by our constitution does indicate it. Indeed no man can conceive any sensation to resemble any known quality of bodies, nor can any man show by any good argument that all our sensations might not have been as they are, though no body, or quality of bodies, had ever existed.’ p. 84.

‘Perhaps we might have been so made as to taste with our fingers, to smell with our ears, and to hear by the nose. Perhaps we might have been so made as to have all the perceptions and sensations which we have without any impression made upon our bodily organs at all!’ p. 305.

‘The perceptions we have might have been immediately connected with the impressions of our organs, without any intervention of sensation. This last seems really to be the case in one instance, to wit, in our perception of the visible figure of bodies.’ p. 305.

‘We

‘ We know nothing of the machinery
‘ by means of which every different im-
‘ pression upon the organs, nerves, and
‘ brain exhibits its corresponding sensa-
‘ tion, or of the machinery by means of
‘ which each sensation exhibits its corre-
‘ sponding perception. We are inspired
‘ with the sensation, and we are inspired
‘ with the corresponding perception by
‘ means unknown.’ p. 306.

Our author seems, however, to be
willing to provide a decent retreat from
his doctrine of original instinctive princi-
ples, by saying, p. 223, ‘ If in any case
‘ we should give the name of a law of na-
‘ ture to a general phenomenon, which
‘ human industry should afterwards trace
‘ to one more general, there is no great
‘ harm done. The most general assumes
‘ the name of a law of nature when it is
‘ discovered, and the less general is con-
‘ tained and comprehended in it.’

But I must take the liberty to say, that
if this should happen, harm *will* be done

to the hypothesis of that man who had been so rash and unguarded as to advance over and over, so that no body could mistake his meaning, that a certain law of nature was absolutely *ultimate*, which afterwards appeared not to be so; who should have asserted that these principles are *simple, original*, and therefore *inexplicable acts of the mind*, and that they cannot be produced by any principle of human nature that has ever been admitted by philosophers. This is asserting that it is impossible to advance any farther in the investigation; for who can ever get beyond *simple, original*, and *inexplicable acts of the mind*.

The suspicion that we are got to ultimate principles necessarily checks all farther inquiry, and is therefore of great disservice in philosophy. Let Dr. Reid lay his hand upon his breast, and say, whether, after what he has written, he would not be exceedingly mortified to find it clearly proved, to the satisfaction of all the world, that all the instinctive principles

ples in the preceding table were really acquired, and that all of them were nothing more than so many different cases of the old and well known principle of *association of ideas*.

It must, moreover, be observed, that the table I have given by no means contains a view of *all* the original instinctive principles which our sagacious author finds in human nature. These are only such as have occurred to him in his survey of the external senses. 'We have taken notice,' he says, p. 378, 'of several original principles of belief in the course of this inquiry; and when other faculties of the mind are examined, we shall find more which have not occurred in the examination of the five senses.'

It may be said that, since our author has not finished his scheme, this critique upon it is premature, that we ought first to hear him out, and that it is not good manners to rise from the table after the first course though we be not disposed to

partake of the second. I answer, that Dr. Reid's guests have already waited about ten years, and that possibly this account of the first course may induce our host to hasten his second. To drop all figure: our author's scheme appears to be already complete as far as it goes, and the evidence of what is before us is altogether independent of what is to come; at least there is no hint given to us of the contrary.

SECTION II.

A view of the several fallacies by which Dr. Reid has been misled in his inquiry.

I Now proceed to consider Dr. Reid's objections to the great outlines of Mr. Locke's doctrine, and the several principles on which he has founded his own; endeavouring, at the same time, to shew the sufficiency of the commonly received principles for those purposes for which Dr. Reid pretends that they are altogether insufficient, so as to oblige him to quit them for others of his own.

As my remarks on the Doctor's performance were made in the course of reading him, and thereby things of a different nature will be unavoidably a little intermixed (though I shall take all the care I can in the arrangement of them) I shall introduce them with distinctly noting the several false steps which he has made in the course of it, or the different *fallacies* to which

which he seems to have been subject, and which have been the source of the principal of his mistakes.

1. Because he cannot perceive any resemblance between objects and ideas, he concludes, that the one cannot be produced by the other.

2. Because he cannot perceive any necessary connection between sensations and the objects of them, and therefore cannot absolutely demonstrate the reality of external objects, or even the existence of mind itself, by the doctrine of ideas, he rejects that doctrine altogether, and has recourse to arbitrary instincts.

3. He takes it for granted that our ideas have no existence but when we are conscious of them, and attend to them.

4. He confounds the *faculty* of sensation with *ideas* of sensation.

5. Because we do not know the mechanism by which a particular motion, or
a set

a set of connected motions, is performed, he concludes that those motions are performed by instinctive principles; and were not acquired by experience and the association of ideas.

6. Supposing, without any foundation, that certain determinations or emotions were prior to experience, he concludes that they are instinctive.

Let it be noted, that I do not assert that our learned professor is *uniform* in these mistakes, for by some of my remarks I think it will appear that he is not perfectly consistent with himself.

SEC-

SECTION III.

Of Dr. Reid's objection to the doctrine of ideas from their want of resemblance to their corresponding objects.

DR. Reid objects to every system which supposes that the mind receives images of things from without by means of the senses, and thinks that they are sufficiently refuted by the observation, that sensations bear no resemblance to bodies, or any of their qualities. 'The properties of extension, figure, solidity, motion, hardness, roughness, as well as colour, heat, and cold, sound, taste, and smell, which all mankind have conceived to be the qualities of bodies, have not', he says, p. 147, 'among them all, one single image of body, or any of its qualities. I am sure that, by proper attention and care, I may know my sensations, and be able to affirm with certainty what they resemble, and what they do not resemble.

ble. I have examined them one by one, and compared them with matter and its qualities, and I cannot find one of them that confesses a resembling feature.

So very confident is our author of the strength of this argument, that he scruples not to rest the whole of his system upon it. 'This,' says he, p. 108, 'I would humbly propose as an *experimentum crucis*, by which the ideal system must stand or fall; and it brings the matter to a short issue. Extension, figure, motion, may, any one, or all of them, be taken for the subject of this experiment. Either they are ideas of sensation, or they are not. If any one of them can be shown to be an idea of sensation, or to have the least resemblance to any sensation, I lay my hand upon my mouth, and give up all pretence to reconcile reason to common sense in this matter, and must suffer the ideal scepticism to triumph. But if, on the other hand, they are not ideas of sensation, nor like to any sensation, then the ideal system is a

rope

‘ rope of sand, and all the laboured arguments of the sceptical philosophy against a material world, and against the existence of every thing but impressions and ideas, proceed upon a false hypothesis.’

Before our author had rested so much upon this argument, it behoved him, I think, to have examined the strength of it a little more carefully than he seems to have done; for he appears to me to have suffered himself to be misled in the very foundation of it, merely by philosophers happening to call ideas the *images* of external things; as if this was not known to be a figurative expression, denoting not that the actual shapes of things were delineated in the brain, or upon the mind, but only that impressions of some kind or other were conveyed to the mind by means of the organs of sense and their corresponding nerves, and that between these impressions and the sensations existing in the mind there is a real and necessary, though at present an unknown connection.

I do

I do not see but that by Dr. Reid's mode of reasoning, he might as well deny that the sound of a musical string is caused by the stroke of a *plectrum*, or that sounds, considered as tremulous motions of the particles of the air, are produced by bodies striking against one another, because he can perceive no proper *resemblance* between the cause and the effect, between the sound that is produced and the shape of the thing or things by which the sounds are made; and yet these sounds vary according to the bodies that occasion them, and the circumstances that attend their impinging on one another; so that, without any such resemblance as the Doctor seems to expect, they correspond strictly to one another, and the one may be called the proper and *necessary*, and not the *arbitrary* (or as Dr. Reid would call it the *natural*) sign of the other.

The transferring of this comparison to the doctrine of ideas is very easy. If, as Dr. Hartley supposes, the nerves and brain be a vibrating substance, the analogy

logy will hold very nearly indeed; all sensations and ideas being vibrations in that substance, and all that is properly unknown in the business being the simple power in the mind to perceive, or be affected by, those vibrations. And if, as Locke and others suppose, matter itself may be indued with that sentient power, even that difficulty, as far as the present question can be affected, is removed.

Our author's doubts are not confined to ideas being produced by external objects, but affect the use of the nerves belonging to the organs of sense, and the brain itself, as the instruments of transmitting them to the mind, reducing the supposition to a mere probability.

‘It is very probable,’ he says, p. 200, ‘that the optic nerve is the instrument of vision, no less necessary than the retina.’ But it appears to me that, arguing in this manner, one might doubt of every thing; and that we might just as well say, it is *very probable* only, that the feet and legs are

are the instruments of walking, as that the optic nerve is only *probably* the instrument of vision.

In another place, he does not leave room to suppose that it is even probable that the optic nerves are the instrument of vision; calling the hypothesis a mere conjecture. 'From the first dawn of philosophy to this day,' he says, p. 277, 'it has been believed that the optic nerves are intended to carry the images* of visible objects from the bottom of the eye to the mind, and that the nerves belonging to the other senses have a like office. But how do we know this? We conjecture it, and taking this conjecture for a truth, we consider how the nerves may best answer the purpose.' It is agreeable to this that he says, p. 303, 'We are inspired with the sensation, and

* If Dr. Reid thinks to reconcile these two passages by saying that by *images*, in this place, he did not mean *impressions* in general, but the real *shapes* and *forms* of thing, the whole charge is false, and he is fighting a chimera of his own creating.

‘ we are inspired with the corresponding
‘ perception, by means unknown.’

This scepticism with respect to the doctrine of ideas, the use of the organs of sense, and their corresponding nerves in transmitting them, appears to me to be very extraordinary indeed; and yet, such are the caprices of the human mind, Dr. Reid expresses as much surprize at the prevalence of the common opinion. ‘ It
‘ is very strange,’ he says, p. 201, ‘ that
‘ philosophers of all ages should have
‘ agreed in this notion, that the images
‘ of external objects are conveyed by the
‘ organs of sense to the brain, and are
‘ there perceived by the mind. Nothing
‘ can be more unphilosophical. For first,
‘ this notion has no foundation in fact
‘ and observation. Of all the organs of
‘ sense the eye only, as far as we can discover, forms any kind of image of its object, and the images formed by the eye
‘ are not in the brain, but only in the bottom of the eye; nor are they at all perceived or felt by the mind. Secondly,

' it is as difficult to conceive how the
 ' mind perceives images in the brain, as
 ' how it perceives things more distant. If
 ' any man will shew how the mind may
 ' perceive images in the brain, I will un-
 ' dertake to shew how it may perceive
 ' the most distant objects: for if we give
 ' eyes to the mind, to perceive what is
 ' transacted at home in its dark chamber,
 ' why may we not make these eyes a little
 ' longer sighted, and then we shall have
 ' no occasion for that unphilosophical fic-
 ' tion of images in the brain? In a word,
 ' the manner and mechanism of the mind's
 ' perception is quite beyond our compre-
 ' hension.'

In this way of arguing we might say
 that the whole system of our senses, nerves,
 and brain is of no real use whatever; for
 it is impossible to say *how* they act upon
 the mind, or the mind upon them. But
 by the same reasoning we may deny every
 principle in nature. For when we have
 traced it as far as we can, we are still
 compelled to stop somewhere, and to con-
 fess our inability to proceed any farther.

I know, however, very well, that an eye is the instrument of vision, because without it nothing can be seen. I also know that the retina and optic nerve are likewise necessary, because, if they be disordered, vision is still wanting; and lastly, I am equally certain that the brain is necessary to all perception, because if that be disordered, thinking either intirely ceases, or is proportionably disturbed.

For my part, I know no conclusions in philosophy more certain than these, and they are not rendered at all less certain by our not being able to go a step farther, so as to know in what *manner* the brain, or the affections of it, can be the instrument or subject of perception. I may conjecture that the brain itself may be the ultimate cause, or I may substitute something else that I may think better adapted to answer the purpose, that is, to suit the phenomena.

SECTION IV.

Of Dr. Reid's objection to Mr. Locke's division of ideas into those of sensation and reflection.

HAVING examined one great pillar of our author's scheme, I now proceed to another, of which he likewise boasts great things; but if my reader be able to consider it with perfect seriousness, it is more than I can expect of him, for it is more than I am able to do myself. It is his objection to Mr. Locke's division of ideas into those of *sensation*, and those of *reflection*.

' This', he says, p. 575, ' is contrary to
' all rules of logic, because the second
' member of the division includes the
' first. For can we form clear and just
' notions of our sensations any other way
' than by reflection? Surely we cannot.
' Sensation is an operation of the mind, of
' which we are conscious, and we get the

‘ notion of sensation by reflecting upon
 ‘ that which we are conscious of. In like
 ‘ manner doubting and believing are
 ‘ operations of the mind, whereof we are
 ‘ conscious, and we get the notion of
 ‘ them by reflecting upon what we are
 ‘ conscious. The ideas of sensation, there-
 ‘ fore, are ideas of reflection, as much as
 ‘ the ideas of doubting or believing, or
 ‘ any other idea whatsoever.’

This I scruple not to say is as mere a quibble, as either the ignorance or the perversion of logic ever produced, arising from our author’s confounding the proper *ideas of sensation* with the idea of *sensation itself*, which is, no doubt, of the same class with the ideas of *doubting, believing*, or those of any other operation of the mind; and so Mr. Locke would have acknowledged. But the ideas belonging to the class of sensation do not require any scientific knowledge of that power, or any reflection upon it. If this were the case, brute animals, having no proper ideas of reflection, could have no ideas of sensation

sensation. Indeed, it is questionable whether the bulk of mankind, who are not philosophers, could have them, and consequently whether they must not be destitute of all ideas.

A more palpable blunder than this I think I hardly ever met with in any argumentative treatise, and yet this is one of the great engines with which our author assails Mr. Locke's doctrine of ideas. Dr. Reid might just as well say that *houses* and *utensils* necessarily belong to the same class of objects, and that they ought never to be distinguished, because the former contain the latter.

Besides our author himself supposes that even human beings may have ideas of mere sensation some time before they discover any power of reflection, and that this power may discover itself and come into play afterwards. 'Perhaps,' says he, p. 112, 'a child in the womb, or for some short period of his existence, is merely a sentient being, the faculty by

' which it perceives an external world,
 ' by which it reflects on its own thoughts
 ' and existence, and relation to other
 ' things as well as its reasoning and mo-
 ' ral faculties, unfold themselves by de-
 ' grees; so that it is inspired with the va-
 ' rious principles of common sense as with
 ' the passions of love and resentment,
 ' when it has occasion for them.' Let
 our author say how this supposition of
 his could be possible, if ideas of sensation
 were necessarily included under the head
 of ideas of reflection, when they are here
 said to have existed prior to the very
 power of reflection, or at least to any ex-
 ercise of that power.

By the way, this hypothesis of the gra-
 dual *unfolding* of the powers of the mind
 very much resembles the gradual *acqui-*
sition of them, from the impressions to
 which we are exposed. I should have
 thought that Dr. Reid would hardly have
 had an idea of real *powers* lying so long
 dormant as this notion may require some
 of them to do, while other faculties were
 awake

awake and vigorous. He will not, I find, assert of *powers* what he does of *ideas*, viz. that they have no existence but when they are in use and exercise.

SECTION V.

Dr. Reid's position, that sensation implies the belief of the present existence of external objects, and his view of Berkeley's theory, particularly considered.

HAVING replied to our author's capital objections to Mr. Locke's, or the common hypothesis, concerning sensations, ideas, and objects, I come to consider what he has farther to advance in support of his own. Now one would imagine *a priori*, that a man who should have assumed the airs and tone that Dr. Reid has given himself through the whole of this treatise, as if he had utterly demolished all the preceding systems of
the

the mind, and erected another quite different from any thing that was ever heard or thought of before, would be able to produce something like *positive evidence* for it. But, behold, when we have got to the end of these *negative arguments*, he has, in fact, nothing more to offer, besides his own very confident assertions (repeated indeed without end, if that would give them any weight) that the thing must certainly be as he represents it.

Now though I, who do not pretend to advance any hypothesis of my own, might very reasonably imitate this example; and, having shewn the futility of his objections to the commonly received hypothesis, content myself with leaving things in *statu quo*; yet for the greater satisfaction of my readers, I shall make a few more observations on the subject of our author's instinctive principles, selecting for a more particular examination that by which he says *our perceptions necessarily imply the belief of the present existence of external objects*. There is no one article
of

of his whole system of common sense that he can less scruple to submit to this examination; for there is no one thing that he repeats so often, or seems to triumph in so much, as this; imagining that his method of considering the subject is an effectual antidote, and the only effectual antidote to all the scepticism of the present age.

Now excepting what our author has said about the absurdity of Mr. Locke's principles, of which I think I have offered a sufficient vindication, and of the peculiarly absurd and dangerous consequences which he ascribes to Berkley's theory, and which I shall presently show to be no better founded, all that he says amounts to nothing more than this; that he cannot, in his own mind, separate the belief of the existence of external objects from his sensations, as those of taste, touch, sight, &c. With respect to this I would make the following observations.

1. There

1. There are many opinions which we know to be acquired, and even founded on prejudice and mistake, which, however, the fullest conviction that they are void of all real foundation cannot erase from the mind; the groundless *belief*, and *expectation*, founded upon it, being so closely connected with the idea of certain circumstances, that no mental power of which we are possessed can separate them.

Though, for instance, Dr. Reid, no doubt, as well as other philosophers, believes the earth to be spherical, and consequently is sensible that no one part of its surface can be *uppermost* and another part under it; or, that if there were such a thing as an uppermost part, every part must become so in its turn; yet he always considers the place on which he stands as constantly uppermost, and conceives of his antipodes as hanging with their heads downwards. Nay he cannot help having an idea of their having a tendency to fall down into the void space below the earth.

He

He may talk as a philosopher, but I am confident he conceives and thinks as the vulgar do; and though in many things our author appeals to the sentiments of the vulgar as the test of truth, in opposition to the philosophers, I think he will hardly chuse to do so in this case. He cannot, however, possibly separate in his imagination the idea of a *tendency to fall* from his idea of the situation of the antipodes. Now why may not this be the ~~case with~~ respect to Berkley's theory, so that though we cannot separate the idea of the real existence of external objects and our sensations; it may, like the other, be no more than a prejudice, void of all real foundation. As we cannot pretend to distinguish between our feelings in these two cases, and one of them we know to be fallacious, why may not the other be fallacious also? There must be some *other kind* of evidence besides *feeling*, to prove that it is not so.

Secondly, This scheme of Dr. Reid's supposes that an extraordinary position
is.

is made for a *kind* of faith, that is by no means necessary for the purpose of it, viz. with respect to the conduct of life. For a very high degree of probability, not to be distinguished in feeling from absolute certainty, is attainable without it. Now since it cannot be denied but that the divine being leaves us to be governed by a kind of faith far inferior to mathematical certainty in things of infinitely more consequence (in this, however, I do not appeal to Dr. Oswald) it is absolutely incredible that he should have implanted in us a peculiar instinctive principle, merely for the sake of giving us a *plenary conviction* with respect to this business, which is comparatively of very trifling consequence.

Thirdly, Our author's scheme has this farther untoward circumstance attending it, that it supposes the divine being to have formed us in such a manner, as that we must necessarily believe what, by our author's own confession, *might not have been true*. For 'no man,' says he, p. 85,
' can

‘ can show by any good argument, that
 ‘ all our sensations might not have been
 ‘ as they are, though no body or quality
 ‘ of body had ever existed.’ Now this I
 should think to be, upon the face of it, so
 very unlikely to be true, that no person
 who considers the case can admit of it.
 For this is very different from those de-
 ceptions which necessarily arise from ge-
 neral laws, and to which all mankind are
 subject ; but with respect to which it is in
 their power, by the proper use of their
 faculties, to relieve themselves.

It appears, therefore, that confident as
 our author is of the truth and importance
 of his system, he acknowledges it to be
 founded not on *absolute* but *relative truth*,
 arising from his constitution, which (con-
 trary to what is advanced by his follow-
 ers Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald) is essen-
 tially different from that kind of evidence
 by which we are satisfied that two and
 two are four, which is independent of any
arbitrary constitution whatever.

I wonder

I wonder it should not have a little staggered Dr. Reid, to consider that his whole system must fall at once before the faintest suspicion, that God may think proper that mankind should be subject to deceptions for their good, at which my mind does not shudder, when I see it to be the necessary consequence of the most excellent general laws. Do we not see that the bulk of mankind live **and** die in the belief that the **sun** moves round the earth, and of other things in which they are deceived by the testimony of their senses? Now let Dr. Reid assign a *good reason*, why the same being who permits his creatures to believe that the sun moves round the earth, might not permit them to believe that there was a sun, though, in reality, there should be no such thing; at the same time that, by his own immediate power, without the aid of any real sun, he should afford them all the benefit of light and heat which they had falsely ascribed to that luminary. I allow it to be as *improbable* as any person pleases, but the supposition is certainly not directly

directly absurd and *impossible*, and this is the only thing in debate.

Fourthly, I wonder that our author should not have attempted some solution of the phenomena of *dreams*, *reveries*, and *visions* upon his hypothesis. In all these circumstances it cannot be denied that men imagine themselves to be surrounded with objects which have no real existence, and yet their sensations are not to be distinguished from those of men awake; so that if *sensations, as such*, necessarily draw after them the belief of the present existence of objects, this belief takes place in dreams, reveries, and visions, as indeed is the case; and if there be a fallacy in these cases, it is certainly *within the compass of possibility*, that there may be a fallacy in the other also.

Notwithstanding these obvious difficulties with which our author's scheme is clogged, and which a genius of any order less than *the most daring* would think to be insuperable, nothing can exceed the

E confidence

confidence with which he expresses his full persuasion of the truth of it, from the supposed impossibility of believing the contrary, or the supercilious and cavalier manner in which he treats all objections to it.

‘ I am aware,’ says he, p. 291, ‘ that
‘ this belief which I have in perception
‘ stands exposed to the strongest batteries
‘ of scepticism. But they make no great
‘ impression upon it. The sceptic asks
‘ me, why do you believe the existence
‘ of the external object which you per-
‘ ceive? This belief, Sir, is none of my
‘ manufacture; it came from the mint of
‘ nature; it bears her image and super-
‘ scription; and if it is not right, the fault
‘ is not mine. I even took it upon trust,
‘ and without suspicion. Reason, says
‘ the sceptic, is the only judge of truth,
‘ and you ought to throw off every opi-
‘ nion, and every belief, that is not
‘ grounded on reason. Well, Sir, why
‘ should I believe the faculty of reason
‘ more than that of perception? They
both

‘ both came out of the same shop, and
 ‘ were made by the same artist ; and if he
 ‘ puts one piece of false ware into my
 ‘ hands, what should hinder him from
 ‘ putting another ?’

‘ Perhaps the sceptic will agree to dis-
 ‘ trust reason, rather than give any credit to
 ‘ perception. For, says he, since by your
 ‘ own confession, the object which you
 ‘ perceive, and that act of your mind by
 ‘ which you perceive it are quite different
 ‘ things, the one may exist without the
 ‘ other ; and as the object may exist with-
 ‘ out being perceived, so the perception
 ‘ may exist without an object. There is
 ‘ nothing so shameful in a philosopher as
 ‘ to be deceived, and deluded, and there-
 ‘ fore you ought firmly to withhold your
 ‘ assent, and throw off this belief of ex-
 ‘ ternal objects, which may be all delu-
 ‘ sion. For my part, I will never attempt
 ‘ to throw it off, and although the sober
 ‘ part of mankind will not be very anxious
 ‘ to know any reasons, yet if they can be
 ‘ of use to any sceptic, they are these.’

Now, as I do not pretend to rank myself with those whom Dr. Reid will call the *sober part of mankind*, I frankly acknowledge that I have had a little curiosity to look at these reasons.

The first I find is, that it is not in his power to believe otherwise, which I presume I have considered sufficiently above.

His second argument is derived from the dangerous consequences which he ascribes to Berkley's hypothesis, and which he expresses in that ludicrous and contemptuous manner in which the greatest part of this *philosophical treatise* is written.

‘I think,’ says he, p. 291, ‘it would not be prudent to throw off this belief, if it were in my power. If nature intended to deceive me, and impose upon me by false appearances, and I, by my great cunning and profound logic, have discovered the imposture, prudence
‘would

would dictate to me in this case even to
 ' put up this indignity done me, as qui-
 ' etly as I could, and not to call her an
 ' impostor to her face, lest she should be
 ' even with me in another way. For
 ' what do I gain by resenting this injury?
 ' You ought, at least, not to believe what
 ' she says. This, indeed, seems reason-
 ' able if she intends to impose upon me.
 ' But what is the consequence? I resolve
 ' not to believe my senses. I break my
 ' nose against a post that comes in my
 ' way; I step into a dirty kennel; and
 ' after twenty such wise and rational ac-
 ' tions, I am taken up, and clapt into a
 ' mad-house. Now I confess I had rather
 ' make one of the credulous fools whom
 ' nature imposes upon, than of those wise
 ' and rational philosophers, who resolve
 ' to withhold assent at all this expence.'

But all this profusion of genuine wit
 and humour turns upon a gross misrep-
 resentation of Berkley's theory; and it is
 really a pity that what is so excellent in
 its kind should be thrown away, by being
 misplaced.

This misrepresentation and abuse is exactly the conduct of many divines, who charge one another with actually maintaining the supposed consequences of their respective opinions. But this is no *fair* consequence. Berkley did not exclude from his system *sensations* and *ideas*, together with matter, the *necessary connections* that subsist among them or our *power* over them. He only ascribed to them a *different origin*; so that all the rules of conduct depending upon them are the same on his scheme as on ours. Our philosophical language only is different.

I say there is a post in my way, and I must turn aside, lest I hurt myself by running against it. He, in the same situation, is as apprehensive of danger as myself, though he says he has only the idea of a post before him; for if he do not introduce the idea of avoiding it, he is sensible that he shall experience a very painful sensation, which may bring on other sensations, till death itself ensue. I may smile at his language, but he is
consistent

consistent with himself, and his fears have as much foundation as mine.

This representation of Berkley's theory, which is common to Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald, and with which they often make themselves and their readers foolishly merry, is exceedingly unjust; but when considered by philosophers, the laugh must rebound upon themselves.

The third reason, as our author is pleased to call it, why he believes in the existence of a material world, or the evidence of his senses, is that he does not find that he has been imposed upon by this belief. 'I find,' says he, p. 293 'that without it I must have perished by a thousand accidents. I find that without it I should have been no wiser now than when I was born,' &c. &c. &c. But all this goes upon the same misrepresentation with the former argument, and is not, in fact, at all different from it. Besides, a reasonable degree of evidence, which may be attained without this extraordinary,

instinctive, absolute, and as our author calls it, *inspired belief*, is just as useful for any real purpose

SECTION VI.

Mr. Locke's doctrine not so favourable to Berkley's theory as Dr. Reid's.

IT is by an evident abuse and perversion of Mr. Locke's doctrine that Dr. Reid pretends that it is favourable to Bishop Berkley's notion of there being no material world; when, in reality, our author's own principles are much more favourable to that notion than Mr. Locke's.

‘If,’ says he, p. 42, ‘impressions and
 ‘ideas are the only objects of thought,
 ‘then heaven and earth, and body and
 ‘spirit, and every thing you please, must
 ‘signify only impressions and ideas, or
 ‘they must be words without any mean-
 ‘ing.’

But

But it was never supposed by Mr. Locke, or any other advocate for ideas, that they were more than the *immediate* object of our thoughts, the things of which we are properly speaking *conscious*, or that we know in the *first instance*. From them, however, we think we can *infer* the real existence of other things, from which those ideas are derived; and then we can reason about those *objects*, as well as about the *ideas* themselves. In fact, ideas being only the signs of external things, we reason about the external things themselves, without ever attending to the ideas which represent them, and even without knowing that there are any such things in the mind, till we come to reflect upon the subject. In like manner, a person may see perfectly without ever thinking of his eyes, or indeed knowing that he has any such organs.

Mr. Locke would not, indeed, pretend to such an absolute *demonstration* of the reality of an external world as Dr. Reid pleads for; but neither is that strict demonstration

monstration necessary. It is quite sufficient if the supposition be the easiest hypothesis for explaining the origin of our ideas. The evidence of it is such that we allow it to be barely possible to doubt of it; but that it is as certain as that two and two make four, we do not pretend.

Strongly attached as our author is to this material world of ours, let us see whether his own system, in other respects, be sufficiently adapted to it. Now it appears to me that his notions of *mind*, *ideas*, and *external objects*, are such as are hardly compatible with one another, that he puts an impassable gulph between them, so as intirely to prevent their connection or correspondence; which is all that the bishop could wish in favour of his doctrine.

‘I take it for granted,’ says Dr. Reid, p. 381, ‘upon the testimony of common sense, that my mind is a substance, that is, a permanent subject of thought, and
‘my

‘ my reason convinces me that it is an un-
 ‘ extended and invisible substance; and
 ‘ hence I infer that there cannot be in it any
 ‘ thing that resembles extension.’ But with
 equal appearance of truth he might infer
 that the mind cannot be *affected* by any thing
 that has extension; for how can any thing
 act upon another but by means of some
 common property? Though, therefore,
 the divine being has thought proper to
 create an external world, it can be of no
 proper use to give us sensations or ideas.
 It must be he himself that impresses our
 minds with the notices of external things,
 without any *real instrumentality* of their
 own; so that the external world is quite
 a superfluity in the creation. If, therefore,
 the author of all things be a *wise* being,
 and have made nothing in vain, we may
 conclude that this external world, which
 has been the subject of so much contro-
 versy, can have no existence.

If then we wish to preserve this external
 world, which is very convenient for many
 purposes, we must take care to entertain
 notions

notions of mind and ideas more compatible with it than those of Dr. Reid.

Our author's fallacious argument from the want of resemblance between our ideas and external objects leads him into many difficulties. It makes him, in several respects, allow too much to Dr. Berkley, and to come nearer to him than he is aware. And in spite of his aversion to the union, and of every thing that he can do or say, their common principles will bring them together. 'Our sensations,' he says, p. 305, 'have no resemblance to external objects, nor can we discover by our reason any necessary connection between the existence of the former and that of the latter. No man,' says he, p. 85, 'can shew by any good argument, that all our sensations might not have been as they are, though no body or quality of body had ever existed.' He even says, p. 304, 'that when we consider the different attributes of *mind* and *body*, they seem to be so different, and so unlike, that we can find
' no

‘no handle by which one may lay hold
 ‘of the other.’

According to our author, therefore, Berkley's theory is at least *possible*; and if, as he says, p. 117, ‘sensations and
 ‘ideas in our minds can resemble nothing
 ‘but sensations and ideas in other minds,’ it may well appear *probable* that they are transferred (as Malebranche, I think, supposes) immediately from the divine mind to ours, without any real agency of a material world. If I could admit Dr. Reid's premises, I think I could hardly help drawing this conclusion from them; especially as nothing can be pleaded for the existence of this same material world, but a mere *unaccountable persuasion* that it *does* exist. This persuasion Dr. Reid says arises from a branch of his new common sense. But if I cannot discover or imagine any *end* or *reason* why it should exist; common sense, in its old and familiar acceptation, would tell me that it does not exist at all.

SECTION VII.

*A sophism of Mr. Hume's in pursuance of
Berkley's theory adopted by Dr. Reid.*

OUR author, struck with a panic fear of scepticism, has been no less misled and thrown off his guard by the dangerous sophisms of Mr. Hume, than by the innocent ones of Bishop Berkley.

‘The *new system*,’ by which he means that of Descartes and Locke, &c. he says, p. 369, ‘admits only of the principles of common sense as a first principle, and pretends by strict argumentation to deduce all the rest from it. That our thoughts, our sensations, and every thing of which we are conscious has a real existence is admitted in this system as a first principle, but every thing else must be made evident by the light of reason. That the rational issue of this system is scepticism, with regard to every thing excepting the existence of our ideas,
‘and

‘ and their necessary relations, which ap-
 ‘ pear upon comparing them, is evident.
 ‘ For ideas being the only objects of
 ‘ thought, and having no existence but
 ‘ when we are conscious of them, it ne-
 ‘ cessarily follows, that there is no object
 ‘ of our thought which can have a conti-
 ‘ nued and permanent existence. Body
 ‘ and spirit, cause and effect, time and
 ‘ space, to which we were wont to ascribe
 ‘ an existence independent of our thought,
 ‘ all are turned out of existence by this
 ‘ short dilemma. Either these things are
 ‘ ideas of sensation or reflection, or they
 ‘ are not. If they are ideas of sensation
 ‘ or reflection, they can have no ex-
 ‘ istence but when we are conscious of
 ‘ them. If they are not ideas of sensation
 ‘ or reflection, they are words without any
 ‘ meaning.’ p. 373.

From this pitiful sophism, advanced
 by Mr. Hume, and deemed unanswerable
 by Dr. Reid, have been derived to us all
 the instinctive principles contained in this
 curious treatise. For being determined

at all adventures to maintain the reality of body and spirit, cause and effect, time and space, &c. and the old theory of the mind not being, in his opinion, sufficient for the purpose, a new one must be found; and if nothing else can be had, still the good things above mentioned must be retained, though we can say nothing in their favour but *they are so because they are so*, which is Dr. Reid's common sense, and his short irrefragable argument.

But if, instead of such a *plenary assurance* as only this new common sense promises, he would have been content with a *reasonable degree of evidence* for the reality of all the things above mentioned, the old hypothesis would have been quite sufficient. It suits every case of sensations and ideas; and therefore, according to the received rules of philosophizing, has a just claim to be admitted.

That *mind* exists I have the very same reason to believe as I have that *body* exists; since it is only by that name that I distinguish

distinguish that to which certain powers and properties, of which I am conscious, as *perception, memory, will, &c.* belong.

I am surpris'd that it should have been so readily admitted, that even ideas have no existence but when we are conscious of them. We have just the same reason to believe the identity of an idea, as that of a tree, that of any external body, or that of our own minds themselves. The idea that I have of my wife or child to-day as much resembles the idea I had of them yesterday, though some hours of sound sleep have interven'd, as my house of to-day resembles my house of yesterday. In this case I only judge by the resemblance of my ideas of it; and if the ideas of my house yesterday and to-day were not the same, I should have no medium by which to prove the identity of the house.

SECTION VIII.

Cases of the association of ideas which had escaped the attention of Dr. Reid.

I Have observed that one of the fallacious mediums of proof which our author makes much use of, in order to prove that we judge and act from original instinct, and not by any acquired power, is our ignorance of the means by which any action is performed, and our having made those judgments, and performed those actions, prior to experience. In the former of these cases he draws *wrong conclusions* from his premises, and in the latter I have no doubt but he is mistaken with respect to the *facts* from which he argues. I shall now present my readers with some instances of both these kinds of fallacy.

‘ In some of the voluntary as well as
‘ the involuntary motions’ (which Dr. Reid
exemplifies by that of the parallel motion
of

of both the eyes, which he says takes place previous to custom, in consequence of some natural instinct) ‘ many muscles,’ he says, p. 187, ‘ which have no material tie or connection, act in concert, each of them being taught to play its part in exact time and measure; yet we see such actions no less skilfully and regularly performed in children, and those who know not that they have such muscles, than in the most skilful anatomist and physiologist.’

From these premises we might just as well have inferred that we have no such muscles. In fact, our *knowledge* of the particular muscles employed in any motion is of no consequence whatever to the *performance* of it. Nature has sufficiently provided for that in the simple power of association, whereby one idea or motion introduces another associated idea or motion mechanically; and without the exertion of any voluntary power in us: and this is equally the case whether volition was employed in forming the original association, or not.

It was my misfortune to have the idea of darkness, and the ideas of invisible malignant spirits and apparitions very closely connected in my infancy; and to this day, notwithstanding I believe nothing of those invisible powers, and consequently of their connection with darkness, or any thing else, I cannot be perfectly easy in every kind of situation in the dark, though I am sensible I gain ground upon this prejudice continually.

I likewise sometimes amuse myself with playing on a flute, which I did not learn very early, so that I have a perfect remembrance that I exerted an express voluntary power every time that I covered any particular hole with my finger. But though I am no great proficient on the instrument, there are some tunes which I now very often play without ever attending to my fingers, or explicitly to the tune. I have even played in concert, and, as I was informed, perfectly in tune, when I have been so absent, that, excepting at the beginning, I did not recollect that I had been playing at all. The same is also frequently

frequently the case with persons who are reading.

Now, reasoning as Dr. Reid does, I should conclude that, in this case, no skill, acquired by habit, was employed, but that my fingers were guided by some original instinctive principle ; and if I had been able to do this earlier than my remembrance of any thing, I must have said that this was one of those powers, which, being latent in the mind, was called forth by proper circumstances. Whereas, I think it more natural to say, that the association between the ideas of certain sounds and the cause of certain motions of the fingers became in time so perfect, that the one introduced the other without any attention ; the intervening express volition, previous to each motion, having been gradually excluded. Facts of this kind demonstrate that the power of association is so great, and so extensive, that even whole trains and very long trains of ideas, are by this means so connected, that if the first take place, all the rest will follow of

F 3

course,

course, without our giving any attention to them, and even while we are attending to other things, and things of a very different nature.

‘ Who,’ says our author, p. 188, ‘ taught
‘ all the muscles that are concerned in
‘ sucking, in swallowing our food, in
‘ breathing, and in several natural expul-
‘ sions, to act their part in such regular
‘ order, and exact measure? It was not
‘ custom surely.’ But in these, and many
such instances, it is exceedingly probable
that the actions of the muscles were ori-
ginally *automatic*, having been so placed
by our maker, that at first they are stimu-
lated and contract mechanically whenever
their action is requisite; and though the
muscles themselves have no connection,
their nerves are connected, and they may
be so situated, that the same causes of
contraction shall necessarily affect several
of them at the same time, or in a certain
regular succession. In some of the ac-
tions to which Dr. Reid refers, we see
evident marks of such a mechanical pro-
gress;

gress; and more knowledge of nature and physiology may lead to the discovery of more of them; provided this system of having recourse at once to *ultimate causes* does not prevent men from giving proper attention to them.

The fæces are at first expelled involuntarily, and a voluntary power over the muscles which are subservient to that operation is evidently acquired gradually. The same is the progress in the action of blowing the nose. Children have not, naturally, the least notion how to do it, any more than they have how to walk. The action of *sucking*, I am also confident, from my own observations, is not natural but acquired; and so I believe are all the actions which Dr. Reid and others, who judge superficially in these cases, refer to instinct; and with respect to which I would refer him to Dr. Hartley, who has written expressly, and pretty largely upon these subjects.

With respect to seeing objects erect by means of inverted images, Dr. Reid says,

p. 151, that ‘the premises from which
‘all mankind are supposed to draw the
‘conclusion (referring to the Cartesian
‘hypothesis) never entered into the minds
‘of the far greater part, but are absolutely
‘unknown to them. In order to see ob-
‘jects erect, according to the principles
‘of Kepler, we must previously know
‘that the rays of light come from the
‘object in straight lines, we must know
‘that the rays from the different points
‘of the object cross one another before
‘they form pictures upon the retina, and
‘lastly we must know that these pictures
‘are really inverted. Now though all
‘these things be true, and known to phi-
‘losophers, yet they are absolutely un-
‘known to the far greatest part of man-
‘kind; nor is it possible that they who
‘are absolutely ignorant of them should
‘reason from them, and build conclusions
‘upon them.’

I do not know how this may affect
others, but it really surprises me to hear
a man of any understanding reason so very
weakly.

weakly. To *feel* a thing, to be *affected* by it, and to be influenced and directed in our future conduct by that feeling, certainly cannot require that we should *know* the connection there is between the objects and our perceptions of them ; but simply that there *be* that connection. They who are the most ignorant of the laws of vision are nevertheless *subject* to them ; so that their retinas, optic nerves, brains, and minds are differently affected in consequence of the rays of light coming in straight lines, crossing one another before they reach the retina ; and pictures are actually formed there, whether we know of them or not. All men, even the most ignorant, find by experience which way they must turn their heads and eyes to look for any object by which they are impressed ; and these associations are so frequent, that we pass immediately and mechanically, from the one to the other ; so that the moment we perceive an object we throw our heads and direct our eyes into the most proper position for the distinct view of it. If,
for

for this purpose, we find that we must turn our heads and eyes upwards, we say the object is above us; but if we must turn them downwards, we say it is below us, without knowing any thing farther about the matter.

SECTION IX.

Concessions of Dr. Reid, and other circumstances which might have led him to have recourse to the association of ideas, rather than to his instinctive principles.

THOUGH it is apparent, from the whole of Dr. Reid's treatise, that he has given very little attention to the doctrine of the *association of ideas* (far less than its obvious importance demanded) yet in some cases, it could not possibly escape his notice; and he has expressed himself in such a manner with respect to some of them as makes me wonder that he did not see that more use might be made

made of it, and that the phenomena would admit of a very easy explanation, without having recourse to his instinctive principles; which ought to have been kept for great emergencies only, *nodi deo vindice digni*.

I am particularly surprized that Dr. Reid should hesitate to acknowledge that our judgment of the unity of an object seen with both eyes is acquired, when he owns that we do acquire a judgment which appears to me to be exactly similar to it.

He says, p. 363, that ‘ Dr. Smith justly
 ‘ attributes to custom that well known
 ‘ fallacy in vision, whereby a button
 ‘ pressed with two opposite sides of two
 ‘ contiguous fingers, laid across, is felt
 ‘ double.’ He adds, that, ‘ as custom
 ‘ produces this phenomenon, so a con-
 ‘ trary custom destroys it. For if a man
 ‘ frequently accustoms himself to feel the
 ‘ button with his fingers across, it will at
 ‘ last be felt single, as I have found by
 ‘ experience.’

‘experience.’ Now why may not custom do the same thing with respect to vision? It is evident, from these similar facts, that it is within the *power* of custom, and of the association of ideas to do it. I can see no more occasion for *naturally corresponding points* of the retina, than for naturally corresponding places in the fingers.

But he says, p. 261, ‘If single vision is the effect of custom, it must appear very strange that not one instance has been found of a person who had acquired the habit of seeing objects single with both eyes, while they were directed in any other manner,’ viz. than so that the centers correspond. But are not all our eyes similar, and are they not all exposed to similar influences; and what can result from this but uniformity in our rules of judging by their affections?

Our author allows, p. 188, that ‘although it appears to be by natural instinct that both eyes are always turned
the

' the same way, there is still some latitude
 ' left for custom. Nature has wisely left
 ' us the power of varying the parallelism
 ' of the eyes a little, so that we can di-
 ' rect them to the same point, whether
 ' remote or near. This no doubt is
 ' learned by custom, and accordingly we
 ' see that it is a long time before children
 ' get this habit in perfection.' But ac-
 cording to Dr. Reid's general rule, we
 ought to have referred this case also to
 original instinct, because we are possessed
 of this power prior to any experience that
 we can remember, and we are not con-
 scious of the means by which we exert it,
 or indeed know that we do any such thing
 at all. Previous to reflection, we ima-
 gine that we have simply a power of see-
 ing distinctly at different distances. We
 are conscious of nothing farther, and
 therefore, according to this new mode
 of philosophizing, we may reasonably ac-
 quiesce in the fact, and call the power
 original and instinctive; in other words,
 one of the many branches of the new
 common sense.

‘ Though

‘ Though we are not conscious,’ says Dr. Reid, p. 310, ‘ of the motions we perform in order to fit the eyes to the distance of objects, we are conscious of the effort employed in producing these motions, and probably have some sensation which accompanies them, to which we give as little attention as to other sensations.’ But unless the distance be considerable, we are not conscious of using any effort at all. Besides, according to this new mode of reasoning, how can the mind employ the muscles that are requisite to make this effort, when it has no knowledge of them, or indeed of the nature and mode of action of any muscle whatever?

As our author generally refers that to instinct which has been acquired by experience and the association of ideas, so he gives to custom and experience what properly belongs to reasoning and judgment; though here also his own concessions might have led him to a right judgment in the several cases.

‘ When

‘ When I hear a certain sound,’ he says, p. 71, ‘ I conclude immediately without reasoning, that a coach passes by. There are no premises by which this conclusion is inferred by any rules of logic. It is the effect of a principle of our nature common to us with the brutes.’ This principle he before called custom or experience.

In what different lights may the same thing be seen by different persons, according as their different hypotheses incline them to regard it. In this very mental operation, or process, in which Dr. Reid can find no trace of reasoning or judgment, I think I see every part of a complete argument; and even that facility, and readiness in passing from the premises to the conclusion, which argues the very perfection of intellect in the case. For in my idea it is only in consequence of the mode of reasoning being very familiar, that the mind jumps with such rapidity to the final judgment, that it requires some attention to discover the medium of proof.

The

The process, when properly unfolded, is as follows: The sound I now hear is, in all respects, such as I have formerly heard, which appeared to be occasioned by a coach passing by, *ergo*, this is also occasioned by a coach. Into this syllogism it appears to me that the mental process that Dr. Reid mentions may fairly be resolved; and I am surprized he should not have thought so himself, when he expressly allows, p. 128, that ‘ the operations of the mind may be so subtle, that we draw conclusions without ever perceiving that the premises entered the mind.’ This concession, which is a very just and reasonable one, certainly overturns the very foundation of his argument in the preceding case.

In this one case Dr. Oswald, more consistently with the system, decides against his master. ‘ The supposition, ‘ says he, vol. 2, p. 56, ‘ of a process of reasoning which passes so quickly through the mind as not to be perceived, is altogether arbitrary; and arbitrary suppositions are extremely injurious to truth,
‘ and

‘and give birth to that multitude of chimerical hypotheses by which mankind have been misled.’

If a dog can form the same conclusion from the same premises, I would not scruple to say that the dog reasoned as well and as justly as myself. I see no reason to deny brute animals the power of reasoning concerning the objects about which they are conversant. They certainly act as *consequently*, as if they reasoned.

Again, upon our author's mistaking a seagull for a man on horseback, he says, p. 319, ‘the mistake and the correction of it are both so sudden, that we are at a loss whether to call them by the name of judgment, or by that of simple perception.’ In fact, these things run insensibly into one another.

Lastly, he acknowledges, p. 154, that it must be extremely difficult to distinguish the immediate and natural objects of sight, from the conclusions which we

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‘have

‘have been accustomed to draw from them.’

SECTION X.

Of Dr. Reid's principle of credulity, and his idea of the principles of induction, and analogy.

THAT any man should imagine that a peculiar instinctive principle was necessary to explain our giving credit to the relations of others, appears to me, who have been used to see things in a different light, very extraordinary; and yet this doctrine is advanced by Dr. Reid, and adopted by Dr. Beattie. But really what our author says in favour of it is hardly deserving of the slightest notice.

‘If credulity,’ he says, p. 340, ‘were the effect of reasoning and experience; it must grow up and gather strength in the same proportion as reason and experience’

‘ perience do. But if it is the gift of
‘ nature, it will be the strongest in child-
‘ hood, and limited and restrained by ex-
‘ perience ; and the most superficial view
‘ of human life shows that this last is re-
‘ ally the case, and not the first.’

This reasoning is exceedingly fallacious. It is a long time before a child hear any thing but truth, and therefore it can *expect* nothing else. The contrary would be absolutely miraculous. Falsehood is a *new circumstance*, which he likewise comes to expect in proportion as he has been taught by experience to expect it. What evidence can we possibly have of any thing being necessarily connected with experience and derived from it, besides its never being prior to it, always consequent upon it, and exactly in proportion to it?

I shall now consider what our author says of the nature of reasoning by *induction* and *analogy*. ‘ If,’ says he, p. 340,
‘ a certain degree of cold freezes water

‘ to-day, and has been known to do so in
‘ all time past, we have no doubt but the
‘ same degree of cold will freeze water
‘ to-morrow, or a year hence. When I
‘ compare the idea of cold, with that of
‘ water hardened into a transparent solid
‘ body, I can perceive no connection be-
‘ tween them. No man can shew the one
‘ to be the necessary effect of the other.
‘ No man can give a shadow of a reason
‘ why nature has conjoined them. But
‘ do not we learn that conjunction from
‘ experience? True, experience informs
‘ us that they have been conjoined in time
‘ past, but no man ever had any expe-
‘ rience of what is future; and this is the
‘ very question to be resolved. How
‘ come we to believe that the future will
‘ be like the past? Children and idiots
‘ have the belief of the continuance of
‘ the present course of nature as soon as
‘ they know that fire will burn them. It
‘ must therefore be the effect of instinct
‘ not of reason.’

But

But experience does a great deal more than Dr. Reid here supposes. It not only informs us that cold and freezing have been conjoined in time past, but also that what is now time *past*, was once *future*; and therefore that there is no more reason to suspect that cold will not freeze water now, than there was to doubt yesterday that it would freeze it to-day. It is only puzzling the question to consider time as *past* or *future* in this case. We also find by experience that we have not hitherto been deceived in our expectation that the future will be like the past in former instances, and therefore cannot have any suspicion of being deceived in a similar expectation in other instances. It is really astonishing that any man should ask the question that Dr. Reid does here, 'How came we to believe that the future will be like the past? It is certainly sufficient to say in answer to this. Have we not always found it to be so? and therefore, how can we suspect the contrary? Though no man has had any experience of what *is* future, every man has

had experience of what *was* future. Every step that I take among this writer's sophisms raises my astonishment higher than before.

He farther says, p. 347, ' If any reader should imagine that the inductive principle may be resolved into what philosophers usually call association of ideas, let him observe that by this principle natural signs are not associated with ideas only, but with the belief of the things signified. Now this can with no propriety be called an association of ideas, unless ideas and belief be one and the same thing.'

This appears to me to be a mere quibble, for not only may *ideas*, properly so called, but every thing that is *mental*, as *belief*, and every other operation or affection of the mind, and even the immediate cause of muscular motion, be the subject of association, as we see it to be in fact. Not to say that *belief*, as Dr. Hartley has explained it, consists of ideas, and
is,

is, in fact, nothing but a complex idea, or feeling.

I could have had no conception that a professed enemy to scepticism, as Dr. Reid is, should himself be so sceptical as he is with respect to many of the most uncontroverted maxims of philosophy. But, indeed, it is no uncommon thing to charge another with our own peculiar failings, and to see a mote in our brother's eye, when we cannot discern a beam in our own. And as scepticism and credulity go hand in hand with unbelievers, so they do with Dr. Reid. Where all the rest of the world see the most closely connected chain of reasoning, he is always ready to suspect that some link is wanting, and as ready to supply the imaginary defect, not with another link, but with something that is no proper part of a chain, but some invisible power to keep the two parts together.

He is so eager to find *arbitrary connections* between objects and sensations, and

between sensations and judgment, that he sometimes overlooks the most necessary connections of things. He says, p. 163 that ‘ the material impresson upon the
‘ retina, by means of the rays of light,
‘ suggest colour, and the position of some
‘ external object ; but no man can give a
‘ reason why the same material impresson
‘ might not have suggested sound, or smell,
‘ or either of these, along with the posi-
‘ tion of the object. And since there is
‘ no necessary connection between these
‘ two things, it might, if it had so pleased
‘ our creator, have suggested one of them
‘ without the other.’ But it is obvious
to remark, that then *rays of light* must
not have been made use of, for these *ne-*
cessarily suggest both colour and form.

SECTION XI.

Of the natural signs of the passions.

ONE would think that a man must never have heard of the general principle of the *association of ideas*, who could possibly take it into his head that certain features, modulations of the voice, and attitudes of the body, require any other principle, in order to suggest the idea and belief of certain thoughts, purposes, and dispositions of mind. Dr. Reid indeed asserts, in proof of this, that ‘an infant
 ‘may be put into a fright by an angry
 ‘countenance, and soothed again by smiles
 ‘and blandishments,’ p. 89. Now I have had children of my own, and have made many observations and experiments of this kind upon them, and upon this authority I do not hesitate absolutely to deny the fact with respect to them; and I have no doubt but that the same is the case with respect to all other infants; unless those of Dr. Reid should be as different from mine

mine as are our notions of human nature. But nature, I believe, is pretty uniform in her operations and productions, how differently soever we may conceive of them.

Dr. Reid talks of an *infant* being put into a fright. On the contrary, I assert that an infant (unless by an infant he should mean a child who has had a good deal of experience, and of course has made many observations on the connections of things) is absolutely incapable of terror. I am positive that no child ever showed the least symptom of fear or apprehension, till he had actually received hurts, and had felt pain; and that children have no fear of any particular person or thing, but in consequence of some connection between that person or thing and the pain they had felt.

If any instinct of this kind was more necessary than another, it would be the *dread of fire*. But every body must have observed that infants show no sign of any such thing; for they will as readily put
their

their finger to the flame of a candle as to any thing else, till they have been burned. But after some painful experience of this kind their dread of fire becomes one of Dr. Reid's original instinctive principles, and it is as quick and as effectual in its operations as the very best of them.

I, moreover, do not hesitate to say, that if it were possible always to beat and terrify a child with a placid countenance, so as never to assume that appearance but in those circumstances, and always to soothe him with what we call an angry countenance, this natural and necessary connection of ideas that Dr. Reid talks of would be reversed, and we should see the child frightened with a smile, and delighted with a frown.

In fact, there is no more reason to believe that a child is naturally afraid of a frown, than he is afraid of being in the dark; and of this children certainly discover no sign, till they have either found something disagreeable to them in the
dark,

dark, or have been told that there is something dreadful in it.

SECTION XII.

Of the judgment we form concerning the seat of pain.

IT also appears to me that a man must be strangely prepossessed in favour of instinctive principles who should think of having recourse to them for distinguishing the parts of our bodies affected with particular pleasures or pains, when the case is so easily explained by the general laws of association, aided by experience.

‘ The sensation of pain,’ Dr. Reid says, p. 209, ‘ is no doubt in the mind, and cannot be said to have any relation, from its own nature, to any part of the body. But this sensation by our constitution gives a perception of some particular part

‘ part of our body whose disorder causes
‘ the uneasy sensation. If it were not so,
‘ a man who never before felt either the
‘ gout or tooth ach, when he is first seized
‘ with the gout in his toe might mistake
‘ it for the tooth ach.’

Now this, I believe, would be the case if a man had never before had any sensation of any kind either in his toe or in his tooth. For though Dr. Reid says that judgments of this kind are antecedent to all experience, I am positive he can have no authority from fact for the assertion, or for believing that an infant can distinguish the seat of any sensation, or so much as know to which of his organs to refer any of them, the first time that they are perceived. Indeed, there is no sort of *occasion* for any such early knowledge of this kind; for though the very first time that a child should make use of his ears or nose, he should not know which of them it was that was affected by a smell or a sound, he would soon acquire that knowledge by experience; finding himself relieved

lieved by stopping his nose when he perceived a disagreeable smell, and by stopping his ears when he perceived a disagreeable sound.

In the same manner in which we learn to refer the several sensations to their proper organs, we learn to refer pains and impressions of all kinds to the places from which the nerves convey them. If Dr. Reid has ever made observations upon children, he must have observed that they do this in a very imperfect manner, making many mistakes, and growing more perfect in the exercise by degrees.

Even men cannot accurately distinguish the part of the body affected with pain without the assistance of sight, in those parts which have not been the seat of any very distinguishable sensation. Let the experiment be made by pricking the part, and requiring the person to put the tip of his finger exactly upon it, when he is blindfolded.

Of the feat of *internal pains* mankind in general have very little knowledge. But in this respect also men improve by observation and experience, and those who have had the most experience have the most accurate knowledge of this kind, as is the case of all other knowledge acquired by experience. Let Dr. Reid apply to this case his own observations concerning the *sense of credulity*.

From the whole of Dr. Reid's reasoning on these subjects, one would think that he had never heard of such things as *nerves* proceeding from all the different parts of the body to the brain, all appropriated to their respective uses, such as the optic nerves, the auditory nerves, the olfactory nerves, each of which convey sensations of different kinds, entering the brain at different places; but that the business of sensation and perception was performed in some strange arbitrary manner without them, or any thing of the kind.

SECTION XIII.

Miscellaneous observations.

I Shall close these animadversions on Dr. Reid's performance with a few miscellaneous articles which shew either the extreme inattention of our author, in condemning others for faults of which he himself is guilty, claiming discoveries which have really nothing in them, or making great boasts when he appears to have been exceedingly ignorant with respect to the subject of which he writes, and the history of it.

Dr. Reid joins in the general laugh at Descartes's argument to prove his own existence from an act of his mind, viz. *doubting*, p. 11. 'For he takes his existence for granted in this argument, and proves nothing at all.' Yet this author himself argues in a manner exactly similar to this of Descartes. 'No man,' says he, p. 39, 'can conceive or believe smelling
' to

istence. In reality we smile at Descartes's argument, not because it is an inconclusive or improper one, but because the thing to be proved is so evident, that it needs no proof.

Our author argues largely, p. 135, in favour of the opinion of the vulgar, that colour is a quality of bodies. Of this he makes a great parade, as of some very serious business; but I shall not argue the matter seriously with him, because I take it for granted he has seen optical experiments, and therefore cannot possibly differ from me except in words. I shall only observe with respect to the subject, that the vulgar are easily brought to acknowledge their mistake, and never fail to express their surprize, as at a real discovery, and what was utterly inconsistent with their former notions of the matter, when they are shewn pieces of white paper assuming all the colours of the rainbow by means of a prism, without any real change in the paper. This has convinced every person to whom I have ever shewed

shewed the experiment, that colour is in the *rays of light*, and not in the body.

‘Nothing,’ says our author, p. 167, ‘shews more clearly our indisposition to attend to visible figure, and visible extension, than this, that, although mathematical reasoning is no less applicable to them than to tangible figure and extension; yet they have intirely escaped the notice of mathematicians.’

By visible figure, &c. our author means the projection of the forms of external objects on the concave bottom of the eye. But to what *purpose* would it have been to have taken any pains with the subject, when it can be of no possible *use*, and all that we have really any thing to do with are the properties of the *things* of which these images are merely the *figs*. No man who had any thing serious to attend to would ever think of it. I do not remember ever to have seen a more egregious piece of solemn trifling than the chapter which our author calls

the geometry of visibles and his account of the *Idomenians*, as he terms those imaginary beings who had no ideas of substance but from sight. Besides, our author acknowledges that the figures upon the retina differ exceedingly little from the real figures which they represent.

Another affectation of originality we see in what our author says concerning the idea of *hardness*. ‘The sensation of hardness,’ he says, p. 83, ‘is so much unknown as never to have been the object of thought and reflection, nor to have been honoured with a name in any language. May we not hence conclude that the knowledge of the human faculties is but in its infancy?’

Now I see nothing particularly *hard*, to use a pun, in the case of this same idea of hardness. Indeed, it is very rarely that we bestow a name upon the *idea* of any thing. It is very well if the thing itself have got a name; for many are obliged to go without names. But though I shall
not

not take the trouble to look into Mr. Locke for the purpose, I make no doubt but that he, and many others, have mentioned the idea of hardness among other abstract ideas, of much more importance, without confounding it with the hard substance that occasioned the idea. At least Dr. Reid's observation does not strike me as any thing either new, or at all important.

That our author is extremely ignorant of what has been written by others on the subject of the human mind, is evident, not only from his total silence concerning Dr. Hartley (whose name, however, appears to have reached Scotland; for his work is quoted with some degree of respect by Dr. Beattie) but from his gross mistake concerning the hints that Newton and others have dropped on the subject.

'About the time of Dr. Briggs,' he says, p. 278, 'the system of the nerves
' was thought to be a stringed instrument,
' composed of vibrating chords, each of
H 3 ' which

‘ which had its proper tension and tone.’ I shall not explain to our author what kind of vibration was supposed to affect the nerves, that I may give him an opportunity of getting a little more knowledge of his subject by looking into Newton or Hartley himself. But this I will venture to say, that such gross ignorance in a professor of this very subject, in so considerable an university, which has hitherto been distinguished for the real eminence of its professors in that department, is disgraceful to himself and to the university. I will even venture to call upon Dr. Reid to name any writer (that has ever had the least shadow of reputation) who seriously maintained that the system of the nerves does resemble *a stringed instrument, composed of vibrating chords*. If any such hypothesis was ever advanced, I own, it has escaped my notice. The hypothesis of Dr. Briggs himself, to which our author probably refers, was very different from this.

To

To treat with contempt, as Dr. Reid does, every hypothesis that has been proposed, and to offer another still more absurd, merely to laugh at it, and to turn the whole subject into ridicule, certainly does not become a philosopher, who means to promote an inquiry into the powers of nature. I can compare Dr. Reid's conduct in this case to nothing but that of the dog in the manger; for he professedly has no knowledge of the subject himself, and does every thing in his power to prevent others from knowing any thing about it, or inquiring into it.

To give my reader an idea of our author's talent for irony, and at the same time to afford him a little respite from metaphysical reasoning, I shall subjoin his account of this new hypothesis of the use of the nerves. After enumerating and laughing at every other hypothesis, he says, p. 278,

‘ These, I think, are all the engines
 ‘ into which the nervous system has been
 H 4 ‘ moulded

‘ moulded by philosophers, for conveying
‘ the images of sensible things from the
‘ organ to the sensorium. And for all
‘ that we know of the matter every man
‘ may freely chuse what he thinks fittest
‘ for the purpose; for from fact and ex-
‘ periment no one of them can claim pre-
‘ ference to another. Indeed, they all
‘ seem so unhandy engines for carrying
‘ images, that a man would be tempted
‘ to invent a new one.

‘ Since then a blind man may guess as
‘ well in the dark as one that sees, I beg
‘ leave to offer another conjecture touch-
‘ ing the nervous system, which I hope
‘ will answer the purpose as well as those
‘ we have mentioned, and which recom-
‘ mends itself by its simplicity. Why
‘ may not the optic nerves, for instance,
‘ be made up of empty tubes, opening
‘ their mouths wide enough to receive the
‘ rays of light which form the image up-
‘ on the retina, and gently conveying
‘ them safe, and in their proper order, to
‘ the very seat of the soul, until *they flash*
‘ *in*

‘ *in her face**? It is easy for an ingenious philosopher to fit the caliber of those empty tubes to the diameter of the particles of light, so as they shall receive no grosser kind of matter. And if these rays should be in danger of mistaking their way, an expedient may also be found to prevent this. For it requires no more than to bestow upon the tubes of the nervous system a peristaltic motion, like that of the alimentary tube.

‘ It is a peculiar advantage of this hypothesis, that, although all philosophers believe that the species or images of things are conveyed by the nerves to the soul, yet none of their hypotheses shew how this may be done. For how can the images of sound, taste, smell, colour, figure, and all sensible qualities, be made out of the vibrations of musical chords, or the undulation of animal spirits, or of æther? We ought not to suppose means inadequate to the end. Is it not as philosophical, and more in-

* A very expressive and elegant phrase.

‘ telligible,

‘telligible, to conceive, that as the sto-
 ‘mach receives its food, so the soul re-
 ‘ceives her images by a kind of nervous
 ‘deglutition? I might add, that we need
 ‘only continue this peristaltic motion of
 ‘the nervous tubes from the sensorium to
 ‘the extremities of the nerves that serve
 ‘the muscles, in order to account for mus-
 ‘cular motion.

‘Thus nature will be consonant to her-
 ‘self, and as sensation will be the convey-
 ‘ance of the ideal aliment to the mind, so
 ‘muscular motion will be the expulsion
 ‘of the recrementitious part of it. For
 ‘who can deny that the images of things
 ‘conveyed by sensation may, after due
 ‘concoction, become fit to be thrown off
 ‘by muscular motion? I only give hints
 ‘of these things to the ingenious, hoping
 ‘that in time this hypothesis may be
 ‘wrought up into a system, as truly philo-
 ‘sophical as that of animal spirits, or the
 ‘vibration of nervous fibres. To be
 ‘serious’———

To

To be serious then. By some persons all this may be thought very ingenious and clever, the irony delicate, and the expression elegant. But while some laugh *with* the writer, others may be more disposed to laugh *at* him, both for his ignorance and his buffoonery. I shall only say that if I have the least notion of what the true *spirit of philosophy* is, this is the very reverse of it; and that such a mode of writing ought to be treated with indignation and contempt.

Our author's *conclusion*, as well as his *dedication*, which, though printed first, supposes the book to have been written before it, shews a persuasion of his having done great things, though his style is unlike that of Horace or Ovid, *Jamque Opus exegi*——He imagined, I suppose, that he had thrown many *new* lights upon the subject of human nature, by throwing down the *old* ones erected by Descartes and Locke.

‘ I intended to have examined more
 ‘ particularly and fully this doctrine of
 ‘ the existence of ideas, or images of things
 ‘ in the mind, and likewise another doc-
 ‘ trine which is founded upon it, to wit,
 ‘ that judgment or belief is nothing but a
 ‘ perception of the agreement or disagree-
 ‘ ment of our ideas, but having already
 ‘ shewn that the operations of the mind
 ‘ which we have examined give no coun-
 ‘ tenance to either of these doctrines, and
 ‘ in many things contradict them, I have
 ‘ thought it proper to drop this part of
 ‘ my design. It may be executed with
 ‘ more advantage, if it is at all necessary,
 ‘ after inquiring into some other powers
 ‘ of the human understanding.

‘ Although we have examined only the
 ‘ five senses, and the principles of the hu-
 ‘ man mind which are employed about
 ‘ them, or such as have fallen in our way
 ‘ in the course of this examination, we
 ‘ shall leave the further prosecution of this
 ‘ inquiry to future deliberation. The
 ‘ powers of memory, of imagination, of
 ‘ taste,

‘ taste, of reasoning, of moral perception,
 ‘ the will, the passions, the affections, and
 ‘ all the active powers of the soul, present
 ‘ a vast and boundless field of philosophi-
 ‘ cal disquisition, which the author of this
 ‘ inquiry is far from thinking himself able
 ‘ to survey with accuracy. Many authors
 ‘ of ingenuity have made excursions into
 ‘ this vast territory, and have communi-
 ‘ cated useful observations, but there is
 ‘ reason to believe that those who have
 ‘ pretended to give us a map of the whole
 ‘ have satisfied themselves with a very in-
 ‘ accurate and incomplete survey.’

Then speaking of what Galileo and Newton have done in the natural world, he adds, ‘ Ambitious of following such
 ‘ great examples, with unequal steps, alas
 ‘ and unequal force, we have attempt-
 ‘ ed an inquiry only into one little corner
 ‘ of the human mind, that corner which
 ‘ seems to be most exposed to vulgar ob-
 ‘ servation, and to be most easily compre-
 ‘ hended; and yet, if we have delineated
 ‘ it justly, it must be acknowledged that
 ‘ the

‘the accounts heretofore given of it were
 ‘very lame, and wide of the truth.’

The subjects our author here speaks of do certainly present a wide field of philosophical disquisition; and if so many new and important truths have occurred to our *philosopher and guide* in the examination of the five senses only, this *small corner of the human mind*, what may we not expect from his farther progress? which I hope the learned Benengeli will not fail to relate. Instinctive principles will then be as common and as cheap—but I forget the proverb—and as many distinct independent laws of nature will be found in this *microcosm* of man only, as have by others been thought necessary for the system of the universe. But what an idea must this author, and his admirers have of the laws of nature!

Should another genius arise, and discover as many new laws in the system of *matter*, as Dr. Reid has in the system of *mind*, we shall be so bewildered and
 con-

confounded as hardly to retain the use of those five senses about which our author has taken so much elaborate pains. But I hope our knowledge of this part of nature is too far advanced to suffer ourselves to be so much bewildered and puzzled, as it seems the inhabitants of Great-Britain and Ireland have hitherto been, with the ingenious speculations of Dr. Reid.

REMARKS

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R E M A R K S

O N

Dr. BEATTIE'S ESSAY

O N T H E

NATURE and IMMUTABILITY

O F

T R U T H.

I

T H E
I N T R O D U C T I O N .

HAVING animadverted so largely upon Dr. Reid's performance, I shall have the less to say with respect to that of Dr. Beattie, who adopts his general system of *instinctive principles of truth*, and discovers too much of his *spirit* and *manner*, which is exceedingly decisive, and insolent to those who think differently from himself; and he even exceeds Dr. Reid in throwing an odium upon those whose sentiments he is willing to decry, by ascribing to them dangerous and frightful consequences, with which they are far from being justly chargeable.

I believe, however, that Dr. Beattie wrote his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* with the very best inten-

tion in the world ; and that it was nothing but his zeal in the most excellent cause, that of religion, which has betrayed him into these rash censures, and into a mode of reasoning which I cannot help thinking to be very prejudicial to the cause of that very *truth* which he means to support, and favouring that very *scepticism* which he imagined he was overthrowing.

I believe farther, and I most sincerely rejoice in it, that Dr. Beattie's treatise has done a great deal of good to the cause of religion ; and I hope it will still continue to do so, with a great majority of those who are most in danger of being seduced by the sophistry of Mr Hume, and other modern unbelievers ; I mean with *superficial thinkers*, who are satisfied with seeing superficial objections answered in a lively, though a superficial manner. Besides, I do think that, in several respects, Dr. Beattie's strictures on Mr. Hume are just ; and therefore that they will be an useful antidote to the mischief that might be apprehended from his writings.

But

But there is danger lest other persons, of greater penetration, finding that Dr. Beattie argues on fallacious unphilosophical principles, should reject at once, and without farther examination, all that he has built upon them. With respect to such persons, it may be of importance to show that religion, though assailed from so many quarters as it has been of late, is under no necessity of taking refuge in such untenable fortresses as Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald have provided for her; but that she may safely face the enemy on his own ground, opposing argument to argument, and silencing sophistry by rational discussion.

In this opinion I am by no means singular. Many judicious persons, excellent scholars and divines, and whose metaphysical system is very different from mine, think Dr. Beattie's book by no means calculated to serve the cause of truth with philosophical and thinking men; and that it will be doing service to truth and religion to point out the faults

and defects of it. And as I believe Dr. Beattie to be a man of candour, I doubt not but he will himself take in good part the following free animadversions. If *truth* be really our object, as it is in the titles of our books, and we be free from any improper bias, we shall rejoice in the detection of error, though it should appear to have sheltered itself under our own roofs. I am very serious when I add, that such a degree of candour and impartiality may be more especially expected of *christians*, and more especially still, of those who stand forth as champions in the cause of christianity, which is at the same time the cause of the most important truth, and of the most generous and disinterested virtue.

To preserve as much order as I well can in my remarks on Dr. Beattie's performance, I shall first consider his account of the foundation of truth, and then the several particular doctrines that he has built upon it.

SECTION I.

*Of Dr. Beattie's account of the foundation
of truth.*

OUR author adopts Dr. Reid's general idea of *common sense*, as the faculty by which we perceive self-evident truth, p. 37, and always considers it as of the nature of a peculiar kind of *instinct*, and very different from Locke's idea of *judgment*, in the first instance, as resulting from comparing our ideas. This I cannot help thinking to be, theoretically speaking, a very fundamental error, affecting the very *essence of truth*, and leading to endless absurdities.

Had these writers assumed, as the elements of their common sense, certain truths which are so plain that no man could doubt of them (without entering into the ground of our assent to them) their conduct would have been liable to very little objection. All that could have been said

would have been, that, without any necessity, they had made an innovation in the received use of a term. For no person ever denied that there *are* self-evident truths, and that these must be assumed as the foundation of all our reasoning. I never met with any person who did not acknowledge this, or heard of any argumentative treatise that did not go upon the supposition of it. The most rigorous reasoners are mathematicians, and they all begin with laying down certain *axioms*, and *postulata*, which must be admitted without proof, in order to the demonstration of every thing else; and therefore I am really surprized that Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald should take so much pains to prove it. Had the thing been really disputable, they have said enough upon the subject to be quite tiresome.

But if we consider the general tenor of their writings, it will appear that they are saying one thing and really doing another, talking plausibly about the necessity of admitting *axioms in general*, as the foundation

dation of all reasoning, but meaning to recommend *particular positions* as axioms, not as being founded on the perception of the agreement or disagreement of any ideas, which is the great doctrine of Mr. Locke, and which makes truth to depend upon the necessary nature of things, to be *absolute, unchangeable, and everlasting*; but merely some unaccountable *instinctive persuasions*, depending upon the arbitrary constitution of our nature; which makes all truth to be a thing that is *relative* to ourselves only, and consequently to be infinitely vague and precarious.

This system admits of no appeal to *reason*, properly considered, which any person might be at liberty to examine and discuss; but, on the contrary, every man is taught to think himself authorized to pronounce decisively upon every question according to his present *feeling*, and persuasion; under the notion of its being something original, instinctive, ultimate, and uncontrovertible; though, if strictly analyzed, it might appear to be a mere prejudice, the offspring of mistake.

This

This may appear to some to be, after all, a business of *metaphysics* only, and a refinement of no real importance to mankind; but it is a mistake that has really very serious and alarming consequences; for instead of leading to humility, caution, and patience in the investigation of truth; it necessarily inspires conceit, and leads to great arrogance and insolence with respect to our opponents in controversy, as persons defective in their constitution, destitute of common sense, and therefore not to be argued with, but to be treated as ideots or madmen.

These objections affect the *general scheme* and plan of Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald. My particular objection to both these writers, as well as to Dr. Reid, is that they have adopted their elements of knowledge too hastily, and that they have acquiesced in certain maxims, as self-evident truths, and have treated with great insolence and contempt all endeavours to disprove them; though some of these maxims are so far from being self evident, that

in

in my opinion they are not true, but capable of a satisfactory refutation. At the same time, since no man can pretend to any natural right to fix the principles of faith for another, they teach unbelievers, and by their example *authorize* them, to reject the principles of religion by the same summary and superficial process; as what appear to them to be, at first sight, too absurd and ridiculous to be admitted as true and divine.

Though I shall never quarrel with any man for the mere use of his terms, since they are, in their own nature, nothing more than the arbitrary signs of ideas, I cannot help thinking that the inconveniences above mentioned may attend even the calling of that faculty by which we discern truth by the name of *sense*. By this term philosophers in general have hitherto denominated those faculties in consequence of which we are liable to *feelings* relative to *ourselves* only, and from which they have not pretended to draw any conclusions concerning the *nature of things* ;
 whereas

whereas truth is a thing not relative, but *absolute*, and real, independent of any relation to this or that particular being, or this or that order of beings. And I think I can evidently perceive that Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald have both been misled by this new application of the term *sense*; having been led by it to consider all truth as an arbitrary thing, relative to particular beings, and even particular persons, like the perceptions of any of our external senses. In consequence also of the same fundamental error, after having degraded the judgment to the level of the senses, they naturally consider the senses as intitled to the same respect, which had usually been appropriated to that superior faculty by which we distinguish truth.

‘ All that we know of truth or falsehood,’ says Dr. Beattie, p. 196, ‘ is that our constitution determines us in some cases to believe, in others to disbelieve; and that to us is truth which we *feel* that we must believe, and that to us is falsehood which we *feel* that we must disbelieve.’

lieve. If, p. 209, a creature of a different nature from man were to say that snow is black and hot, I should reply; it may possibly have that appearance to your senses, but it has not that appearance to mine. It may therefore, in regard to your faculties, be true; and if so, it ought to constitute a part of your philosophy; but of *my* philosophy it cannot constitute a part, because, in respect of my faculties, it is false, being contrary to fact and experience.'

To me this doctrine appears to be entirely subversive of all truth; since, speaking agreeably to it, all that we can ever say is, that certain maxims and propositions appear to be true with respect to *ourselves*, but how they may appear to *others* we cannot tell; and as to what they are in *themselves*, which alone is, strictly speaking, the *truth*, we have no means of judging at all; for we can only see with our own eyes, and judge by our own faculties, or rather feelings.

If

If this be not a fair conclusion from Dr. Beattie's representation of the principles of truth and common sense I am not capable of drawing a conclusion. I am sure I do not mean to be uncandid. I hope, indeed, and believe, that he will be staggered when he attends to the unavoidable consequences of his doctrine, so very unsuitable to a discourse on the *immutability of truth*; because it is almost the very thing that he objects to Mr. Locke, whose principles he thinks *erroneous and dangerous*, p. 16, for speaking of one part of his philosophy he says, p. 239, 'if it be true, it would go near
' to prove that truth and virtue have at
' least nothing permanent in their nature,
' but may be as changeable as the incli-
' nations and capacities of men.'

All the reason that our author assigns why the principle by which we judge of self-evident truth may be called a *sense* is, that such judgments are instantaneous and irresistible, like impressions made upon the mind by means of the external senses.
' The term *common sense*,' he says, p. 45,
' has

' has, in modern times, been used by
 ' philosophers to signify that power of the
 ' mind which perceives truth or com-
 ' mands belief, not by progressive argu-
 ' mentation but by an instantaneous, in-
 ' stinctive, and irresistible impulse, derived
 ' neither from education nor from habit,
 ' but from nature, acting independently
 ' on our will, whenever the object is pre-
 ' sented, according to an established law;
 ' and therefore not improperly called
 ' sense; and acting in a similar manner
 ' upon all, or, at least, upon a great ma-
 ' jority of mankind, and therefore pro-
 ' perly called *common sense*.'

But should we, out of complaisance,
 admit that what has hitherto been called
judgment may be called *sense*, it is making
 too free with the established signification
 of words to call it *common sense*, which in
 common acceptance has long been ap-
 propriated to a very different thing, viz.
 to that capacity for judging of common
 things that persons of middling capacities
 are capable of.

If

If the determinations of this new principle of common sense be so instantaneous, irresistible, and infallible, as Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald represent, how can we account for all the error there is in the world? When we see how miserably bewildered the bulk of mankind are, one would think that this principle of truth is like the god Baal, who, when he was most wanted, and ought to have made a point of being present, to assist his worshippers, was asleep, or on a journey, or engaged some other way. See 1. Kings, xviii.

If we apply to Dr. Beattie in this great difficulty he tells us, p. 49, that ‘common sense may languish for want of exercise, as in the case of a person who, blinded by a false religion, has been all his days accustomed to distrust his own sentiments, and to receive his creed from the mouth of a priest.’

But if this languishing of common sense resembles the languishing of any other sense,

sense, I should expect that the consequence would be our seeing very dimly and obscurely, as with a weak eye, only bearing to be used with great tenderness and caution. But though a weak eye cannot bear a strong light, and only admits of faint and indistinct vision, yet it exhibits all things on which it is exercised truly, and in their just proportions, or without distorting one thing more than another. If a man be so blind that he cannot see a house, neither can he see a tree, or any other object. I should, therefore, expect that, if a man was so totally deprived of common sense, as not to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood in one case, he would be equally incapable of distinguishing it in another; and therefore, that the man who should put implicit faith in his priest would, if he wanted common sense, be equally absurd in his whole conduct, which is far from being the case; for in other respects no men think or act more rationally than the Roman Catholics. How then do the affections of this common sense resemble those of the other

senses? The analogy appears to me to fail most essentially. It does not at all resemble the eye, the ear, the nose, or any other of the organs of sense.

Since Dr. Beattie writes with a practical, and indeed an excellent design, let us consider for a moment, the *practical influence* of this new, and to me strange doctrine. A man who finds that he thinks differently from the rest of mankind, with respect to any of the principles which Dr. Beattie shall be pleased to call *primary*, and *fundamental* (suppose the doctrine of *human liberty*; or take the case of the poor priest ridden mortal above mentioned, who may with equal right consider his own principles as fundamental) if he believes, with myself, and those who have not yet heard of this new principle of faith, that all just knowledge results from a just view of things, and a comparing of his ideas, and that a habit of just thinking may be acquired by a course of observation and reflection duly persisted in; and consequently, that if he be in an error, it
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is in his own power to set himself right (for that, naturally, he has as good a power of distinguishing truth from falsehood as his neighbours) a man, I say, who has these views of the nature of truth, and of the faculties by which it is perceived, is encouraged to indulge a freedom of inquiry, and to persist in his investigations, though they should prove very laborious.

Whereas, if he should have read the writers on whom I am animadverting, or Dr. Beattie only, and, in consequence of it, be persuaded that he perceives all fundamental truths by something that is of the nature of a *sense*; he may, indeed, see reason to look at any principle pretty attentively; but if, after giving this kind of attention to it, he perceives that he is not affected in that *instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible* manner that Dr. Reid describes, he necessarily concludes that either it was not truth that he was contemplating, or that he is not one of that *great majority of mankind* who are endued

with the faculty that is necessary to the perception of it. But which ever of these he concludes to be the case, he remits his attention, satisfied that his view of the object is constitutional and irremediable.

And certainly his determination would be sufficiently countenanced by Dr. Beattie, who says, p. 47, that ‘ common sense
 ‘ which, like other instincts, arrives at
 ‘ maturity with almost no care of ours,
 ‘ cannot possibly be taught to one who
 ‘ wants it. You may,’ says our author, p. 47, ‘ make him remember a set of first
 ‘ principles, and say that he believes them,
 ‘ even as you may teach one born blind
 ‘ to speak intelligibly of colours and light;
 ‘ but neither to the one nor to the other
 ‘ can you, by any means, communicate
 ‘ the *peculiar feeling* which accompanies
 ‘ the operation of that faculty which nature has denied him. A man defective
 ‘ in common sense may acquire learning,
 ‘ he may even possess genius to a certain
 ‘ degree, but the defect of nature he never can supply. A peculiar modifica-
 ‘ tion

'tion of scepticism, or credulity, or levity, will to the end of his life distinguish him from other men.' Then, after mentioning the different *degrees* in which different men are possessed of common sense, he says, p. 48, 'These diversities are, I think, to be referred, for the most part, to the original constitution of the mind, which it is not in the power of education to alter.'

Dr. Beattie may imagine, and I believe does, that he is serving *the cause of God and of truth* by such views of things as these; but it appears very clearly to me, who have no pretensions to the common sense that he describes, that, as far as speculation can go, he is subverting it all.

I am aware that Dr. Beattie will reply, that this doctrine of his concerning common sense is only to be applied to *first principles*. But who is to tell us what are first principles? The man who has from his infancy laboured under a mistake, will imagine his most

fundamental errors to be first principles. With a papist, implicit confidence in his priest, or holy church, which he takes for granted is the same thing with faith in God and the bible, acts upon his mind *as instantaneously and irresistibly* as any of Dr. Beattie's first principles; and this principle in the poor papist cannot appear more absurd to Dr. Beattie, than some of Dr. Beattie's first principles appear to me.

Now who is to help us in this case? Must we, in good earnest, put the question to the vote, being previously assured by Dr. Beattie, p. 45, that a *great majority* of mankind are possessed of the true principles of common sense, and therefore cannot mistake concerning it? But I appeal from a tribunal whose decisions have been so unsteady, and may change again; and think that nothing is so likely to serve our purpose, and the purpose of truth, as a persuasion the very reverse of Dr. Beattie's, viz. that the faculty by which we perceive truth is the farthest possible

possible from any thing that resembles a *sense*; that every misfortune we do, or may labour under, with respect to *judgment*, is naturally remediable; and consequently, that it depends upon ourselves, as far as any thing of practical importance is concerned, to be as wise, judicious, and knowing, as any other person whatsoever.

Dr. Beattie seems to place the same confidence in his external senses that Dr. Reid does, which is much more than I can persuade myself to put in them; but with respect to the various instinctive principles of truth which our maker has arbitrarily annexed to them, Dr. Beattie speaks sometimes with more caution; as if he had now and then some secret distrust of them. I shall, with this view, quote what he says of the foundation of reasoning by induction and analogy.

‘The mind,’ he says, p. 122, ‘by its own innate force, and in consequence of an irresistible and instinctive impulse,

‘ infers the future from the past, without
 ‘ the intervention of any argument. The
 ‘ sea has ebbed and flowed twice every
 ‘ day in time past, therefore the sea will
 ‘ continue to ebb and flow every day in
 ‘ time to come, is by no means a logical
 ‘ deduction of a conclusion from premises.
 ‘ Reasoning from analogy, p. 126, ‘ when
 ‘ traced up to its source, will be found in
 ‘ like manner to terminate in a certain in-
 ‘ stinctive propensity, implanted in us by
 ‘ our maker, which leads us to expect that
 ‘ similar causes, in similar circumstances,
 ‘ do probably produce, or will produce,
 ‘ similar effects. A child, p. 128, ‘ who
 ‘ has been burned with a red hot coal is
 ‘ careful to avoid touching the flame of a
 ‘ candle. And it deserves to be remarked
 ‘ that the judgment a child forms on these
 ‘ occasions may arise, and often does arise,
 ‘ previous to education and reasoning,
 ‘ and while experience is very limited.’

It is in this last clause that Dr. Beattie
 shows his caution, and betrays his suspi-
 cion of these new principles. He does
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not chuse to say that children judge in this manner with *no experience at all*, which, if the judgment was properly *instinctive*, ought to be the case, (but which happens to be too notoriously contrary to fact) but only *when their experience is very limited*. But if they had had any experience at all, it cannot be said with truth that they were without *education*; for experience is the school of nature; and in this course of education we make much use of our *reason*, and the power of *association* is very busily employed.

By the simple principle of the association of ideas, the idea of the flame of a candle is intimately associated with the idea of the pain which it has occasioned, in so much, that ever after they are considered in the closest connection, as it were the inseparable parts of the same thing; so that whatever recalls the idea of the one recalls likewise the idea of the other, and a dread of the one cannot be separated from a dread of the other.

Supposing,

Supposing, therefore, that the child has an aversion to pain, and that he is master of those actions by which it is avoided, he will mechanically, and instantly, draw back his hand from the near approach of a candle, without any intermediate idea whatever.

As to Dr. Reid's general principle, that *the laws of nature will continue* (with which he supposes that the mind of a child is inspired) or, as Dr. Beattie here expresses it, that *similar causes, in similar circumstances, will probably produce similar effects*, as a foundation for its concluding that a candle which has burned him once will burn him again, it is not certainly at all probable that he has the least notion of any such thing. It is a long time before a child attains to any such *general knowledge*. Particular facts are first discovered, and general propositions, or principles, are formed from them. But according to the hypothesis of Dr. Reid and Dr. Beattie, the mind is, prior to any experience, either furnished with
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the general maxims, that there are laws of nature, and that these laws will continue, or else with a thousand particular independent maxims, comprehended under that general one. But these provisions are equally unnecessary, when the simple law of association of ideas so easily supplies the place of them both.

SECTION II.

Of the testimony of the senses.

THROUGH a degree of fairness and ingenuoufness, for which very shrewd disputants are not always remarkable, Dr. Beattie is no less unfortunate with respect to that part of his system which relates to the *external senses*, than we have seen him to be in the instances mentioned in the last section. He speaks in general with more confidence than Dr. Reid himself does of his faith in his eyes, ears, nose, taste, and feeling (though it is possible

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fible that his writing with more strength and eloquence upon this subject may only proceed from his having a greater command of language, and not from a stronger conviction of mind) but then he inadvertently subjoins such *concessions and exceptions*, as, in fact, overturn all his preceding doctrine, and throw us back into all our former distrust of our senses.

‘ Upon the evidence of the external
 ‘ senses,’ he says, p. 63, ‘ hearing, seeing,
 ‘ touching, tasting, and smelling, is
 ‘ founded all our knowledge of natural
 ‘ or material things; and therefore all
 ‘ conclusions in natural philosophy, and
 ‘ all those prudential considerations
 ‘ which regard the preservation of our
 ‘ body, as it is liable to be affected by the
 ‘ sensible qualities of matter, must finally
 ‘ be resolved into this principle, that
 ‘ *things are as our senses represent them.*
 ‘ When I touch a stone, I am conscious
 ‘ of a sensation, or feeling in my mind,
 ‘ accompanied with an irresistible belief,
 ‘ that this sensation is excited by the appli-
 ‘ cation

' cation of an external and hard substance
 ' to some part of my body. This belief
 ' as certainly accompanies the sensation,
 ' as the sensation accompanies the applica-
 ' tion of the stone to my organs of sense.
 ' I am as certain,' p. 65, ' that at present
 ' I am in a house, and not in the open air,
 ' that I see by the light of the sun, and
 ' not by the light of a candle, that I feel
 ' the ground hard under my feet, and
 ' that I lean against a real material
 ' table, as I can be of the truth of any
 ' geometrical axiom, or of any demon-
 ' strated conclusion. Nay I am as cer-
 ' tain of all this as of my own existence.
 ' But I cannot prove by argument that
 ' there is such a thing as matter in the
 ' world, or even that I myself exist.'

All this is perfectly agreeable to the
 new system, and an extremely short, easy,
 and convenient one it certainly is, for
 those who are not disposed to take much
 pains in the investigation of truth; but
 it is certainly not agreeable to nature and
 fact; and as the old proverb says, *Natu-*
ram

ram furca licet expellas, tamen usque recurret; so here Dr. Beattie could not help saying, p. 189, ‘A distempered sense, as well as an impure and unequal medium may doubtless communicate false sensations; but we are never imposed upon by them *in matters of consequence.*’

Now I can easily conceive how all this might have been said by Dr. Beattie very innocently, and without the least suspicion that any caviller, like myself, could possibly make any use of it to his prejudice; when, in fact, it effectually overtuns his whole system of *implicit confidence in his senses*, as the sure guides to truth. For certainly, if they be capable of deceiving us *at all*, they are no more to be trusted without some guard of a different nature. The man who is under the deception has no help *from them* to undeceive himself. Thus if all mankind had jaundiced eyes, they must have been under a necessity of concluding that every object was tinged with yellow; and indeed, according to this new system,

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as explained before, it would then have been so not in appearance only, but also in *reality*; nay this would have begun to be true, when only a *great majority of mankind* had their eyes thus affected.

Our author is, farther, so very much off his guard upon this unfortunate subject, as to allow that some of our senses give us information that is contradicted by the testimony of others, which certainly very ill agrees with his idea of them as infallible guides to truth.

‘Of magnitude,’ he says, p. 179, ‘we judge both by sight and touch. With regard to magnitude we must, therefore, believe either our sight, or our touch, or both, or neither. To believe neither is impossible. If we believe both, we shall contradict ourselves,’ and at length he determines in favour of the touch. If we ask why we believe the touch rather than the sight, he says, p. 177, ‘it is instinct, and not reason, that determines me to believe my touch.’

But

But did not he that made the sense of feeling make the sense of sight also ; and if, as our author pretends, he had designed that our senses, *as such*, should give us true information concerning external objects, would he not have provided that their testimony should have been in all respects perfectly consistent ? Besides, it is obvious to remark, that if the eye require to be corrected by the touch, the touch may possibly require to be corrected by something else. Dr. Beattie may say that the same common sense that bids him believe his touch in preference to his sight, and to correct the evidence of sight by that of touch, assures him that the touch requires no correction whatever. But this can have weight only with those who have faith in this same common sense.

I should be glad to ask Dr. Beattie, and others who admit it as a maxim, that *things are as their senses represent them to be*, what a man of common sense, and altogether without experience (which indeed

deed can hardly be the case in fact) would say upon looking at a straight stick held obliquely, with half of it under water. Would he not be positive that it was bent in the middle; and would he not have the plain testimony of his eyes for it? If you should take the stick out of the water, and bid him look at it again, and handle it, would he not assert the very reverse of Dr. Beattie's maxim, viz. that his eyes had *imposed* upon him, and that *the thing was not as his senses had represented it?*

Do not the bulk of mankind believe that the earth is at rest, and that the sun, moon, and stars have a diurnal revolution; and have they not the testimony of their senses for it? They certainly *think* so. They also all believe (as Dr. Reid himself pretends to believe with them) that colour is a property of bodies, and yet are easily convinced that it is a mistake.

If, after all, it really be a dictate of this new common sense, that, notwithstanding

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standing all this, things still are as our senses represent them to be, I think that in these cases our common sense is in league with our other senses to impose upon us, and therefore that we are justified in excluding it, as well as them, from being the test of truth.

SECTION III.

Dr. Beattie's view of Berkley's theory.

IT is curious to observe how much our acquaintance both with truth and error resembles the introduction of the fox to the lion, in the fable of Esop. We grow bolder by degrees, and each encourages his neighbour to go a few steps farther than himself.

The principles both of Dr. Reid and Dr. Beattie lead them to reject Berkley's hypothesis. Indeed, their whole scheme appears to me to have been, in a great measure,

measure, suggested by it; but Dr. Beattie rises greatly upon Dr. Reid in his tone and emphasis upon this occasion. If Dr. Reid conquered and slew his adversary, Dr. Beattie not only conquers, and puts him to death a second time, but tramples upon him. Dr. Reid did not vanquish him till after a pretty hard combat, in which some skill and dexterity in the use of his weapons was requisite; but Dr. Beattie does it at once, without giving him an opportunity of drawing in his own defence. Hear his own account of their different modes of conducting this controversy.

‘ Though it be absurd,’ says Dr. Beattie, p. 290, ‘ to attempt a proof of what is
 ‘ self-evident, it is manly and meritorious
 ‘ to confute the objections that sophistry
 ‘ may urge against it. This, with respect
 ‘ to the subject in question, has been done
 ‘ in a decisive and masterly manner by
 ‘ Dr. Reid, who proves that the reason-
 ‘ ings of Berkley, and others, concerning
 ‘ primary and secondary qualities owe all

‘ their strength to the ambiguity of words.’ This, then, is the *manly* and *meritorious* conduct of Dr. Reid ; but being only of relative use and importance, and *absurd in itself*, our author takes a different ground ; which he immediately describes. ‘ I have proved that though this fundamental error had never been detected, the philosophy of Berkley is, in its own nature, absurd, because it supposes the original principles of common sense controvertible and fallacious ; a supposition repugnant to the genius of the ‘ true’ (alias the *new*) ‘ philosophy, and which leads to universal credulity, or universal scepticism, and consequently to the subversion of knowledge and virtue, and’ —but first guess reader, if you can, what follows—‘ the extermination of ‘ the human species.’ He even fixes the time, very nearly, in which this calamitous event would take place.

Describing what he imagined would follow if all mankind should, in one instant, be made to believe that matter has

no existence, he says, p. 281, ' Doubtless
 ' this catastrophe would, according to our
 ' metaphysicians, throw a wonderful light
 ' on all the parts of knowledge. I pre-
 ' tend not even to guess at the number,
 ' extent, or quality, of the astonishing dis-
 ' coveries, that would then start forth into
 ' view. But of this I am certain, that, in
 ' *less than a month* after, there could not,
 ' without another miracle, be one human
 ' creature alive on the face of the earth.'

Dr. Reid fairly encounters his enemy, vanquishes, slays, and buries him, all in their proper order; but Dr. Beattie begins at once with the last act of burying, without troubling himself whether he be dead or alive, thinking the act of burying will suffice for all. This is that curious and summary process which Dr. Oswald is taking to rid the world of all dangerous errors in religion. Without giving himself the unnecessary trouble to argue the matter, except for his own amusement, and that of his readers, he only throws himself back in his chair, shuts his eyes, sees

them to be absurd, and the delusion vanishes. This is indeed fighting with the spear of Ithuriel, at the touch of which all imposture vanishes*.

I shall quote one passage more from Dr. Beattie on this subject, in which he expresses the nature and fullness of his persuasion concerning the reality of the material world, in a manner that is peculiarly emphatical, and therefore must be very satisfactory to men of *taste*, who can feel the beauties of fine writing. ‘That matter has a real, separate, and independent existence,’ p. 261, ‘is believed, not because it can be proved by argument, but because the constitution

* The passage in Dr. Oswald, to which I here allude, is so very curious, that I think my reader will not be displeased to see it quoted in a note on this part of my remarks on Dr. Beattie, though he will find it quoted again in its proper place. ‘A real believer,’ p. 255, ‘will not despise the well-meant labours of those who have endeavoured to demonstrate the primary truths by reducing their opposites to absurdity; but knows, that without their help, he can, *by a single thought*, reduce those chimeras to the grossest of all absurdities, namely, to nonsense.

‘ of our nature is such, that we *must* believe it. There is here the same ground of belief, that there is in the following propositions. I exist; whatever is is; two and two make four. It is absurd, nay it is impossible to believe the contrary.’ Accordingly, he says, ‘ I have known many who could not answer Berkley’s arguments, I never knew one who believed his doctrine.’

I find, however, that I have travelled a little farther than Dr. Beattie, for I have met with a very ingenious man who maintained Berkley’s doctrine with great seriousness, and I have known others who have espoused the same opinion: But perhaps Dr. Beattie may have the indulgence of the Welch jury I have heard of, who would not believe a man who confessed himself to be guilty, and fairly acquitted him.

My friend and I used to debate this subject, but for want of being acquainted with the principles of Messrs. Reid, Beattie, and

Ofwald, I was glad to plead for the existence of the material world only as the most probable hypothesis to account for appearances, and never thought of there being the same kind of evidence for it, as of two and two being equal to four. Had I been acquainted with these new principles, I might have saved myself a great deal of trouble; but I am apprehensive that I should hardly have escaped a great deal of *ridicule*; and we ought not to forget that ridicule has been deemed the *test of truth* as well as this new common sense. I think with equal reason, and I flatter myself that the reign of this new usurper will not be much longer than that of his predecessor, to whom he is very nearly related.

In this some may think that I only mean to be jocular, but really I am serious. Why was *ridicule* ever thought to be the test of truth, but because the things at which we can laugh were supposed to be so absurd that their falsehood was self-evident; so that there was no occasion

sion to examine any farther? We were supposed to *feel* them to be false; and what is a *feeling* but the affection of a *sense*? In reality, therefore, this new doctrine of common sense being the standard of truth is no other than ridicule being the standard of truth. The words are different, but not the things. I should be glad to see so acute a metaphysician as Dr. Reid, so fine a writer as Dr. Beattie, and, to adopt Dr. Beattie's compliment, so *elegant an author* as Dr. Oswald, separately employed to ascertain the precise difference between these two schemes.

In my opinion the chief difference, besides what I said above, consists in this, that the one may be called the *'sense of truth,* and the other the *sense of falsehood.* There is also some doubt whether Shaftesbury was really in earnest in proposing ridicule as the test of truth. Many think that he never could be so absurd. Whereas there can be no doubt but that this triumvirate of authors are perfectly serious. There is, however, another difference that will strongly

strongly recommend the claims of common sense in preference to those of ridicule, which is, that *this* was advanced in support of infidelity; but *that* in support of religion. But I should think that the greater weight we have to support, the stronger buttresses we should use.

In remarking upon Dr. Reid, I pointed out the inconclusiveness of the consequences he drew from Berkley's hypothesis. Dr. Beattie says the same things after him, but with considerable improvements in point of diction and energy, and with an air of much greater seriousness with respect to *religion*, which appears to me to have nothing to do in the business. I do not wonder, however, at Dr. Beattie's zeal in the case, when he imagined that so much depended upon it, any more than I do at Don Quixote's heroic enthusiasm, when he mistook inns for castles, a flock of sheep for an army, and a barber's basin for Mambrino's helmet.

“Sure,”

‘Sure,’ says our author, p. 283, ‘the laws of nature are not such trifles as that it must be a matter of perfect indifference whether we act or think agreeable to them or no.’ I think if I had not apprized my reader of it before hand, he would not have guessed that, in this solemn sentence, our author had nothing in view but this same innocent theory of Berkley; and especially if he had not seen, in the preceding quotation, that the very *extermination of the human species* is the consequence of this same scheme; which appears to me to be as complete raving as any thing in Don Quixote himself.

Our author farther says, p. 289, ‘Berkley’s doctrine is subversive of man’s most important interests, as a moral, intelligent, and percipient being. I doubt not,’ says he, *ib.* ‘but it may have overcast many of his days with a gloom, which neither the approbation of his conscience, nor the natural serenity of his temper could entirely dissipate.’

Now

Now I can see no difficulty in conceiving that I myself might have adopted this opinion, and yet have been very easy, chearful, virtuous, religious, and happy, in the full expectation of a restoration to a future life, as real as that which I enjoy at present, and in circumstances infinitely superior. In so very different lights do we sometimes see the same thing, though we are all, at least we all *think* ourselves, possessed of this same infallible standard of truth, viz. *common sense*.

SECTION IV.

Dr. Beattie's account of the source of moral obligation, and of the fundamental principles of religion.

HITHERTO I must acknowledge that I have not always been able to resist the temptation to divert myself with my author's Quixotism. For, serious as he himself has been, his adventures have sometimes appeared laughable enough to me. But I must now begin to be a little more serious, because I apprehend the consequences are so. For our author, after having made his common sense the *test of truth*, proceeds to make it the standard of *moral obligation*, expressly excluding all reasoning upon the subject.

‘ They,’ says Dr. Beattie, p. 74, meaning mankind, ‘ believe a certain mode of conduct to be incumbent upon them in certain circumstances, because a notion of duty arises in their mind when they
‘ con-

‘ contemplate that conduct in relation to
 ‘ those circumstances. I ought to be
 ‘ grateful for a favour received. Why?
 ‘ because my conscience tells me so. How
 ‘ do you know that you ought to do that
 ‘ of which your conscience enjoins the
 ‘ performance? I can give no further
 ‘ reason for it but I *feel* that such is my
 ‘ duty. Here the investigation must stop;
 ‘ or if carried a little farther it must re-
 ‘ turn to this point. I know that I ought
 ‘ to do what my conscience enjoins be-
 ‘ cause God is the author of my constitu-
 ‘ tion, and I obey his will when I act ac-
 ‘ cording to the principles of my constitu-
 ‘ tion. Why do you obey the will of
 ‘ God? Because it is my duty. How
 ‘ know you that? Because my conscience
 ‘ tells me so, &c.’

In any other case, therefore, if a man
feels that any thing is his duty, or, which
 is the same thing with respect to himself,
 if he *thinks* he feels it, he has no occasion
 to trouble himself with examining into
 the ground of that feeling. He must
 follow

follow it without hesitation, or reserve. So that even the poor priest-ridden mortal above mentioned will be justified, if, at the command of his ghostly superior, he murders his heretical neighbour; for had he gone the round of the self-examination described by Dr. Beattie, it would have been like travelling round the world for nothing but to come to the same place from which he set out, viz. *so my conscience dictates.*

Judging in the first and last instance by mere *feeling*, it is impossible to distinguish the injunctions of a *well-informed* from those of an *ill-informed* conscience. Many, I doubt not, have felt as real remorse upon the omission of a superstitious ceremony, and have been as unhappy in consequence of it, as they have ever been for the neglect of the most important moral duty. As, on the other hand, they have felt as real satisfaction after confessing to a priest, and having received his absolution, as others have felt from the consciousness of genuine repentance,

or of a well spent life. Yea some, I am persuaded, have felt as perfectly easy at a Portuguese *act of faith*, as if they had been *glorifying God* in any other manner.

Not content with this, Dr. Beattie scruples not to rest all the future hopes and expectations of man, as derived from religion, on the foundation of this same principle of common sense. ‘Sceptics,’ says Dr. Beattie, p. 113, ‘may wrangle, and mockers may blaspheme; but the pious man knows, by evidence too sublime for their comprehension, that his affections are not misplaced, and that his hopes shall not be disappointed; by evidence which to every sound mind is fully satisfactory, but which to the humble and tender hearted is altogether overwhelming, irresistible, and divine.’

With whatever feelings Dr. Beattie might compose this paragraph, it strikes me as containing matter that is exceedingly dangerous and alarming; setting
aside

aside all reasoning about the fundamental principles of religion, and making way for all the extravagancies of credulity, enthusiasm, and mysticism.

The *plenary persuasion* that our religious affections are not misplaced, and that our hopes shall not be disappointed, evidently supposes the belief of the being, the perfections, and moral attributes of God, and a state of future retribution; and what *kind* of evidence has Dr. Beattie spoken of as *overwhelming*, and *irresistible*, but this of common sense? the effects of which he always describes in that style, and to which he had before applied those very epithets, and others of a similar import. And yet this common sense appears to me, and to others, who seem to be in our sober senses, to be very insufficient for this purpose; though Dr. Oswald has attempted to prove at large, and in detail, all the particulars which Dr. Beattie only asserts in gross. But I am afraid that, after all his pious pains, the evidence will be found to be what Dr.

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Beattie

Beattie here says of it, *too sublime for our comprehension.*

That our author imagined he had sufficiently established some very important religious and practical principles, is evident from what he says in the conclusion of his work, where he is reciting his achievements in it. ‘That the human soul is a real and permanent substance,’ he says, p. 491, ‘that God is infinitely wise and good, that virtue and vice are essentially different, that there is such a thing as truth, and that man, in many cases, is capable of discovering it, are some of the principles which this book is intended to vindicate from the objections of scepticism.’

Now I do not recollect, after reading Dr. Beattie’s book through (with how much attention and care let the reader judge) that he has attempted a demonstration of the human soul being a rational and permanent substance, of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, that virtue
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and vice are essentially different, &c. by any proper medium of proof whatever; but only, if he has proved them at all, by an appeal to this principle of common sense, which is said to assure us, *without reasoning*, that such and such doctrines are true.

Also, though Dr. Beattie has not taken the same large field of argument that Dr. Oswald has done, thinking probably that, after him, it was unnecessary, yet he quotes from him with respect, and no doubt with intire approbation (or why did he quote him at all?) a passage in which he not only asserts the propriety of defending primary truths on the sole authority of common sense, but vindicates the doing of it with a peculiar *emphasis*, and without much delicacy. And I have already shewn in what an extensive sense Dr. Oswald considers the primary truths of religion, a sense with which Dr. Beattie could not be unacquainted.

Dr. Beattie's quotation, in vindication of his vehemence of expression in this treatise, is as follows, p. 512. 'There is no satisfying the demands of false delicacy, says an elegant and pious author, because they are not regulated by any fixed standard. But a man of candour and judgment will allow that the bashful timidity, practised by those who put themselves on a level with the adversaries of religion, would ill become one who, declining all disputes, asserts primary truths on the authority of common sense; and that whoever pleads the cause of religion in this way has a right to assume a firmer tone, and to pronounce with a more decisive air, not upon the strength of his own judgment, but on the reverence due from all mankind to the tribunal to which he appeals. *Oswald's appeal in behalf of religion*, p. 14.' These gentlemen, therefore, having discarded all pretences to *reasoning*, think themselves justified in discarding all *good manners*, and in assuming

suming an arrogance and insolence which does not become us poor reasoners. A happy privilege truly!

From these circumstances it appears to me to be impossible not to conclude, that Dr. Beattie approved, in the main, of what Dr. Oswald had written. Indeed, writing upon this subject, and mentioning him at all, it behoved him to have guarded his readers against his dangerous extravagancies, if he had not gone the same lengths himself. His candid letter to me, however, which the reader will find at the end of this book, makes me conclude, that he does not *now* approve of Dr. Oswald's writings; and I hope that, after more reflection, he will acknowledge that he has given his absurd and dangerous principles too much countenance by what he has written himself.

SECTION V.

Dr. Beattie's view of the doctrine of necessity.

AFTER the very severe and injurious treatment that Bishop Berkley's amusing theory has met with, it cannot be expected that the doctrine of *necessity*, which, like many other very good things, has had the misfortune to fall into the hands of some unbelievers, should escape Dr. Beattie's censure; especially as, like other great truths, removed from the conception of the vulgar (as that of the revolution of the earth upon its axis) it necessarily stands exposed to some plausible, but superficial, objections. There is, at the bottom, however, something so ingenuous in Dr. Beattie, that notwithstanding the vehemence of his assertions, he has not been able to conceal evident marks of the impression that has been made upon him by the arguments of the Necessarians. These, I doubt not, have

have had no small influence in determining him to shut his eyes so obstinately, to disclaim all *argument* upon the subject, and to take refuge in his most convenient and never failing principle of *common sense*.

Both the thorough satisfaction that Dr. Beattie has in his own principles, and the manner in which he attained and preserves that satisfaction, notwithstanding the *unanswerable arguments* (as he can hardly help acknowledging) of the Necessarians, may be seen in the following quotations, which I can read and transcribe without feeling myself more offended than I should be at hearing any person assert his full conviction of *the earth standing still*; being fully satisfied with the evidence that I have of the very superficial grounds on which his opinion has been formed.

‘ My intention,’ p. 295, ‘ is to treat
‘ the doctrine of necessity as I have
‘ treated that of non-existence of matter,

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‘ by

‘ by inquiring whether the one be not, as
‘ well as the other, contrary to common
‘ sense, and therefore absurd. Both doc-
‘ trines,’ p. 360, ‘ are repugnant to the
‘ general belief of mankind, both, not-
‘ withstanding all the efforts of the subtlest
‘ sophistry, are still incredible; both are
‘ so contrary to nature, and to the condi-
‘ tion of human beings, that they can-
‘ not be carried into practice, and so con-
‘ trary to true philosophy, that they can-
‘ not be admitted into science; without
‘ bringing scepticism along with them,
‘ and rendering questionable the plainest
‘ principles of moral truth, and the very
‘ distinction between truth and falsehood.
‘ In a word, we have proved that com-
‘ mon sense, as it teaches us to believe,
‘ and be assured of the existence of mat-
‘ ter, doth also teach us to believe, and be
‘ assured, that man is a free agent. My
‘ liberty, in these instances,’ p. 295, ‘ I can-
‘ not prove by argument, but there is not
‘ a truth in geometry of which I am more
‘ certain.’ Speaking of the same thing,
he says, p. 311, ‘ Some philosophers
‘ want

‘ want to prove what I know by instinct
 ‘ to be unquestionably certain. I am as
 ‘ conscious,’ p. 70, ‘ that some actions
 ‘ are in my power, and that others are
 ‘ not, &c. as I am of my own existence.’

I have no occasion to enter into a discussion of this question with Dr. Beattie. Indeed, I am precluded from doing it; for what can it avail to argue with a man who declares that he will neither argue himself nor hear the arguments of others upon the subject? But to answer this very pertinacious believer, in something of his own way, I will tell him that, if I were to take my choice of any metaphysical question, to defend it against all opposers, it should be this very absurd and obnoxious doctrine of *necessity*, of the falsehood of which our author is as certain as he is of his own existence. There is no truth of which I have less doubt, and of the grounds of which I am more fully satisfied; and I am likewise fully persuaded, not only of the perfect *innocence*, but also of the *happy moral influence* of
 it.

it. Indeed, there is no absurdity more glaring to my understanding than the notion of *philosophical liberty*; and (judging as Dr. Beattie does of Berkley's theory) of more dangerous consequence. But I have long learned to entertain no great dread of opinions theoretically dangerous, and to repeat what I have said upon a former occasion, 'Notwithstanding some sects do, in words, subvert the foundations of all virtue, they have always some *salvo* whereby they preserve a regard to it, and in reality enforce it. Such a foundation has the God of nature laid for the practice of virtue in our hearts, that it is hardly in the power of any error in our heads to erase it.' *Discourse on the Lord's Supper, third edition. p. 107*

What could lead Dr. Beattie to quote Dr. Hartley upon the subject I cannot tell, as he does not propose to enter into any discussion of the question, except it was to take an opportunity of contradicting him in his appeal to experience with relation to it, 'In all my experience,'
says

says he, p. 333, 'I have never been conscious of any such necessity as the author (Dr. Hartley) speaks of.' But so very little attention did Dr. Beattie give to any thing like *reasoning* on this subject, or even necessary explanations of it, that though Dr. Hartley, in the very passage that Dr. Beattie quotes from him, gives a very accurate state of the question, defining philosophical liberty to be *a power of doing different things, the motives, or previous circumstances, remaining precisely the same*, all that our author says upon the subject shows that the liberty which he contends for is *the power of doing what we please, or will*, which Dr. Hartley is far from denying.

It makes me smile, and I am confident it must make others smile, who shall read both these writers, to find Dr. Beattie calling Dr. Hartley *a fanciful author*. To judge by the style and manner of the two writers, I think any indifferent person would see that serious and dispassionate argument was with Dr. Hartley, and *fancy* and *imagination* wholly with Dr. Beattie.

There

There is something very singular in the manner in which Dr. Beattie treats this subject of necessity; first disclaiming all reasoning about it, then, from his natural ingenuofness, not being able intirely to satisfy himself with this conduct, half hinting at some objections, and subjoining some half answers to them; then acknowledging that the arguments on both sides *come at last to appear unanswerable*, p. 362, and so reverting to his common sense again; just as he did in his account of the foundation of moral obligation, in which he both began and ended with an appeal to the same common sense.

Among other things, our author gently touches upon the objection to the contingency of human actions from the doctrine of the *divine prescience*. In answer to which, or rather in *descanting* upon which (thinking, I suppose, to chuse the less of two evils) he seems to make no great difficulty of rejecting that most essential prerogative of the divine nature, though nothing can be
more

more fully ascertained by independent evidence from revelation, rather than give up his darling hypothesis of human liberty ; satisfying himself with observing, p. 352, that ‘ it implies no reflection on ‘ the divine power, that it cannot perform ‘ impossibilities.’ In the very same manner he might make himself perfectly easy if his hypothesis should compel him to deny any other of the attributes of God, or even his very being, for what reflection is it upon any person that things impossible cannot be. Thus our author, in the blind rage of disputation, hesitates not to deprive the ever blessed God of that very attribute by which, in the books of scripture, he expressly distinguishes himself from all false Gods, and than which nothing can be more essentially necessary to the government of the universe, rather than relinquish his fond claim to the fancied privilege of *self-determination* ; a claim which appears to me to be just as absurd as that of *self-existence*, and which could not possibly do him any good if he had it.

Terrified,

Terrified, however, as I am willing to suppose (though he does not express any such thing, as he seems to be ready, upon any emergency, with all the *sang-froid* in the world, to strike from his creed the doctrine of the divine prescience) at this consequence of his system, he thinks, with those who maintain the doctrine of a *trinity* of persons in the unity of the divine essence, and with those who assert the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, to shelter himself in the *obscurity* of his subject; saying, p. 353, that ‘we cannot comprehend the manner in which the divine being operates.’ But this refuge is equally untenable in all the cases, because the things themselves are, in their own nature, impossible, and imply a contradiction. I might just as well say that, though to us, whose understandings are so limited, *two* and *two* appear to make no more than *four*; yet in the divine mind, the comprehension of which is infinite, into which, however, we cannot look, and concerning which it is impossible,
and

and even dangerous to form conjectures, they may make *five*.

Were I possessed of Dr. Beattie's talent of declamation, and had as little scruple to make use of it, what might I not say of the absurdity of this way of talking, and of the horrible immoral consequences of denying the fore-knowledge of God? I should soon make our author and all his adherents as black as atheists. The very admission of so untractable a principle as *contingency* into the universe would be no better than admitting the Manichean doctrine of an *independent evil principle*; nay it would be really of worse consequence; for the one might be controlled, but the other could not. But I thank God my principles are more generous, and I am as far from ascribing to Dr. Beattie all the real consequences of his doctrine, (which, if he could see with my eyes, I believe he would reprobate as heartily as I do myself) as I am from admitting his injurious imputations with respect to mine.

Not-

Notwithstanding Dr. Beattie, confiding in the solidity of his own judgment, strengthened by the sanction of a *great majority of mankind*, is pleased to call Dr. Hartley a *fanciful author*, he does vouchsafe, at the same time, to call him *an ingenious and worthy one*, which, considering the horrid consequences he deduces from his principles, must argue a great deal of candour. But, indeed, I think it absolutely impossible for any person to read his *Observations on man*, and not lay down the book with the fullest conviction both of the amazing comprehensiveness and strength of his mind (to which the trifling epithet of *ingenious* is very inadequate) and of the piety, benevolence and rectitude of his heart. All who were acquainted with him join their testimony to this internal evidence from his writings.

Without, however, attempting to account for this, or any facts of the same kind, our author takes it for granted, p. 473, 351, that the doctrine of necessity is
incon-

inconsistent with the first principles of natural religion. After enumerating a number of absurd and atheistical tenets, he sums up the whole with saying, p. 317, —— ‘and now the liberty of the human
 ‘ will is questioned and debated. What
 ‘ could we expect but that it should share
 ‘ the same fate?’ ‘To believe,’ says he, p. 355, ‘that the dictates of conscience
 ‘ are false, unreasonable, or insignificant,
 ‘ is one certain effect of my becoming a
 ‘ fatalist, or even sceptical with regard to
 ‘ moral liberty.’ If I could think that this would be the consequence, I should be very sorry to hear of Dr. Beattie’s changing his sentiments on this subject; but we know very little of our own hearts, and what we should think, feel, or do, in very new situations. For my own part, I doubt not but that this very change of opinion which he dreads so much (if it be not too late for him to bear the shock that so total a revolution in his system of thinking would occasion) would bear a very favourable aspect on his virtue, and even make him a better man than he is at

N

present ;

present; though, by all accounts, he is a very good one.

As to the hackneyed objection to the doctrine of necessity, from its being inconsistent with the idea of virtue and vice, as implying praise and blame, it may be fully retorted upon its opponents. For as to their boasted *self-determining power* (were the thing possible in itself, and did not imply an absurdity) by which they pretend to have a power of acting independently of every thing that comes under the description of *motive*, I scruple not to say, that it is as foreign to every idea of virtue or vice, praise or blame, as the grossest kind of mechanism, that the most blundering writer in defence of liberty ever ascribed to the advocates for moral necessity.

It is true that, strictly speaking, the doctrine of necessity would oblige a man to depart from the common *language* in speaking of human actions; but this makes no change with respect to his *conduct*.

The

The very same is the case with respect to the doctrine of the *sun standing still*. Philosophers use the language of the vulgar with respect to this subject, and even *think* with them too, except in their closets, and when they are explicitly attending to it. Copernicus and Newton themselves, I will venture to say, not only talked of the sun rising and setting, but, *in their ordinary conceptions*, had the very same ideas that a common farmer annexes to those words. So also it is impossible that, with respect to common life, a necessarian should have any other ideas to the words praise and blame (which however are equally foreign to both the schemes of liberty and necessity, philosophically and strictly considered) than other people have, and he will be influenced as much by them. And as to the different views that he will be able to take of these things in *contemplation*, they appear to me only to remove virtue from one foundation to place it upon another, much broader and firmer. Our conduct depends not upon what we *think* our con-

stitution to be, but upon what it really is. But upon this subject I refer to Dr. Hartley, both for argument, and example.

Upon this, as upon a former occasion, I cannot help observing what different company I and Dr. Beattie have kept. ‘I have found,’ says he, p. 344, ‘all the impartial, the most sagacious, and worthy part of mankind, enemies to fatality in their hearts.’ On the contrary, a considerable majority of my acquaintance, men of whose understanding and hearts not myself only, but all who know them have the highest opinion, have been, and are, confirmed necessarians.

For my own part, if I might be allowed to follow Dr. Beattie’s example in appealing to my own experience, I would tell him that I embraced the doctrine of necessity from the time that I first studied the subject; I have been a firm believer of it ever since, without having ever entertained the least suspicion of there being any fallacy belonging to it;
I meditate

I meditate frequently upon it, and yet every consideration of it, and every view of things suggested by it, appears to me to give an elevation to the sentiments, the most exalted conceptions of the great author of nature, and of the excellence and perfection of his works and designs, the greatest purity and fervor to our virtue, the most unbounded benevolence to our fellow creatures, the most ardent zeal to serve them, and the most unre-served and joyful confidence in divine providence, with respect to all things, past, present, and to come.

In short, I have no conception that the man whose mind is capable of entertaining, and duly contemplating what is called the doctrine of necessity, and its genuine consequences, as unfolded by Dr. Hartley, can be a bad man; nay that he can be other than an extraordinary good one. I am confident that I shall improve myself continually by frequent and *steady* views of this subject, and such as are connected with it, and

by being actuated by them more than I have been. It is true that I had the unspeakable happiness of a very strict and religious education; but notwithstanding this, had the doctrine of necessity, in reality, any immoral tendency, I am positive it would have done me an irreparable injury at the time that I adopted it.

Let Dr. Beattie reflect upon these things with the candour that I am willing to think is natural to him, and I doubt not he will feel himself disposed to unsay some of the harsh things that have dropped from him on this subject.

That my reader may enjoy the pleasure of *contrast* in a higher degree, I shall subjoin to this section a few extracts from Mr. Jonathan Edwards, in which he expresses his opinion of the unfavourable tendency of the doctrine of philosophical liberty, which he calls the *Arminian* doctrine with respect to virtue and religion, &c. in his *Treatise on free will*; which I had not read till after the whole
of

of this book, and even the préface, except the paragraph relating to it, was transcribed for the press.

‘Arminian principles and notions,’ p. 267, ‘when fairly examined, and pursued in their demonstrable consequences, do evidently shut all virtue out of the world, and make it impossible that there should ever be any such thing, in any case, or that any such thing should ever be conceived of. For by these principles the very notion of virtue or vice implies absurdity and contradiction.’

‘A moral necessity of men’s actions,’ p. 16, Appendix, ‘is not at all inconsistent with any liberty that any creature has, or can have, as a free, accountable, moral agent, and subject of moral government. This moral necessity is so far from being inconsistent with praise and blame, and the benefit and use of men’s own care and labour, that, on the contrary, it implies the very ground and

‘ reason why men’s actions are to be
 ‘ ascribed to them as their own, in that
 ‘ manner as to infer desert, praise and
 ‘ blame, approbation and remorse of con-
 ‘ science, reward and punishment; and it
 ‘ establisshes the moral system of the uni-
 ‘ verse, and God’s moral government, in
 ‘ every respect, with the proper use of
 ‘ motives, exhortations, commands, coun-
 ‘ cils; promises and threatnings, and the
 ‘ use and benefit of endeavours, care and
 ‘ industry; and therefore there is no need
 ‘ that the strict philosophic truth should
 ‘ be at all concealed from men: ‘ So far
 ‘ from this, the truth in this matter is of
 ‘ vast importance, and extremely need-
 ‘ ful to be known, and the more con-
 ‘ stantly it is in view the better.’

‘ The moral necessity of men’s actions,’
 p. 7, ‘ is requisite to the being of virtue
 ‘ and vice, or any thing praise-worthy or
 ‘ culpable; and the liberty of indifference,
 ‘ and contingency, which is advanced in
 ‘ opposition to that necessity, is incon-
 ‘ sistent with the being of these.—If we
 ‘ pursue

‘pursue these principles,’ p. 258, ‘we shall
 ‘find that virtue and vice are wholly ex-
 ‘cluded out of the world, and that there
 ‘never was, or ever can be, any such
 ‘thing as one or the other, either in God,
 ‘angels, or men,’

‘The doctrine of necessity,’ p. 386,
 ‘which supposes a necessary connection
 ‘of all events, on some antecedent ground
 ‘and reason of their existence, is the only
 ‘medium we have to prove the being of
 ‘God. And the contrary doctrine of
 ‘contingence, which certainly implies, or
 ‘infers, that events may come into ex-
 ‘istence, or begin to be, without de-
 ‘pendence on any thing foregoing, as
 ‘their cause, ground, or reason, takes
 ‘away all proof of the being of God.’

‘It is so far from being true,’ p. 15,
 ‘that our minds are naturally possessed
 ‘with a notion of such liberty as this, (so
 ‘strongly that it is impossible to root it
 ‘out) that, indeed, men have no such
 ‘notion of liberty at all, and it is utterly
 ‘impossible,

‘ impossible, by any means whatsoever;
 ‘ to implant or introduce such a notion
 ‘ into the mind.—The greatest and most
 ‘ learned advocates themselves for liberty
 ‘ of indifference and self-determination
 ‘ have no such notion; and indeed they
 ‘ mean something wholly inconsistent
 ‘ with, and directly subversive of, what
 ‘ they strenuously affirm, and earnestly
 ‘ contend for.’

‘ All the Arminians on earth,’ p. 411;
 ‘ might be challenged, without arrogance,
 ‘ to make these principles of theirs con-
 ‘ sistent with common sense, yea and per-
 ‘ haps to produce any doctrine ever em-
 ‘ braced by the blindest bigot of the
 ‘ church of Rome, or the most ignorant
 ‘ Mussulman, or extravagant enthusiast;
 ‘ that might be reduced to more, and
 ‘ more demonstrable inconsistencies and
 ‘ repugnancies to common sense, and to
 ‘ themselves; though their inconsistencies
 ‘ may not, indeed, lie so deep, or be so
 ‘ artfully veiled by a deceitful ambiguity
 ‘ of

‘of words, and an indeterminate signification of phrases.’

How very different is the *common sense* of Mr. Edwards from the common sense of Dr. Beattie! How uniform and infallible is this guide to truth!

SECTION VI.

The conclusion.

WHEN I consider the many seemingly plain and unequivocal marks of a good intention, and good disposition in Dr. Beattie, I am puzzled to account for his gross and injurious misrepresentations of the sentiments of his adversaries, and at the violence with which he is actuated, bordering sometimes upon a spirit of persecution.

‘The

‘The vulgar,’ he says, p. 49, ‘when they are puzzled with argument, have recourse to their common sense, and acquiesce in it so steadily, as often to render all the arts of the logician ineffectual; *I am confuted, but not convinced*, is an apology sometimes offered when one has nothing to oppose to the arguments of the antagonist; but the original undisguised feelings of his own mind. This apology is, indeed, very inconsistent with the dignity of philosophic pride, which, taking for granted that nothing exceeds the limits of human capacity, professes to confute whatever it cannot believe, and, which is still more difficult, to believe whatever it cannot confute; but this apology may be perfectly consistent with sincerity and candour, and with that principle, of which Pope says, that, *though no science, it is fairly worth the seven.*’

Now what is this but insinuating, nay it is something more than insinuating, that all those who do not admit this new doctrine

trine of *the infallibility of common sense*, are possessed of so much philosophic pride, that they take it for granted that nothing can exceed the limits of their capacity ; that we profess to confute whatever we cannot believe, and to believe whatever we cannot confute. But whatever effect this representation may have upon those who, knowing but little of men and books, are disposed to take for granted whatever such a man as Dr. Beattie will venture to assert so roundly, it is a mere chimera of his own brain : and this mode of writing is a most unjustifiable method of drawing an odium upon his opponents, who, perhaps, have no more philosophic pride than himself. If arrogance and insolence be an indication of pride, Dr. Beattie has certainly no small share of it, though it may hitherto have escaped his own search.

His tacking the doctrine of necessity to the end of a list of peculiarly obnoxious and atheistical tenets, as if it was the natural and necessary completion of the whole scheme, in the preceding quotation,

tion, is another instance of his unfairness, that looks very like *artifice*; and which I think exceedingly unjustifiable. A little of *irony* and *satyr*, and something approaching to *asperity*, may, perhaps, be indulged, as in a manner necessary to enliven controversial writing; at least it may be apologized for, as almost unavoidably suggested by the heat of debate; but the passages I have quoted above have a very different and a more malignant aspect.

Dr. Beattie's vehemence, and his antipathy to those who differ from him, though he is quite a *volunteer* in the controversy, and cannot plead that he was heated by any *personal opposition*, approaches too near to the spirit of persecution. At least I do not see how else to interpret the following passage, and I earnestly wish that the ingenuous author would do it himself, and help us, if it be possible, to interpret it without having recourse to so unfavourable a comment. 'Had I,' p. 20, 'done
' but half as much as he (Mr. Hume) in
' labour-

‘labouring to subvert principles which
 ‘ought ever to be held sacred, I know not
 ‘whether the *friends of truth* would have
 ‘granted me any indulgence. I am sure
 ‘they ought not. Let me be treated with
 ‘the lenity due to a good citizen no longer
 ‘than I act as becomes one.’

Certainly the obvious construction of this passage is, that Mr. Hume ought not to be treated with the indulgence and lenity due to a good citizen, but ought to be punished as a bad one. And what is this but what a Bonner or a Gardiner might have put into the preamble of an order for his execution? Judging as Dr. Beattie does, by his own ideas of the tendency of principles, expressed in this book, he will, I doubt not, think several of my writings, if they have happened to fall in his way, and especially these remarks on his treatise (in which I own I have endeavoured to lay the ax to the very root of *his* fundamental principles of virtue, religion and truth) to be equally dangerous, provided he should think them in equal danger of spreading ;
 and,

and, if he be consistent with himself, and think me worthy of his notice, I shall expect, after a summary process before the tribunal of his common sense, to be consigned to the disposal of his *friends of truth*, who may not be equally the friends and lovers of *mercy*. But, thanks to a good superintending providence, which influences the hearts; and directs the affairs of men, our governors either do not entertain the sentiments, or are not inspired with the zeal of our author.

Dr. Beattie and I must certainly think and feel very differently with respect to many things. His dread of infidel writings, and his apprehension of the mischief they may do, far exceeds mine. ‘The writings of Mr. Hume,’ he says, p. 472, ‘notwithstanding their obscurity, have done mischief enough to make every sober-minded person earnestly wish that they had never existed.’

Now I, for my part, am truly pleased with such publications as those of Mr. Hume,

Hume, and I do not think it requires any great sagacity, or strength of mind, to see that such writings must be of great service to religion, natural and revealed. They have actually occasioned the subject to be more thoroughly canvassed, and consequently to be better understood than ever it was before; and thus *vice cotis funguntur*.

In what a wretched state would christianity have universally been at present, loaded with such absurdities and impieties as all the establishments of it contain, (that of Scotland by no means excepted) if it had not been for such a scrutiny into it as the writings of unbelievers have promoted, and indeed have made absolutely necessary.

Infidelity appears to me to have been the natural and necessary produce of corrupted christianity; but I have no doubt but that this evil will find its own remedy, by purging our religion of all the absurdities it contains, and thereby enabling it

to triumph over all opposition. Things are now in such a train that infidelity will have every day less and less to carp at in christianity; till at length its excellence and divine authority will be universally acknowledged.

REMARKS

R E M A R K S

O N

Dr. OSWALD's APPEAL

T O

C O M M O N S E N S E

I N B E H A L F O F

R E L I G I O N.

THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE

ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF

NEW YORK

FOR THE

SESSION

OF 1881

AND

1882

IN

THE

SENATE

CHAMBERS

OF THE

STATE

OF

NEW YORK

T H E

INTRODUCTION.

THE controversy in which I am now engaged may perhaps illustrate the propriety of the old Latin proverb *Principiis obsta*. Dr. Reid's new principle of *Common sense*, or, to give it a name less ambiguous, and more appropriated to its office, his *sense of truth*, notwithstanding the prodigious assurance with which it was ushered into the world, and notwithstanding the manifest inconsistency there is between it and the fundamental principles of Mr. Locke, concerning the human mind, was suffered to pass without any particular notice. I suppose because no particular *use* was made of it. It was considered as nothing more than a new-fashioned theory of the human mind, eagerly adopted and cried up by some,

who, in my opinion, were very superficial judges of such things; while those who thought with me, that the whole system was ill founded, did not, I suppose, think it worth their while to make any opposition to it; concluding that in due time the futility of it could not fail to be seen through, when it would fall into oblivion of itself.

Presently, however, we find two writers, men of some note, Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald, (seeing that this new doctrine of *a sense of truth* was received without any opposition) beginning to avail themselves of it for the defence of religion, and of some peculiar tenets of their own, in the regular proof of which they had been embarrassed. Dr. Beattie, indeed, with some degree of moderation and timidity, and not much in the detail of things; but Dr. Oswald with great particularity, and with as much bigotry and violence, as if his principles had been the established faith of all mankind in all ages, and not, as in truth they are, *a thing of yesterday*.

Finding

Finding this new power of the human mind to be decisive and irresistible within its jurisdiction, and requiring no aid from reason, he immediately sets about enlarging its province (as the English government have lately done that of Quebec) throwing into it, without any regard to reason or conscience, every thing that he thought of value, and which he had found any difficulty in defending upon other principles.

By this means he has eased himself at once of the defence of all the first principles, or, as he calls them, *primary truths of religion*; such as the being, the unity, the moral perfections, and providence of God, and a future state; of the evidences also of christianity, and even many of his favourite and least defensible doctrines in the christian system. And, moreover, on this new ground, as from a sanctuary, he pours the grossest abuse both upon all unbelievers, and those who have opposed them on the principles of reason only; treating them alike as fools or mad-

men. Dr. Oswald's treatise, however, as well as Dr. Beattie's, has many admirers, both north and south of the Tweed.

Finding things in this situation, I own I was willing to interpose my feeble endeavours to put a stop to this sudden torrent of nonsense and abuse that is pouring down upon us from the North, though at the evident *risk of my character*, as Dr. Oswald, vol. 2, p. 328, will tell me, and laying my account with meeting all that magisterial insolence, which he, and indeed the whole *triumvirate*, have boldly assumed with respect to others.

But if this task should not be undertaken by some person, I am afraid we shall find these new principles extending their authority farther than the precincts of metaphysics, morals, religion, christianity, and protestantism, to which they have been hitherto confined. Papists may begin to avail themselves of them for the support of all those doctrines and maxims for which the powers of reason had proved insufficient ;

insufficient; and politicians also, possessing themselves of this advantage, may venture once more to thunder out upon us their exploded doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. For having now nothing to fear from the powers of *reason*, and being encouraged by the example of grave divines and metaphysicians, they may venture to assert their favourite maxims with the greatest confidence; appealing at once to this ultimate tribunal of common sense, and giving out their own mandates as the decisions of this new tribunal. For every man will think himself authorized to assume the office of interpreting its decrees, as this new power holds a separate office in every man's own breast. Indeed our author has left the politician but little to do with respect to this doctrine, having ranked *obedience to the magistrate* among the primary truths of nature. p. 247.

Considering the very late origin of this new empire of common sense, its conquests, it must be confessed, have been
pretty

pretty rapid; and as it has subdued all the regions of metaphysics, morals, and theology in the space of ten years, it may be computed that, with this addition of strength, it may, in ten years more, complete the reduction of all the seven sciences; when the whole business of *thinking* will be in a manner over, and we shall have nothing to do but to *see* and *believe*.

Now, being no friend to implicit faith, because, perhaps, it has been no friend to me, I am willing to oppose the farther encroachments of this bold invader, before it be quite too late. And having already made two campaigns in this just cause, as it appears to me, I am now preparing for a third, which I foresee will be more difficult and hazardous than both the former. Nevertheless I will not despair; since, if I fail, I shall, at least, be intitled to the epitaph of Phaeton, *Magnis tamen excidit ausis*.

But,

But, dropping this figure, I really am much more at a loss how to answer Dr. Oswald, than either Dr. Reid, or Dr. Beattie, on account of the great incoherence of his work, and his remarkably loose and declamatory way of writing; on which account his argument is so involved, that there is hardly any such thing as coming at it; so that, though I have often said, that if I have any talent, it is a facility in arrangement, I own that, for once, I have been exceedingly puzzled, and do not clearly see my way. I shall proceed, however, in the best manner that I can; giving, in the first place, the history of this new science, as deduced by our author; then explaining the nature and extent of it; after which I shall show more particularly the relation it bears to reasoning, and point out some particular applications that our author has made of it.

In all this I shall do little more than select and arrange a number of passages that I have collected from our author.

For

For I must acknowledge, that if he has embarrassed me, and taken up my time in the disposition of my materials, he has made me amends by saving me the trouble of making many observations. In fact, I shall have occasion to do little more than let our author speak for himself, only putting his words a little nearer together than he would have done. And as our author seems to have had great satisfaction in the first publication of his work, I hope he will not be displeased at this *new edition* of it. For whatever my reader may think of him, as a *reasoner*, my quotations cannot fail to verify the character that Dr. Beattie (whose judgment in this case no person will call in question) gives of him, viz. that he is an *elegant writer*.

SECTION I.

Of the History of Common sense.

IT has been a great loss to history, that the principal actors in many great achievements have not themselves written the history of them. But Dr. Oswald has taken sufficient care that there should be no complaint of this kind with respect to the late triumph of *sense* over *reason*. For though he himself is but the second in succession from Dr. Reid, who planned and began the attack, he has taken an opportunity of fully stating the ground of the war, and informing us of the progress that his predecessor had made in it.

The more fully to explain the rise of this new system, our author goes back to the times preceding the reformation from popery. Speaking of this popish darkness, he says, p. 52, 'Upon consulting the sacred records, and appealing to them' (not *reasoning* from them) 'one half

‘ half of Christendom were made sensible
‘ of their folly, and shook off the domi-
‘ nion of ignorance and error.—They
‘ split again into sects, formed different
‘ creeds, and different plans of worship
‘ and government; and having been
‘ much exercised in subtle and hot dis-
‘ putes with the Romish doctors, they
‘ entered into contests of much the same
‘ kind, and in much the same spirit, with
‘ one another, about their peculiar tenets.
‘ Mean time, a sect arose who called the
‘ whole in question; and, believing them-
‘ selves equally privileged with others to
‘ sound unfathomable depths, they em-
‘ ployed the same subtlety of reasoning
‘ against religion which contending di-
‘ vines had employed against each other;
‘ and the friends of religion, not aware
‘ of the consequence, did partly from
‘ their zeal for the truth, and partly from
‘ a habit of disputing, and a confidence
‘ of victory, admit the whole to debate.’

Religion being now, through the fatal
imprudence of its best friends, and the
ablest

ablest that the times (which produced no such men as Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, or Dr. Oswald) afforded, become a subject of debate, divines were obliged to make the best of the arms with which they were furnished for the engagement. How things were conducted before the time of Mr. Locke our author does not particularly say; but though his writings were universally thought to be of great advantage to the cause of truth and religion, yet Dr. Oswald informs us that he set out wrong, and thereby gave the enemy too great advantage.

‘Mr. Locke, p. 108, unfortunately, derived all our knowledge from sensation or reflection, intirely overlooking another principle, more important than them both, and without which they are of no avail. Sensation and reflection,’ our author says, ‘do indeed give occasion to all our ideas, but they do not produce them. They may, in our present state, be considered as the *sine qua non* to our most rational and sublime conceptions,

' ceptions, but are not therefore the pow-
 ' ers by which we form them. These
 ' conceptions are formed in us by another
 ' and different power, which Mr. Locke,
 ' and unhappily, after him, the bulk of
 ' the learned, have overlooked. In this;
 ' p. 109, he has committed a capital over-
 ' sight of very bad consequence. He has
 ' not only put the learned upon a false
 ' scent, but has brought the primary
 ' truths of nature under suspicion, and
 ' opened a door to universal scepticism.'

At this door, set open by Mr. Locke,
 Mr. Hume and others have found ad-
 mission. Hence, p. 110, disputes
 ' upon the most important subjects have
 ' been maintained, to the detriment of
 ' religion, and the disgrace of the human
 ' understanding; nor will it be possible
 ' to put an end to these disputes, without
 ' searching farther into the powers of the
 ' human mind than Mr. Locke has done.'

To pursue this curious history a little
 farther, ' Mr. Hume had penetration
 ' enough,'

‘ enough,’ p. 110, ‘ to perceive the defect
 ‘ of Mr. Locke’s hypothesis, but had not
 ‘ the courage to supply that defect, by the
 ‘ only way in which it could be supplied.
 ‘ Perhaps he suspected that philosophers
 ‘ would not submit to the authority of
 ‘ common sense, or was himself too much
 ‘ a philosopher to have recourse to an
 ‘ authority so vulgar and homely. He
 ‘ therefore found himself under a neces-
 ‘ sity of making the best account he
 ‘ could of the phenomena of nature by
 ‘ the received doctrine of the connection
 ‘ and association of ideas; and it must
 ‘ be owned that his account is extremely
 ‘ ingenious.’

‘ The author of the *Essays on the prin-*
 ‘ *ciples of morality and natural religion,*
 ‘ published Edinburgh, 1751, p. 94, 112,
 ‘ alarmed at Mr. Hume’s confounding
 ‘ rational belief with credulity, and deny-
 ‘ ing the connection between cause and
 ‘ effect, has said all that is necessary in
 ‘ confutation of his opinion; but he has
 ‘ confuted Mr. Hume upon principles too

P

‘ much

‘ much a-kin to his own. He has recourse
 ‘ to our being so constituted that we must
 ‘ perceive, feel, and believe certain truths,
 ‘ without laying open the human consti-
 ‘ tution, or once attempting to point out
 ‘ that in our frame which produces the
 ‘ way of thinking, which he justly says is
 ‘ unavoidable. That certain persons are
 ‘ so constituted is perhaps all the account
 ‘ that can be made of odd and fanciful
 ‘ perceptions or feelings ; but a more sa-
 ‘ tisfactory account ought to be given of
 ‘ the primary truths of nature. He has
 ‘ not bestowed that attention on the lead-
 ‘ ing power which is due ; nor seems he
 ‘ to have reached a true and full view of
 ‘ the characteristic of a rational being.’
 p. 114.

After these gross blunders of Mr.
 Locke, Mr. Hume, and the author of
 the Essays, it is pleasing to observe the
 approach that was made towards the dis-
 covery of this great principle of common
 sense by Mr. Hutcheson. ‘ Mr. Hutche-
 ‘ son,’ p. 158, ‘ thought that he had made
 ‘ a dis-

‘ a discovery of a new faculty of the human mind, which he was intitled to call by a new name, and thereby gave offence to the friends of demonstration ; but in reality this great philosopher had only got a view, and but a partial view of common sense.’

Behold, however, at length, the great *desideratum* completely discovered ; and after this state of deplorable darkness and obscure gueffings, full day light is diffused by Dr. Reid. ‘ Dr. Reid,’ vol. 2, p. 329, ‘ has put an effectual stop to the artifices of sceptics, by pointing out three powers of the mind, evidently distinct, and easily distinguished,’ meaning perception, memory, and imagination ; the operations of two of which imply the belief of the real existence of their respective objects. ‘ We have found then,’ says our author, p. 268, ‘ a source of ideas that has been too long overlooked, and in it have found the much contested source of moral obligation. Theology and ethics are now to be

‘ considered as a real science, founded on
 ‘ principles of indubitable certainty ; prin-
 ‘ ciples, which, if they are not as much
 ‘ regarded, are, however, intitled to equal
 ‘ regard with the axioms of the schools—
 ‘ the principles of *common sense*.’

‘ Of late, p. 168, there has appeared
 ‘ *An inquiry into the human mind, on the*
 ‘ *principles of common sense*, by Dr. Reid,
 ‘ in which he gives such an account of the
 ‘ operations of our powers, as shews it to
 ‘ be impossible for a rational being to
 ‘ doubt the reality of the objects of sense,
 ‘ and gives us ground to expect, from a
 ‘ farther pursuit of his inquiry, such a dis-
 ‘ play of the powers of the human mind
 ‘ as will render it impossible for any one
 ‘ to doubt of the obvious truths of religion
 ‘ and virtue, without being convicted of
 ‘ folly or madness ; so that the triumph of
 ‘ truth over error, and of true science over
 ‘ false philosophy may not be very distant.

‘ Upon the whole, p. 169, we are ar-
 ‘ rived at a period, in which, if it is not
 ‘ our

‘ our own fault, we may dismiss frivolous
 ‘ controversies, and settle in the belief of
 ‘ primary truth upon the most solid foun-
 ‘ dation.’

It is my *misfortune*, or, as Dr. Oswald says above, my *fault*, that I cannot as yet dismiss all controversy, and settle upon this solid foundation.

SECTION II.

*Of the nature, limits, and general use of
 the principle of Common sense.*

HAVING seen the history of this great discovery deduced, with a solemnity worthy of its importance, my reader, if I had not in some measure gratified his curiosity already, in my account of Dr. Reid's and Dr. Beattie's performances, would have been impatient to be informed more particularly what this common

senſe is. I can promiſe him, however, that though he has ſeen much, there is more to be ſeen; and that he will get new light and information from this and the following ſections.

In the firſt place, I ſhall preſent him with Dr. Oſwald's idea of the *nature*, *limits*, and *general uſes* of the faculty of common ſenſe.

According to our author, this new-diſcovered faculty is the ‘leading and ſupreme power of the rational mind,’ as he deſcribes it in the following paſſage, in which he alſo moſt pathetically laments that it has been hitherto much overlooked and neglected.

‘The powers of compounding,’ p. 86,
 ‘dividing, and abſtracting our ideas have
 ‘been unfolded with the greateſt accu-
 ‘racy and judgment; but its leading
 ‘power, that which is ſupreme in the
 ‘rational mind, and is its chief preroga-
 ‘tive and characteriſtic, has been much
 ‘neg-

‘ neglected. Its objects are not enu-
 ‘ rated, its extent is not known, and its
 ‘ authority is little regarded. For which
 ‘ reason a standard of theologic, ethic,
 ‘ and political truth is to this hour a *desi-*
 ‘ *deratum* with the learned. On all these
 ‘ subjects we are become expert reason-
 ‘ ers, but hardly know when or where to
 ‘ stop, or how to form a firm and steady
 ‘ judgment.’

The great importance of this principle may farther appear from the following censure of Mr. Locke. ‘ There is a ne-
 ‘ cessity of declaring,’ p. 70, ‘ in plain
 ‘ terms, that Mr. Locke, in his account
 ‘ of the origin of our ideas, is guilty of
 ‘ an oversight of very bad consequence.
 ‘ If, as our author represents, we can
 ‘ have no ideas besides those arising im-
 ‘ mediately from impressions made on our
 ‘ organs of sense, or our own reflections
 ‘ upon those, then the authority of com-
 ‘ mon sense must go for nothing, and a
 ‘ free scope is given to scepticism with re-

‘spect to all truths that are not the immediate objects of sense.’

If we ask why this new faculty is to be called *sense*, or *common sense* (for as to a regular *definition*, that he absolutely declines giving us, leaving us to make it out as we can) he answers as follows, ‘This characteristic power of the rational mind,’ vol. 2, p. iv. *Advertisement*, ‘on account of its quickness, clearness, and indubitable certainty, is called sense, and on account of its being possessed in one degree or other by all of the rational kind, is called common sense.’ In this I would observe that our author differs from Dr. Beattie, who only says that this common sense is given to *a great majority of mankind*.

The great use of this common sense is that, instead of having *perceptions* or *emotions* for its object, like the other senses, it is employed about the more important business of *truth*, which it suggests with-
out

out the help of any proper evidence ;
and yet it is the means of making the
greatest and most important discoveries.

‘ Mr. Locke unhappily overlooked the
‘ chief inlet to truth,’ vol. 2, p. 42. ‘ That
‘ discoveries may be made in the arts and
‘ sciences by reasoning will not be denied ;
‘ but that discoveries more numerous,
‘ more useful, and more certain may be
‘ made in both by a judicious attention
‘ to the operations of nature, cannot be
‘ doubted.’ p. 34.

But the most important use of this new
principle is derived from its relation to
morals. It is ‘ the faculty of distin-
‘ guishing between fit and unfit, right
‘ and wrong in conduct.’ p. 119.

This principle of common sense our
author also considers as ‘ the *charac-*
‘ *teristic of rationality,*’ p. 102. ‘ We
‘ are not distinguished,’ he says, p. 114,
‘ from idiots and the lower animals by
‘ perceptions, feelings, and instinctive
‘ emo-

‘ emotions. We have perceptions specifically different from these, which the lower animals have not,’ p. 116, ‘ viz. the perception of obvious truth and palpable absurdity,’ p. 117. ‘ Mr. Locke,’ p. 179, ‘ was guilty of a capital oversight; in making abstraction the characteristic of rationality. There is another faculty which makes a yet more perfect distinction between men and brutes, the faculty, to wit, of perceiving and pronouncing upon the connection which subsists between qualities and powers, and the subjects to which they belong; of which faculty if the brutes were possessed, there seems no ground to doubt of their power of abstracting, occasionally, those qualities and powers, in the same manner we do.’

So plain is it, that it is this common sense that makes the difference between men and the lower animals, that, according to our author, none but those who are themselves ideots can doubt of it. ‘ That we are distinguished by a set of ideas, and a system of knowledge specifically different

‘ different from theirs (the brutes) might
 ‘ without more ado be appealed to the
 ‘ breast of every man who is above the
 ‘ rank of an idiot; were it not that the
 ‘ learned lay us under a necessity of giving
 ‘ them in detail.’ p. 189.

It is the possession of this faculty of common sense that distinguishes men from *ideots* no less than from the lower animals. ‘ The characteristic of idiotism consists in an incapacity to distinguish between chance and design.’ Vol. 2, p. 55.

We shall now consider how this new faculty is to be distinguished from the old ones, and first from *intuition*; with respect to which we shall find there has been some little fluctuation in our author’s judgment, which appears to be rather unusual with him.

‘ The man who from the looks, gestures, and speech of his adversary, sees
 ‘ rage and resentment, which are not,
 ‘ strictly

‘ strictly speaking, objects of intuition,
 ‘ has the same information of those pas-
 ‘ sions as he has of any other reality, which
 ‘ he perceives intuitively by his external
 ‘ and internal senses,’ p. 238. ‘ If I be
 ‘ asked whether primary truths are disco-
 ‘ vered by intuition, the answer will be in
 ‘ the negative ; because intuition has been
 ‘ confined to our perceptions of the ob-
 ‘ vious relations and qualities of being.’
 But he affirms, at the same time, that our
 knowledge of primary truths is equally
 certain and indubitable as that of intui-
 tion. p. 238.

Afterwards our author owns that the
 knowledge we acquire by common sense
 is properly intuitive. ‘ I was,’ says he,
 p. 357, ‘ too scrupulous on that occasion.
 ‘ Our knowledge of primary truth has an
 ‘ equal title with our knowledge of all
 ‘ other self-evident truths to be resolved
 ‘ into intuition.’

Our author distinguishes the informa-
 tions of common sense from those of *ex-*
perience,

perience, as being more certain. ‘ I do
 ‘ not,’ p. 361, ‘ found our belief of pri-
 ‘ mary truths on experience alone; for
 ‘ experience alone doth not produce cer-
 ‘ tainty.—The unthinking part of man-
 ‘ kind,’ p. 363, ‘ are often governed solely
 ‘ by experience in much the same man-
 ‘ ner as children and ideots; but men of
 ‘ understanding search for a more firm
 ‘ foundation of their faith.—The vulgar
 ‘ are not accurate reasoners, and yet you
 ‘ will find that they do not chuse to rest
 ‘ in experience alone.’

It has been seen above that our author complains of the author of the *Essays* for confuting Mr. Hume upon principles too near a-kin to his own. However I must own that, for my part, I can see no material difference between the sentiments of the author of the *Essays*, as explained by our author, and those of Dr. Oswald himself. ‘ He has recourse,’ says our author, p. 112, ‘ to our being so constituted that
 ‘ we must perceive, feel, and believe cer-
 ‘ tain truths, without laying open the
 ‘ human

‘human constitution, are once attempting
 ‘to point out that in our frame which
 ‘produces a way of thinking, which he
 ‘justly says is unavoidable.’ Now it appears to me that all the more satisfactory account that Dr. Oswald himself can give of this part of my constitution, and all that he and Dr. Reid have done towards *laying it open*, is merely verbal, viz. giving a *name* to this unknown something, calling it *common sense*. But what addition is this to our knowledge of the subject?

Our author appears to be a little embarrassed about the boundary between the province of *reason* and that of *common sense*, in the business of inferring the laws of nature from the phenomena. This has hitherto been ascribed to reason, but our author, desirous to find sufficient employment for his new principle, is unwilling to admit of this, except in a qualified sense. ‘It is common to say.’ p. 235, ‘that we infer the laws of nature from the phenomena; but that way of speaking
 ‘ing

‘ing is not philosophically, nor strictly
 ‘true. In every just inference there is a
 ‘reference to some well known truth, by
 ‘the help of which the inference is made,
 ‘and on the truth of which its justness
 ‘depends. But there is no truth in na-
 ‘ture by which we can infer those realities
 ‘which are not the objects of sense from
 ‘those that are. From the appearance
 ‘of smoke we infer fire. Why? Because
 ‘we know the connection between the
 ‘one and the other. Thus some general
 ‘truth is always understood, on the
 ‘knowledge of which the inference de-
 ‘pends.’

But he afterwards says, ‘if any,’ vol. 2,
 p. 36, ‘chuse to say that they infer the
 ‘primary truths from the phenomena,
 ‘we allow the phraseology, upon condi-
 ‘tion they keep in mind, that the inference
 ‘results immediately and unavoidably
 ‘from due attention to the object, and
 ‘without the help of any middle term.
 ‘Or if they chuse to call such obvious
 ‘and necessary deductions reasoning, we
 ‘will

‘ will not dispute about a word, provided
‘ they allow that such reasoning is not sub-
‘ ject to the danger of those errors and
‘ mistakes we are liable to in every other
‘ exercise of the discursive faculty.’

Some of the dictates of this general principle of common sense, our author informs us, are the mathematical axioms; and the difference between these and other primary truths he explains as follows. ‘ The difference between the evidence
‘ for mathematical axioms and that which
‘ we have for other primary truths is
‘ merely circumstantial,’ p. 139. ‘ In
‘ judging of mathematical axioms you see
‘ the ground on which you proceed,
‘ which you do not see in judging of many
‘ other truths, on which we pronounce
‘ with equal certainty,’ vol. 2, p. 324. So that whether we see the ground on which we walk, or not, we may proceed with equal confidence, being equally secure from falling.

SECTION III.

Of the sufficiency and universality of the principle of Common sense.

CONSIDERING the very important nature, high rank, and authority of common sense, my reader will be pleased to be informed of the *sufficiency* and *universality* of it, and of the confidence with which its dictates may, and ought to be delivered, whenever sceptical reasoners call them in question.

‘The principles of good sense are so plain,’ says our author, p. 17, ‘that to illustrate and inculcate them is to tire the patience, and affront the judgment of the reader. The human mind,’ p. 8, ‘has a power of pronouncing, at first sight, on obvious truth with a quickness, clearness, and indubitable certainty, similar, if not equal, to the information conveyed by the external organs of sense. Its exercise begins in children

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‘with

‘with the first dawn of rationality, and
 ‘not till then; and is ever after enjoyed,
 ‘in some degree, by learned and un-
 ‘learned; and by every individual of the
 ‘human kind, who is not an idiot, and
 ‘somehow disordered in his intellects.
 ‘No man can be at a loss,’ p. 249, ‘to
 ‘know the propositions that are the ob-
 ‘jects of common sense from those that
 ‘are not, and to determine with himself
 ‘whether he has, or has not, a right to
 ‘suspend his judgment.’

Considering that the dictates of this
 common sense are so *clear*, and likewise
universal, our author must not be cen-
 sured when he treats those who do not
 listen to them with a severity suited to
 their desperate folly and madness; even
 though upon some particular occasions
 he should so far transgress the scripture
 rule, as to call his brother a *fool*.

‘If your adversary,’ p. 12, ‘have the
 ‘boldness to question the truth of first
 ‘principles, or to substitute chimeras,
 draw ‘instead

‘ instead of principles, you must necessarily appeal to common sense; and if you do so, you must show him how far he deviates from the standard appealed to, i. e. in other words you must convict him of *nonsense*. The harsh expression may and ought to be avoided, but the idea conveyed by it must be kept in view. Without that you do nothing. Your appeal will be found frivolous and unjust.’

‘ It is impossible,’ p. 134, ‘ to observe inferior animals move hither and thither by the direction of their appetites and inclinations without conceiving the idea of that self-determining power by which they act, &c. If any one has attended to such operations, without arriving at the knowledge and belief of such principles of action, we do not blame the dulness or slowness of his apprehension, but without scruple pronounce him a *fool*.’

So abundantly sufficient are the dictates of this common sense, that in many cases they even supersede all other help to truth. With respect to religion more especially we are much better without them. They only embarrass and perplex us.

‘I should not be very glad,’ says our author, p. 353, ‘to see a demonstration of the being and perfections of God that would stand the severest trial: For a demonstration equal to any in Euclid could add nothing to the belief that every rational being has of it. You may rest assured,’ p. 354, ‘that the best proof or demonstration of these truths is that you cannot admit the supposition of the contrary, without your being conscious of your playing the *fool* or the *madman*.’ He recommends, p. 92, ‘asserting in a high tone, that no demonstration is of equal force with common sense, and no confutation can serve the interest of truth so effectually, as a plain conviction of nonsense. And therefore,’ says he, ‘it
‘ was

‘ was the business of divines and philosophers to have recourse to the simple decision of common sense, on subjects so plain and important. Too much can hardly be said,’ p. 171, ‘ to persuade men to put less confidence in the faculty of reasoning; and more in the faculty of judgment than they commonly do.’

Such firm hold have the principles of common sense on the bulk of mankind, that no person who has any regard to his reputation will ever dare to call them in question; so that we may be perfectly easy in resting the cause of religion upon this solid foundation. ‘ If one incline,’ vol. 2, p. 328, ‘ to set aside the authority of ‘ reason’ (as distinguished from *reasoning*, p. 327) ‘ and deliver himself over to fancy, ‘ he may use what freedoms he will with ‘ primary truths, but not with safety to ‘ his character. One must either admit ‘ all obvious truths, or fall under the imputation of folly and nonsense. This ‘ is learned nonsense,’ p. 327, ‘ and so are

‘all the furnishes that can be offered
‘against indubitable truths.’

Considering how amply the dictates of common sense are guarded by their own evidence, and the sanction of all mankind, in so much that every man must be conscious that he is *playing the fool or the madman* who shall presume to gainsay them, that he cannot do it *with safety to his character*, that every man who hears him has a right to tell him to his face that he *talks nonsense*, and even need not scruple to call him a *fool*, it is rather wonderful that our author should want any other guard for his primary truths; and yet he, as well as Dr. Beattie, gives hints that the *aid of the magistrate*, and a little wholesome severity, might not be improper; provided that, contrary to his expectation, the above mentioned guards should prove not to be quite sufficient for so great and good a purpose. But, in fact, no people have been so ready to have recourse to persecution, as those
who

who have pretended to infallibility. This was the case both with the infallible church of Rome, and the no less infallible Calvin. Countenanced by these great examples, the patrons of common sense, which is as infallible as either of them can pretend to be, need not be ashamed to do as they did.

‘All possible encouragement,’ says our author, vol. 2, p. 335, ‘ought to be given to rational and just, and all manner of discouragement to foolish and nonsensical way of talking. No pleasantry, no vivacity, no appearance of wit and humour, ought to atone for nonsense on any subject, especially in those of the greatest weight and importance. It were even to be wished that the *civil magistrate* were authorized to put a stigma on palpable absurdity, in subjects where the honour of God and the interest of mankind are deeply concerned. But as this might be dangerous, it is also unnecessary.’

SECTION IV.

Of the natural imperfections and necessary culture of Common sense.

LEST the idea which my reader will naturally conceive of the power and influence of common sense, from the contents of the last section, should lead him to expect from it more than he will find, it is necessary, before we proceed any farther, to apprize him, that here, as in many other cases, (examples of which he will find in abundance in the prosecution of his studies) *fact* and *experience* do not exactly tally with the *preconceived theory*.

He would too naturally imagine that the principle which distinguishes every individual of the human race, being the very characteristic of rationality, which pronounces with *quickness*, *clearness*, and *indubitable certainty*, on all *primary truths*, and which was intended by our maker

maker to be an almost *infallible direction* in the whole conduct of life, and especially in matters of religion, would be a sovereign and effectual antidote, or rather preventive, of all error, imposition and vice; and that upon this foundation the empire of truth and virtue would be securely and for ever established.

But, alas! our author, having, no doubt for good reasons, given this exercise to our *imagination*s, thinks proper to give us a lesson of humility, patience, and industry, by acquainting us, that, in fact, the dictates of common sense are very little known or regarded in the world; for that, what through the lesser encroachment of *vulgar prejudice* on one side, and the greater and bolder encroachments of *philosophy* on the other, her authority is almost annihilated; so that almost all received opinions and established maxims are fundamentally wrong.

All

All this, however, is easily explained and accounted for, by a little variation in the idea he had first given us of this wonderful power; and which, in fact, only serves to raise our admiration of it higher than ever. Before he compared it to a *sense* in general, now it resembles the most perfect of all the senses the *eye*, which we have a power of rendering quite useless to us by covering it with the eye-lid, which nature has, to be sure, provided for that purpose, lest by the too free use both of the external and internal eye, we should injure them, and thereby intirely deprive ourselves of them. And though no man ever voluntarily shut up his external eyes, except to relieve them, and make them more serviceable to him afterwards; yet men are almost universally disposed to do this with respect to the eye of the mind, taking particular pleasure in the diversion which in the country is called *blind-mans-buff*.

‘As the eye,’ says our author, p. 361,
 ‘has a power of letting in more or less
 ‘light, so the mind has a power of ad-
 ‘mitting these truths in a greater or less
 ‘degree at pleasure.’

Again, whereas the other senses are improved by exercise to a certain degree, this internal sense is capable of indefinite improvement, even *ad infinitum*; so that though the eye and ear admit of no sensible improvement from ten to four-score years, this eye of the mind is improved, as our author has found by computation, in an exact arithmetical ratio with the application of it. For with the eye of the mind you see every thing just a thousand times better for having looked at them a thousand times. A man, therefore, who has but just begun to make use of his common sense is no more fit to hold an argument with a man who has grown expert in the use of it, than a man with his naked eyes only can dispute about the spots of the sun with one who has got a telescope. The latter sees a
 thousand

thousand things in objects that the former cannot possibly see at all. How this can be reconciled with the fact, of mankind not improving in knowledge, but sometimes going backwards, I leave to our author's *third* publication on the subject.

‘It may seem a paradox,’ says our author, vol. 2, p. 349, ‘but it is a certain truth that common sense, as it is indeed more worthy, so it is no less capable of culture than any other of our faculties. We do not pretend,’ p. 255, ‘to determine the degree of certainty at which he will arrive, for that will be proportioned to the degree of rationality of which he is possessed; but he may promise himself satisfaction suited to the exercise he gives his good sense and probity on this important occasion. This prescription is no less proper for the unthinking part of mankind, than for professed sceptics. Many take primary truths for granted, without attending to their evidence; who, if they took the trouble of comparing them
‘with

‘with the opposite absurdities, would believe them more cordially, and feel their influence upon the temper and manner more sensibly than they do.’

‘He who has distinguished fifty times,’ vol. 2, p. 346, ‘between obvious truth and arbitrary conceit, pronounces with a clearness of persuasion fifty times greater than that with which another pronounces, who has discerned the difference but once only; and he who has distinguished a hundred times, pronounces with a quickness and firmness a hundred times greater,’ &c.

To improve upon this hint, suppose our author were to draw up a list of primary truths, get it printed, and, in order to employ the civil magistrate in *preventing* rather than *punishing* error, let him compel every child, from the very first dawn of rationality, to repeat them fifty or a hundred times every morning. We knew before that such an exercise would strengthen the *voice*, and

now

now we have reason to think it would contribute no less to strengthen the *judgment*. The danger would be lest, by this exercise, mankind should be too knowing for their rank in the creation.

This doctrine of Dr. Oswald's concerning the improveableness of the faculty of common sense by culture, it may be proper to observe, is the very reverse of Dr. Beattie's sentiments on the same subject. In his comparison of reason and common sense, p. 47, he says, that the former is *more in our power* than the latter. He adds, 'There are few faculties, either of our mind or body, more improveable by culture than that of reasoning; whereas common sense, like other instincts, arrives at maturity with almost no care of ours.' This, and other points of difference, I hope these learned doctors will settle between themselves, before they join their forces for their common defence.

This

This opening of the intellectual eye must, however, be a very disagreeable and painful operation; or, since the advantages of keeping it open are so very great, one would think that men would have hit upon some contrivance to keep them always open. Whereas, on the contrary, they seem to have got some extraordinary, and most effectual method of keeping their eye-lids down.

‘It is,’ says our author, speaking of common sense, p. 17, ‘the gift of heaven, but needs to be stirred up; and has been so long and universally neglected, that to give it full exercise, requires more attention, and application of thought, than most people are willing to bestow. The principles of good sense, *ibid.* are diametrically opposite to received opinions, and established maxims.’

But, notwithstanding this, common sense has more hold of the vulgar, than it has of the learned. ‘There are those,’ p. 274, ‘not indeed of the unlearned,
‘but

‘ but among the learned, who distrust the
 ‘ authority of common sense; and seem
 ‘ to doubt its existence; and some there
 ‘ are who positively affirm that there nei-
 ‘ ther is, nor can be, any such thing. In
 ‘ truth, the unlearned are the only peo-
 ‘ ple who retain a clear idea of common
 ‘ sense, and appeal to it as an oracle, and
 ‘ the learned only are sceptical. You
 ‘ shall not find a man of sense among the
 ‘ unlearned who hesitates, and scarce will
 ‘ you find one among the learned who
 ‘ doth not. Such are the blessed effects of
 ‘ modern learning.’

If the too sagacious reader should discover any thing like inconsistency between this quotation and the preceding, he should consider that, though I have brought them together, one of them is taken from p. 17, and the other from p. 274, which are sufficiently distant from one another. In the following paragraphs our author explains the reason of this departure from common sense, both in the vulgar and in the learned.

‘ As

‘As the vulgar, through the grossness
 of their conceptions, have lame and
 confused ideas of primary truths, so
 the learned have puzzled themselves
 and others about them by the arts of
 reasoning, to which they have been so
 long and so violently attached. So
 that, in fact, the common people de-
 prive themselves of the blessings of
 common sense by thinking too little,
 and the learned by thinking too much.’

Besides the general defects, and neg-
 lects, relating to this power of common
 sense, it seems to be more especially de-
 fective in its information concerning the
self determining power, which our author
 is resolved to preserve, though all man-
 kind, at least both the learned and un-
 learned, which I suppose includes them
 all, think differently from him on the
 subject. ‘Notwithstanding our aversion
 to frivolous disputes,’ vol. 2, p. 208,
 about obvious truths, something must
 be done to give satisfaction concerning
 a self determining power. Otherwise

R

‘all

‘ all that has been said, or can be said, in
 ‘ favour of virtue, must go for nothing ;
 ‘ because all men, learned and unlearned,
 ‘ bigots or free-thinkers, are not merely
 ‘ sceptical, but infidels with regard to the
 ‘ reality of this power.’ It is, indeed,
 very strange, but not the less true, that
 all mankind should be possessed of this
 most important power, on which all vir-
 tue depends, and yet that they should be
 so far from knowing, or suspecting it,
 and that they cannot be persuaded to
 believe they have any such thing. This
 something resembles Moliere’s *Medecin
 malgré lui*.

S E C-

SECTION V.

Of the extensive application of the principle of common sense to morals and religion.

THIS life is nothing but a scene of joys and sorrows, hopes and fears; and we are continually passing from the one to the other. All this will be frequently exemplified by my reader. And as I first gave him a general view of the bright side of my picture, and then desired him to contemplate the shade, I shall now exhibit the bright side again, and desire him to take a more particular survey of it.

We shall here find that this great oracle of the human breast has pronounced most distinctly concerning all the fundamental doctrines and duties of morality, comprehending the whole of natural religion, the evidences of christianity, and even the more essential articles of christian faith. To this, however, we must sub-

join our author's just, pathetic, and eloquent complaints of the shameful neglect of this principle; and the great folly of philosophers and divines in having recourse to the deceitful principle of *reason*; which, according to our author, may almost be considered as the source of all evil and mischief; when every thing they ought to have wished for might have been obtained without any trouble at all, by only applying to common sense.

Speaking of the great outlines of morality in general, our author says; vol. 2, p. 195, 'The obligations arising from obvious relations are the objects of common sense.' Again, p. 24, 'Besides those instinctive emotions and feelings, which we have in common with the lower animals, every individual of the human kind has a perception, which idiots and the inferior animals have not, of what he owes to himself, to his offspring, to his friends, and benefactors, to his country, and to his God.— Those sacred obligations, which have
 ' been

' been the subject of dispute with the
' learned, are objects of simple per-
' ception and judgment to men of sense.'

' That magistrates ought to be obeyed,'
p. 247, ' that the workman is worthy of
' his wages, that every one ought to take
' care of his own, and his family's interest,
' and that men ought to do kind and
' friendly offices to each other; these,
' and the like propositions, appear obvi-
' ously true, as the propositions opposite
' to them appear obviously false, to every
' man of common sense.'

Such are the dictates of our infallible
instructor and guide as to the great duties
of morality, respecting this life. If we
want to be informed concerning the pe-
culiar *sanctions* of natural religion, our
author assures us, p. 8, that this great
principle ' affords men an almost infal-
' lible direction in the whole conduct of
' their lives, and that it was intended by
' the author of our being for giving us
' intire satisfaction concerning all primary
R 3 ' truths,

‘ truths, those of religion in particular;
 ‘ and that our not having recourse to this
 ‘ power is the true cause of those idle dis-
 ‘ putes, which have been maintained of
 ‘ late about the truth of religion.’

That the *being* of God ought not to be attempted to be proved by reason we have in some measure seen already, and we shall hear more on that subject hereafter; we shall, therefore, proceed to other articles of religion. ‘ To acknowledge the being, and dispute the *attributes* of God, betrays,’ says our author, vol. 2, p. 80, ‘ great stupidity, or gross prevarication. Now for the divine *unity*. ‘ A work of design,’ vol. 2, p. 75, ‘ indicates one and but one author to a sound understanding.’ With respect to the obligation to *worship* and *obey* God, he acknowledges, indeed, p. 216, that ‘ it would be unreasonable to expect the same instinctive emotions and inclinations that we have to the other offices of life. But,’ he says, ‘ we have a clear perception of those obligations, accompanied with
 ‘ emotions

‘ emotions and inclinations which nearly resemble those we call instinctive.’

Speaking of trusting in God, with respect to things that are above our comprehension, our author says, with peculiar emphasis and eloquence, vol. 2, p. 140, ‘ This is religion, this is philosophy, this is common sense. It is *nonsense*,’ says he, vol. 2, p. 97, ‘ to talk of difficulties and embarrassments arising from a constitution of things to which the supreme being gave existence of his free choice.’ Other divines are content with saying that this conduct is highly *unreasonable*.

The great difficulty in the theory of natural religion is the proof of a *future life*; but, happily, that difficulty is now intirely removed. Let us only silence the impertinence of reason, and common sense will speak plain enough, and to the purpose on this subject. ‘ We do not

‘ pretend,’ says Dr. Oswald, vol. 2, p. 296, ‘ to demonstrate, from any thing that we know of the present state, that

‘ there will be a future state of existence.’
This has been said by many christian
divines, but then they have recourse to
revelation for a sure foundation of their
faith in this great doctrine; but our au-
thor can do without this resource.

‘ We must,’ says he, vol. 2, p. 306,
‘ enter a complaint against the learned of
‘ both sides, for their injurious manner
‘ of treating this interesting and impor-
‘ tant subject. In place of setting full in
‘ the view of mankind, a truth which
‘ none pretend to doubt of, and about
‘ which no man can be unconcerned, viz.
‘ that we are *accountable* to God for our
‘ conduct, the friends of religion and
‘ virtue have ransacked all nature for
‘ arguments to prove that we shall *actu-*
‘ *ally be called to account*, and have there-
‘ by turned the attention of mankind
‘ from their proper business to an endless
‘ and fruitless dispute, about what is pos-
‘ sible and impossible in nature, and may
‘ or may not come to pass. Was this
‘ well advised? If a man is desirous of
‘ certain

' certain information concerning this
 ' great event, let him consult the revela-
 ' tion which God has made of his mind.
 ' Or if he is not satisfied about that, let
 ' him consult the sentiments of his own
 ' heart, about his being *liable to account*.
 ' —But if he will do neither, your rea-
 ' soning is vain; for the man is a fool,
 ' and his folly is voluntary, and there-
 ' fore incurable, or not to be cured by
 ' the art of reasoning.'

If my reader will not peruse this para-
 graph over again, he will perhaps over-
 look the most excellent *distinction with-*
out a difference, with which the whole
 compass of his reading will ever furnish
 him. That we are *accountable to God*
 for our conduct, is a truth that no man
 can pretend to doubt of, or be uncon-
 cerned about; and yet all the powers of
 reason cannot persuade the same man to
 believe that he shall be *actually called*
to account. And all the mischief that has
 been done by philosophers and divines
 has arisen from their not having attended

to the distinction between those two very different things.

Since this distinction is of such unspeakable consequence, and has hitherto been intirely overlooked by all divines and philosophers, it would certainly very much oblige and benefit the world if Dr. Oswald would give us a discourse upon the subject; insisting largely and strongly on the consideration of our being *accountable to God*, and being *liable to be called to account*, but, at the same time, carefully avoiding every thing that could give us an idea of our ever being *actually* brought to account. I the less wonder at the conduct of divines in this case, because I think it must require no small ingenuity and skill to do it. But what may not be expected from the eloquence of Dr. Oswald!

Speaking more particularly of Socrates's arguments for a future state, he says, vol. 2, p. 288, 'But in that variety of arguments, advanced by this great
' and

‘ and good man, none give such satisfaction to a plain understanding, as his observation to Crito, that the carcass he shewed so great concern about was not Socrates; that Socrates was he who then discoursed, reasoned, and gave arrangements to his thoughts, and who, he said, would soon give them the slip. This is common sense.’

Deriving so much information from common sense, and finding such effectual functions of virtue in it, one would have thought that *revelation* might have been spared; and many good christians would be exceedingly offended at our author for ascribing so much to *nature* in this respect. But then he makes atonement, by establishing the evidences of revelation upon the foundation of the same common sense; which, of course, supersedes all *reasoning* about the matter, and thereby saves those good christians a great deal of trouble, in inquiring for themselves, or replying to the impertinent cavils of others.

‘ Of

‘Of a revelation from God,’ meaning no doubt the Jewish and christian, he says, p. 56, that ‘few have any serious doubt, and that no man can disbelieve it in any consistency with common sense.’ But for the farther illustration of this important subject another whole volume is promised us.

As the truth of the scripture history is founded on common sense, so we may take it for granted that its contents are agreeable to it. ‘The scriptures,’ says our author, vol. 2, p. 203, ‘are the true, if not the only source of sound philosophy and good sense on these subjects, viz. moral obligation.’ By the way, after making good sense the source of so much knowledge in morals, I do not see with what propriety our author can call the scriptures the source of this good sense.

The manner in which Dr. Oswald speaks of ‘two important truths,’ which, he says, the christian revelation superadds to our natural notions of religion, which it has revived,

revived, viz. 'an œconomy of grace in this life, and an exact retribution in the next,' is particularly curious. 'One cannot conceive,' says he, p. 254, 'what prejudice a man of sense can have to this plain doctrine. And as it was received by persons no wise prejudiced in its favour, upon an attestation in which they could not be deceived, one must reckon all scepticism concerning it as mere affectation.' When a man speaks of indubitable truths he ought at least to use intelligible language; but what our author means by *an œconomy of grace*, I really do not understand.

I now come to present my reader with a few specimens of our author's pathetic and eloquent complaints on the subject of neglecting this common sense, in the defence of religion, natural and revealed, and on divines having imprudently condescended to reason about it, which was a piece of complaisance as mischievous as it was unnecessary. Infidels are a set of people with whom it is exceedingly improper

improper for a christian philosopher, and much beneath his dignity, to hold any parley.

‘Is there not,’ says Dr. Oswald, p. 364, ‘just cause of complaint against the learned for overlooking distinctions which seldom escape the observation of the vulgar, and thereby exposing religion to objections which would be rejected with disdain on any other subject? Not only the christian revelation,’ p. 55, ‘but the moral perfections and government of God, yea and the very being of virtue, have been made the subject of dispute. Free-thinkers are not ashamed to publish their doubts concerning these realities, divines and philosophers have not disdained to establish them by a multitude of arguments.’

‘The power of custom,’ vol. 2, p. 152, ‘in reconciling the mind to measures however absurd, which are become familiar, is almost incredible. Should an Indian of good sense be told, that for some
‘time

' time past, men of the greatest eminence
 ' in the learned world had been employed
 ' in disputing with one another about the
 ' reality of virtue and vice; whether,
 ' for instance, the obligations of justice,
 ' temperance, gratitude, were nominal,
 ' fictitious and fanciful; or whether we
 ' were, indeed, bound to the practice of
 ' these and such like virtues; that volumes
 ' have been written on both sides, and
 ' deep attention given to the controversy,
 ' and that each hypothesis had its vo-
 ' taries; would the foreigner give credit
 ' to this report?

' Yet this conduct, so unaccountable
 ' to a foreigner, has been continued
 ' among us without much notice. The
 ' subject, it is true, merits the strictest
 ' attention; the researches on both sides
 ' were curious enough, acquisitions of
 ' some value were made in the abstract
 ' sciences; the audacity of one side seemed
 ' to require a check and the zeal of the
 ' other was at least pardonable. But, in
 ' good earnest, might not that zeal, that
 ' acute-

‘acuteness, penetration, and compass of
 ‘thought, have been employed with
 ‘greater propriety, and to more advantage? Was there any occasion at all
 ‘for such disquisitions? Must metaphysicians and subtle disputants be called in
 ‘to evince our obligations to do the
 ‘right and shun the wrong? Can we,
 ‘without renouncing common sense, be
 ‘ignorant, doubtful, or even insensible to
 ‘such obligations? There is need, great
 ‘need; to awaken, revive, and enforce
 ‘them; but without the influence of
 ‘false learning there could be no room
 ‘to doubt what every man of common
 ‘understanding does, and must perceive
 ‘at first sight.

How fatal would a strict regard to
truth be to a turn for *eloquence*. All this
 truly fine piece of declamation would
 have been lost to the world, if our author
 had recollected, that *moral obligation*
itself never was a subject of dispute, but
 only the *foundation* of this obligation.
 Let our author endeavour to recollect
 the

the names of the writers who ever disputed whether men were indeed bound to the practice of justice, temperance, &c.

These complaints respect *writers* chiefly, but his complaints against the *preachers of the gospel*, on the same score, are still stronger. ‘What is more to be regretted,’ says Dr. Oswald, p. 56, ‘the preachers of the gospel, forgetting the dignity of their character, and the design of their office, have condescended to plead the cause of religion in much the same manner as lawyers maintain a disputed right of property. Instead of awakening the natural sentiments of the human heart, and giving them a true direction, they have entered into reasonings about piety, justice, and benevolence, too profound to be fathomed by the multitude, and too subtle to produce any considerable effect. Instead of setting forth the displays of the divine perfections in the dispensation of the gospel, so admirably fitted to touch, to penetrate, and to subdue the human mind,

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‘they

‘ they have entertained their audiences
 ‘ with long and laboured proofs of a reve-
 ‘ lation from God, of which few have any
 ‘ serious doubt, and which no man can
 ‘ disbelieve in any consistency with com-
 ‘ mon sense. May not this be called,
 ‘ with propriety, a throwing cold water
 ‘ on religion? and ought it not to be
 ‘ considered as one of the chief causes of
 ‘ that insensibility to all its concerns of
 ‘ which we so frequently complain? The
 ‘ multitude has been astonished, wise men
 ‘ have been ashamed, and good men
 ‘ grieved at this treatment of religion, so
 ‘ much beneath its dignity.’

Our author intimates, however, that,
 bad as the case is, it is not yet quite des-
 perate. Access to the tree of life is yet
 open, and common sense, this remedy
 for all our ills, though hitherto so shame-
 fully neglected, will not refuse her succour
 upon proper application.

‘ Till divines and philosophers,’ vol. 2,
 ‘ p. 221, ‘ have abated their ardour for fri-
 ‘ volous

‘ volous inquiries, and learned the art of
 ‘ turning the attention of mankind to ob-
 ‘ vious and interesting truth, they have
 ‘ no title to complain of the unthinking
 ‘ part of mankind. For one may be bold
 ‘ to affirm, that multitudes would act a
 ‘ better part than they do, if they were
 ‘ under better treatment.’ Now as Dr.
 Oswald’s parish is undoubtedly under
 this very treatment, I should be glad to
 be informed of the state of it. Though
 his books have, in some measure, put all
 the world under the same treatment, it is
 too large a field of inquiry ; and though I
 have read his performance with some
 degree of attention, there may be some-
 thing in my particular constitution that
turns medicine into poison. See p. 372.

‘ It is apparent,’ says our author, vol. 2,
 p. 204, ‘ that if common sense had been
 ‘ consulted, a controversy of the most
 ‘ pernicious kind might have been wholly
 ‘ prevented, or soon stopped. And, if
 ‘ men will yet pay the regard that is
 ‘ due to common sense, they shall find

‘ themselves relieved from embarrassments
 ‘ they have always complained of, and
 ‘ see the whole of religion rise to their
 ‘ view in that obvious, plain, and plea-
 ‘ sant light, in which the face of nature
 ‘ appears when freed from those mists and
 ‘ clouds by which it was obscured.’

Lastly, our author proceeds to give more particular directions concerning what is necessary to be done by divines towards the reformation of the world, without addressing the reason of their hearers ; which is a thing that they ought, if possible, to have nothing to do with. This is to put them under the direction of God, in the dictates of common sense, if I understand him rightly, when I put all the passages together. For there is something of the air of *mysticism* in what he says upon this subject ; and things of that nature do not find the readiest admission to my understanding.

‘ Till divines and philosophers,’ vol. 2, p. 227, ‘ are better skilled in touching
 ‘ the

‘ the springs of the human heart than
 ‘ they are, or affect to appear, they can-
 ‘ not reach the end they propose; and
 ‘ were they possessed of all the eloquence
 ‘ of Greece or Rome, they could not ac-
 ‘ complish what they ought to have in
 ‘ view, I mean to save those from ruin
 ‘ who will not take the trouble of saving
 ‘ themselves; and in order thereto, to
 ‘ correct and cure the inveterate folly of
 ‘ the human heart. There is something
 ‘ here that demands a deeper attention
 ‘ than has been given to it; something too
 ‘ that points at a method of forming
 ‘ mankind to virtue which has been too
 ‘ much neglected.

‘ The great secret informing men to
 ‘ religion and virtue,’ vol. 2, p. 232, ‘ if
 ‘ it is fit to call that a secret which is so
 ‘ palpable to common sense, and ought
 ‘ to have been published to all the world,
 ‘ is to persuade them to resign themselves
 ‘ to God, as docile and dutiful pupils, to
 ‘ a faithful and capable tutor. To put
 ‘ mankind under a divine direction and

‘influence,’ vol. 2, p. 229, ‘ought to be the chief aim of all our instructors in religion and virtue. For without doing so, all their other prescriptions will be found ineffectual, and indeed a mere project. All partial proceedings ought to be dismissed, and justice done to primary truths.’ Vol. 2, p. 230.

S E C T I O N VI.

Of the incroachments of common sense on the province of Reason.

LEST Dr. Oswald should blame me for exhibiting his sentiments without any proper refutation, which I have not always done, because I really thought it to be needless, especially after what I have said in answer to his superiors, Dr. Reid and Dr. Beattie; and also because I thought it would be doing for my reader what he would very easily do for himself,

himself, and might rather chuse to do for himself; I promise to be a little more serious in this and the following sections; in the first of which I shall endeavour to show that, as great an enemy as Dr. Oswald is to reasoning on the subject of morals and religion, he himself makes more use of it than he is willing to acknowledge. For, to make the more of his principle of common sense, he has manifestly encroached upon what has hitherto been universally deemed the province of reason.

To prevent all mistake of my meaning I shall here observe, that a proposition may be said to be proved by reason when a *third term* is necessary to show the connection between the *subject* and *predicate* of it; and that a general proposition is proved by an induction of a sufficient number of the particulars which are comprized in it.

Thus, when I want to prove that the three internal angles of a right lined tri-

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angle

angle are equal to two right angles, I make another set of angles, to which I know that the three angles in question are equal, and which I can also easily shew to be equal to two right angles. If I want to prove that any particular person is generous, I point out a number of generous things that he has done, which indicate that character.

If our author will say that this is not reasoning, I answer that then there is no such thing as reasoning. This, I will venture to say, has hitherto been universally deemed reasoning; and if Dr. Oswald chuses to call it by any other name, he imposes upon himself and the world, by changing the established signification of words. But, in fact, it will appear, from a passage that I shall presently quote, that Dr. Oswald has the same ideas of the nature of reasoning, though he seems very often to have lost sight of them.

That

That Dr. Oswald, in many cases, merely cavils at the terms *reason*, *proof*, and *demonstration*, and that he misapplies them, in order to ridicule and explode them, is very evident to me ; and I think it cannot but appear so to all my readers, who are not quite adepts in this new science of common sense, and consequently accustomed to the phrases and sense of terms peculiar to it.

Speaking of the being and attributes of God, he says, p. 151, ‘ To what purpose
 ‘ demonstrate a truth, to the indubitable
 ‘ certainty of which all nature bears testi-
 ‘ mony?’ Now excepting Dr. Clark’s arguments *a priori*, which have long ceased to be so much as mentioned by divines, all that, in fact, has ever been meant by *demonstrating* the being and attributes of God, is to exhibit and explain the testimony of nature ; by pointing out such marks of design, power, and benevolence in the constitution of the world, as prove not only that it had a cause, but that this cause must be a being
 possessed

possessed of great power, wisdom, and goodness.

Again he says, p. 197, ‘ You cannot
 ‘ form an idea of God by gazing upon
 ‘ his works, without observing their ten-
 ‘ dency; and entering as far as your,
 ‘ faculties will carry you into his great,
 ‘ wise, and gracious plan.’

After our author has evinced the *being* of a God, without the help of reason, he proceeds to assert, in the title of the first chapter of book third, that ‘ to acknow-
 ‘ ledge the being and dispute the attri-
 ‘ butes of God, betrays great stupidity,
 ‘ or gross prevarication.’ But the manner in which he supports this with respect to the particular attributes, is so like reasoning, that I own I can see no difference between it and reasoning. Let the reader judge.

‘ We acknowledge,’ vol. 2, p. 81, ‘ that
 ‘ it is impossible to avoid the idea of God
 ‘ when we look on the phenomena of na-
 ‘ ture ;

ture ; but if we do not content ourselves
with words without meaning, we must,
at the same time, acknowledge, that it
is impossible for us to form any concep-
tion of the immense system of nature,
without an idea of the immensity of his
power who made and upholds it ; that
it is impossible to trace the endless con-
nection and combination of causes con-
spiring to one great design, without
having an idea of the unfathomable
depth of the divine wisdom ; that it is
impossible to survey the multitude of
living creatures he has brought into be-
ing, which he upholds in being, and
protects from danger, and for whom he
makes continual and bountiful supplies,
without acknowledging his immense be-
nevolence and parental care. And
when we recollect the various sufferings
of body and mind, which he has con-
nected with, and made consequent upon
almost every deviation from moral rec-
titude, even in this life, and the natural
dread which every guilty person has of
a more exact retribution in another state,
it

‘ it is impossible for us to avoid an idea
 ‘ of his tremendous justice.’

That any person should be able to write this and call it by any other name than *reasoning* I own surprizes me not a little; and I can only compare our author to the poor man who had spoken *prose* all his life without knowing it.

Also when Dr. Oswald says, p. 138;
 ‘ It is *nonsense* to expect that lead should
 ‘ swim in water,’ it is impossible that his meaning should really differ from that of the generality of philosophers, to whom his language must, I am persuaded, sound very strange. They would show, by observation and experiment, that nothing of this kind has ever happened, and would say they had then proved that the expectation of its happening was very *unreasonable*; but would think it a strange abuse of words to call it *nonsensical*. To nonsense, as the term has generally been used hitherto, no ideas at all can be annexed, except such as are inconsistent
 with

with one another; and we can form as clear an idea of lead *not* sinking in water, as of its sinking. What is really nonsense can never become sense; but by miraculous power the laws of nature can be suspended or reversed.

To enlarge the province of this new principle of common sense, Dr. Oswald manifestly incroaches upon the province of reason in other instances. He expresses the greatest possible surprize and indignation that divines should have endeavoured 'to discover a medium to
' demonstrate that we ought to worship
' God, to do justice to men, and to keep
' our passions and appetites within just
' and proper bounds,' p. 91. Upon this occasion he says, as was quoted above,
' No demonstration is of equal force with
' common sense; and no confutation can
' serve the interest of truth so effectually
' as a plain conviction of nonsense; and
' therefore it was the business of divines
' and philosophers to have recourse to
' the

‘ the simple decision of common sense on
 ‘ a subject so plain and important.’

I cannot help thinking, however, that it would answer a very good purpose both to define strictly what we mean by *worshipping God, doing justice to men, and bringing our passions within proper bounds*; and also that, when these propositions have been defined, intermediate and plainer propositions may be found, which will serve to show the truth of the former. And such proofs of these moral duties I think have been given by many writers, and I hope have not been impertinently alledged in my *Institutes of natural and revealed religion*, vol. 1.

I am the more surprized at Dr. Oswald’s objections to the common language of logicians, as he himself distinguishes very well between such propositions as are self evident, and such as are not. ‘ No man,’ says he, p, 248, ‘ can be at a loss to know
 ‘ propositions that are the object of com-
 mon

‘mon sense from those that are not,’ and
 ‘to determine with himself where he has,
 ‘or has not a right to suspend his judg-
 ‘ment. If the evidence of the propo-
 ‘sition under consideration flows from its
 ‘relation to or connection with some
 ‘other truth, he has no doubt a right to
 ‘suspend his judgment till he has inquired
 ‘into that connexion and relation.’

Now surely the proposition that *magi-
 strates ought to be obeyed* depends upon
 this other proposition, that *the good of the
 society ought to be provided for*. Or if our
 author be an advocate for a natural and
 divine right, still he must give some rea-
 son for it. If he reflect at all upon the
 subject, he will hardly maintain that such
 a right is *self evident*. This latter propo-
 sition then, viz. that *the good of the state
 ought to be consulted*, may properly be
 urged in support of the former, that ma-
 gistrates ought to be obeyed. It is so
 much of an *argument*, that I dare say nei-
 ther our author, nor any other person
 could

could possibly avoid it, in discoursing on the subject.

Our author, indeed, admits of a *kind of demonstration* of primary truths; which arises from *comparing them with their opposite absurdities*; in consequence of which he says, p. 255, ‘we shall believe them more cordially, and feel their influence more sensibly than we do. A real believer,’ he says, ‘will not despise the well meant labours of those who have endeavoured to demonstrate the primary truths by reducing their opposites to absurdity; but knows that, without their help, he can, by a single thought, reduce these chimeras to the grossest of all absurdities, namely, to nonsense.’ Though, therefore, it is *pardonable* to demonstrate the being and perfections of God, the necessity of obeying magistrates, &c. he advises us to spare ourselves that trouble, and with more magnanimity appeal at once to the great tribunal of common sense. An admirably short and decisive method

‘rhetoric, of bullying, and of canting,
 ‘practiced by his Lordship, every one
 ‘who believes there is a God will believe
 ‘that he loves the right and hates the
 ‘wrong; and expect, of course, that he
 ‘will reward the one and punish the
 ‘other.’ Now is not Dr. Oswald’s sug-
 gesting that God *loves the right and hates*
the wrong a proper argument, to prove
 that he will reward the one and punish
 the other? Indeed, why did he use the
 word *therefore*, if he was not *arguing*
 and proving one thing by means of ano-
 ther? If this be not reasoning, and in the
 necessary forms, I know not what is.

But, possibly, our author might think
 himself sufficiently guarded against this
 objection by the manner in which he has
 expressed the title of this chapter, which
 is ingenious enough. ‘To maintain,’
 vol. 2, p. 276, ‘a curious debate about a
 ‘future judgment, when we ought to be
 ‘preparing for so awful an event, is
 ‘unpardonable folly.’ The three next
 chap-

chapters have the title of ‘ *The same subject continued.*’

The objection then is not to *arguments*, but to *curious arguments*. But how shall we distinguish curious debates from those that are not curious, and what does our author mean by *curious*? A word of so very vague a meaning is certainly very improperly used upon such an occasion as this. If I should be asked to point to a specimen of *curious reasoning*, I should name this very treatise of Dr. Oswald's.

But the propriety of the title of this same chapter is guarded in another curious manner. ‘It is unpardonable folly,’ he says, ‘to maintain a curious debate about a future judgment, when we ought to be preparing for it.’ But whoever denied that there was a time to *prepare* for a future event, as well as for *proving* that it will happen, and that these two ought not to interfere with one another? If he meant that we ought never to debate, but to be always preparing, it was

unpardonable folly in him to write his treatise ; in which he not only debates, but is the occasion of more debating, as the book I am now writing evidences.

I have descanted a little upon the title of this one chapter, or rather of four chapters (which, by the way, is very awkward and confused in point of method) in order to exhibit a specimen of our author's unfair and equivocal manner of writing throughout. By an artful choice of words he makes, upon all occasions, a specious harangue, when his pompous assertions are all the while either nugatory, or false.

As the greatest part of Dr. Oswald's two volumes consists of such writing as this, I shall, for the more complete information of my reader concerning the nature of it, produce another example of his artfully adopting a mode of expression which cuts off all reply, except that of its being absolutely trifling ; while he is using all the pomp
and

and parade of the most important observations.

‘ To state the primary truths,’ p. 315,
 ‘ in their native light and strength, and in
 ‘ comparison with their opposite falsities,
 ‘ and to show, in the clearest, plainest
 ‘ manner, which ought to preponde-
 ‘ rate, was in justice due to the public.
 ‘ But to trace every conceit, of every
 ‘ bold projector, through all the windings
 ‘ of abstruse and sophistical reasoning, or
 ‘ to offer laborious and minute defences
 ‘ of truths which neither require nor ad-
 ‘ mit of any, was ill advised.’

I challenge our author to specify the writers on whom this censure falls, viz. those who have *traced every conceit of every bold projector through all the windings of abstruse and sophistical reasoning*, or who have *offered laborious and minute defences of truths which neither required nor admitted of any*. One would imagine, from reading Dr. Oswald, that this egregious and laborious trifling had been universal

with the infatuated friends of religion. But let our author name the men, and prove his charge; or be considered as having given himself ridiculous airs, by cloathing mere calumny in rant.

Indeed, the exceptions which our author himself makes to his violent accusations will almost amount to a full confutation of his declamatory abuse.

‘ It was no doubt proper,’ he says, p. 316, ‘ to detect the scandalous shuffling of Collins, to expose the rambling conceits of Lord Shaftesbury, the dangerous paradoxes of Mr. Hume, and the presumptuous boldness of Lord Bolingbroke. It might also be fit to take some notice of the quibbles of inferior writers. But to engage the attention of a whole nation to a formal dispute between grave divines, and writers of this stamp, about the truth of religion, as if this was a point yet unsettled, was a manner of proceeding much below the dignity of the subject, and from which little good could be expected.’

‘ peſted. From the common effect produced on the minds of the multitude, by attending the pleading of lawyers in a contentious law ſuit, one might foretel the conſequences of this ill judged meaſure.’

Now I really do not know to what kind of reaſoning any of the defenders of chriſtianity have had recourſe, except ſuch as was adopted in the controverſies above referred to, and which our author allows to have been proper. And, excluſive of ſuch controverſies as he himſelf expreſsly approves, I challenge him to ſay when *the attention of any whole nation was ever engaged to a formal diſpute between grave divines about the truth of religion, as if it was a point yet unſettled.* This aſſertion, I will venture to ſay, was made abſolutely at random, and has no foundation in truth. It is a mere rhetorical flouriſh, in ſupport of a piece of miſerable ſophiſtry.

Our author farther allows, vol. 2, p. 78, that ‘ the diſciples of Manes were intitled

‘to satisfaction, because,’ as he curiously enough expresses it, ‘they *founded on realities.*’ He adds, ‘but it is below the dignity of divines or philosophers to fight with chimeras. These antient heretics had not the boldness of modern theorists, who scruple not to resolve natural and moral evil into the divine will; but from the same aversion which all guilty persons have of bringing the charge home to themselves, they fancied themselves under the necessity of having recourse to two gods, the authors of all that is good or evil in the world.’

Not to remark upon our author’s taking it for granted that all Necessarians are unbelievers (though the very best of all the defences of christianity has been written by a Necessarian) I shall only ask, whether all who object to religion and christianity do not pretend to found their objections on *realities*, as well as Manes.

The remainder of the paragraph quoted above is not less curious, and of a piece with

with the rest of the treatise. ' This gross error,' viz. that of Manes ' is, however, long since extinct, and the friends of religion can be under no obligation to prove the unity of God, till at least some one appear who can say, with a good conscience, that he suspects that there are more than one, to whom we owe that worship and obedience which is due, in return for his being and preservation; and till he assign some plausible reason for his suspicion.' p. 79.

But can there be no propriety or advantage in reviewing the errors of past ages, and in the confutation of them? May we not hope, by that means, to prevent a relapse into them? Can we be too well established in truths of great importance? Besides, with respect to this very question, of the *unity of God*, has not the church of Rome, the church of England, and even the church of Scotland, more objects of supreme worship than one?

I would

I would also ask, what the word *plausible* has to do in this business! If an error be *actually* embraced, and spreads; must I defer the combating of it till some *grand jury*, appointed for the purpose, shall vote that it is a plausible one? Had these preliminaries been requisite, it is not certain that I should have been permitted to answer Dr. Oswald.

I shall produce but one instance more of our author's complaints of the conduct of christian divines, who have judged and acted differently from himself; because, *for once*, he names his man. 'Had Dr. ' Clarke,' p. 151, 'employed his 'natural ' good sense, which was not inferior to ' his learning, in setting in a true and full ' light all the shameful absurdities of those ' who believe there is a God, and behave ' as if there was none, he would have ' done ' more service to the interests of ' truth, than can be done by a thousand ' demonstrations.'

But

But why may it not be of service to set in a strong light the absurdity of not believing, or affecting not to believe that there is a God, as well as of not acting in a manner agreeable to that belief? The latter is certainly as obvious, and therefore is as little necessary to be insisted upon as the former. But so great is our author's aversion to *reasoning*, that a man must not touch upon the former, however necessary, because something like *argument*, *proof* and *demonstration* may be wanted; whereas on the latter of these topics a man may declaim as long as he pleases, writing as Dr. Oswald does, without any reasoning at all.

Lastly, our author very much misrepresents the conduct of the *sacred writers*, in order to favour his system, and to decry reasoning. ‘ The inspired writers do
 ‘ not offer any proof of the being and
 ‘ perfections of God. They tell us that
 ‘ the invisible things of him are clearly
 ‘ seen from the things which he has
 ‘ made, &c.—but never enter into trains
 ‘ of

‘of reasoning, to establish a truth that is
‘too obvious to admit of any proof.’
Vol. 2, p. 51, 52.

But how do any divines pretend to prove the invisible power of God otherwise than by the visible effects of it; at least I never had recourse to any other argument, and yet I imagine that I have reasoned on the subject. See my *Institutes*, vol. 1.

Perhaps our author may think to escape my animadversions, by saying that, though the sacred writers do reason, they do not enter into *trains of reasoning* on the subject. But whether a man uses trains of reasoning or not, or whether the trains be longer or shorter is not the question; but whether they reason at all. In my opinion our author may find both excellent reasoning, and even long trains of reasoning on the being, perfections, and providence of God in various parts of the books of scripture, as in the book of Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets. In
my

my opinion Paul reasoned very closely on this subject in his discourse before the Athenian Areopagites. See Acts xvii. But the sacred writers had no occasion to prove the being or perfections of God to those who admitted them, which was generally the case with those to whom, or for whom they wrote.

SECTION VII.

Of Dr. Oswald's refutation of the argument in proof of the being of a God.

THERE is no subject on which Dr. Oswald declaims so frequently, or with so much vehemence, and seeming satisfaction to himself, as on the want of judgment in divines, in reasoning concerning the *being of a God*; which he always speaks of as 'too obvious and sacred a truth to be subjected to the reasonings of men, and that too much encouragement

‘couragement has been given to the cavils of sceptics by entering into reasoning about it.’ These propositions are the titles of two separate chapters in his second volume, p. 50 and 57.

In the latter of these chapters he even openly assumes the character of an atheist, and undertakes a complete refutation of the standing argument for the being of a God, in order to shew that it is incapable of any proper *proof*; but that the proposition, being nevertheless true, must be admitted on the sole authority of common sense; not considering that if this new principle of common sense should ever be exploded; he has no resource left, but must in good earnest profess himself an atheist. And thus, like the dog in the fable, by catching at a shadow, he will have lost the substance. Now, as I should be very sorry for such a catastrophe, I shall go over the several steps of this demonstration along with Dr. Oswald; in order to convince him, that, notwithstanding his confident objections,

jections; it is a very good one, and will bear the strictest examination.

‘No process of reasoning,’ says Dr. Oswald, vol. 2, p. 157, ‘can be employed in favour of this capital truth, that will not be found either false or frivolous; or if the premises are admitted to proof, there can be no just conclusion. The premises are these, a work that indicates design must be ascribed to an intelligent author. The world is a work that indicates design,’ &c.

From these premises, each of which Dr. Oswald allows to be just, though not demonstrable, I think it may be clearly proved that *the world must be ascribed to an intelligent author*, which is what we mean by the term *God*. If the conclusion be allowed to be fairly drawn from the premises, which Dr. Oswald does not deny, the argument is certainly complete, whether we proceed any farther, viz. to prove the truth of the premises or not. To this, however, our author gives no
atten-

attention; but only says it is impossible to prove the premises. Let us consider then, in what manner he pretends that neither of these premises can be proved, so that an unbeliever may be justified in withholding his assent to them, and consequently to the conclusion that is drawn from them.

‘A work that indicates design must be ascribed to an intelligent author.’

This is an abstract proposition, to which, if the terms of it be defined, I will venture to say that no man can possibly withhold his assent, being really identical and self-evident. To invalidate this, or rather to evade it, our author absolutely *changes* it, and substitutes another in its place. For, from an abstract and *universal*, he makes it a *particular* proposition; asserting as the reverse of it, that this particular work, viz. *this world*, bears no marks of design; in support of which he alledges the trite atheistical supposition of the possibility of its having been produced

duced by the *concourse of atoms*. 'By repeated throws of dice,' he says, vol. 2, p. 59, 'one may cast up any number called for, within a given time; and therefore any possible state of nature may result from unlimited revolutions of matter.'

Not to say that this does not amount to a shadow of an objection to the truth of a proposition, which only asserts that a work which *actually does* indicate design is to be ascribed to an intelligent author; which, by supposition, excludes all idea of chance, it may certainly be said, on the behalf of the being of a God, that let atoms revolve, *ad infinitum*, and move without a mover, nothing can result from it but new *combinations*, and *positions*. For *powers*, such as those of attraction, repulsion, magnetism, electricity, &c. could never be gained by it; there being no conceivable or possible connection between such a revolution, and the acquisition of any such powers. It is possible that the ingenuity of Dr. Oswald

may suggest something to an atheist in answer to this, but I own I cannot. And yet, as if the believer could make no reply to this objection, which is both misplaced and frivolous, he concludes that he had sufficiently invalidated the force of this *major* proposition, and proceeds with great confidence to attack the minor, viz. that

‘The world is a work that indicates design.’

Here, after acknowledging, p. 61, ‘that it is easy to show them (atheists) a connection of parts and unity of design, which they cannot gainsay;’ he yet maintains that, ‘because they can point out some strange and uncouth appearances, which we cannot explain, they have a right to withhold their assent, if the case is to be determined by reason; and not by the authority of common sense, But surely, after admitting design in *many things*, they cannot possibly withhold their assent to *those things* having

‘ having an intelligent author, whatever
 ‘ they may do with respect to the rest.’

If, for instance, it be undeniable, that the formation of the eye, and of the light which so admirably correspond to one another, and to the purpose of giving us notices of distant objects, is an excellent *contrivance*; it is plain that there must have been a *contriver*, or an intelligent author of *that part* of our constitution, though there should be other parts of the same system, the spleen, for instance, the uses of which we could not explain. So that it appears to me, that the proposition is completely proved, according to the strictest forms of logic.

But our author says, ‘ You may unriddle many difficulties, and give satisfaction to several objections. You may do more. By careful inspection, you can show, to the satisfaction of the sceptic, that what appeared irregularity is regularity in the highest degree; that seeming discord is harmony not understood,

' derstood, and that a seeming blemish
 ' is a beauty in the works of God; but
 ' you will not silence him. You have
 ' something farther to explain, and some-
 ' thing farther still, and cannot give a
 ' full answer to his objections until you
 ' explain the whole, and that you cannot
 ' do. Good sense requires that he should
 ' be contented with less satisfaction, but
 ' he demands *proof*, and as you have
 ' undertaken it, you must give it without
 ' reserve or limitation.'

The proposition, however, proposes
 no such thing. It only asserts that this
 world must have had an intelligent author.
 So that if I prove that *any thing* in the
 world necessarily requires such an author,
 which Dr. Oswald himself, in the charac-
 ter of a sceptic, allows, I have fully
 proved all that I proposed. I will ven-
 ture to say, that no person, who ever pro-
 posed the strictest demonstration of the
 being of God, ever thought of any thing
 else; and I even challenge Dr. Oswald
 to name any atheist who expected more.

If

If a man should be so foolish as to give out that he could explain all the phenomena of nature, which he certainly could not do, and should acknowledge that he had not demonstrated the being of a God, till he had done it, I do not see how *good sense* should help a man to see that he had fulfilled his promise, when it was evident to *reason* that he had not done it. If, therefore, a man advances no more than he can prove, which is sufficient for the demonstration of the being of a God, an appeal may as safely be made to *reason*, as to any thing bearing the name of *common sense*, or any other name that admits of *evidence without proof*. As, on the other hand, if he advances more than he can prove, I do not think that there is any power in human nature that can oblige us to say that he had done what he himself acknowledges he could not do.

At the conclusion, however, of all this miserable quibbling and sophistry, our author sums up this chapter with the airs of an acknowledged conqueror. ‘Whe-

'ther the sceptic is actuated by imper-
 'tinent curiosity, a spirit of contradiction,
 'or a yet worse principle, it must be
 'owned that, as a disputant, he has a
 'right to insist on his demand; and, on
 'being refused, to withhold his assent;
 'which he can do with the more ease,
 'and with much better grace, in the
 'course of a dispute, than he could have
 'done, if you had submitted the truth to
 'his judgment, by a simple appeal.' That
 is, if I *beg the question*, he may, as a
favour, condescend to grant it.

'It is surprizing,' continues our author,
 'that this inconvenience attending the
 'method of argumentation should have
 'been so long overlooked by so many
 'friends of religion, distinguished by their
 'good sense, as well as by their learning.
 'Yet any one may recollect similar in-
 'stances of men of good understanding,
 'disappointing themselves in common life,
 'by too great eagerness to prove truths
 'too obvious to admit of proof or de-
 'monstration.'

But

But what had escaped not only the *learning*, but, what is much more, the *good sense* of all preceding ages, has been luckily discovered by our author.—To conclude this section with seriousness. I know no parallel to such wretched sophistry and conceit. And that any *friend of religion* should thus lend weapons to the common adversaries, and in their name challenge all the powers of reason, certainly would not have gained credit before the publication of this work of Dr. Oswald's. Such are the happy fruits of discarding reason, and substituting this new common sense in its place. And yet this is the man, who, upon all occasions, and from the beginning of his two volumes to the end of them, ridicules and insults the greatest masters of argumentation.

‘Can you tell me,’ says he, p. 375,
 ‘whence it comes to pass, that our cele-
 ‘brated divines and philosophers blunder
 ‘so grossly in an art to which they are so

‘much devoted?’ But before a man had affected this contempt of reasoning, he should certainly have known *what it was*; which appears not to have been the case with Dr. Oswald. I have studied, and I have taught logic, but in no scholar’s exercise did I ever see such marks of a total ignorance of the plainest rules of it, as in Dr. Oswald’s critical examination of the argument for the being of God; and it is evident that in him *common sense* has not supplied the place of *logic*, though he boasts of it’s doing infinitely more.

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SECTION VIII.

Of the application of Common sense to various disquisitions in Morals and Theology.

WHEN the idea of this new sense was first started, it had the appearance of something new and whimsical, indeed, but it *threatened* nothing; seeming to be only a new method of explaining the manner in which we give our assent to self-evident propositions; and, provided the propositions were really self evident, it signified nothing in practice by what means we evince them to be so.

Going thus backwards, into the obscure regions of *Metaphysics*, could do no great harm, and might prove an innocent amusement to many persons who had nothing better to do, or to those who chose to relax from more important studies. But when this new power, after thus securing its retreat backwards, begins to
advance

advance forwards, into the regions of *science, philosophy, and life*, superseding reasoning wherever it comes, we begin to mark its progress with more attention: for we must not suffer her invasion of the right of another. Accordingly I have endeavoured to repress the inroads which this new power has made on the *frontiers* of morals and theology; and now I must show what attempts she has made to penetrate into the *interior parts* of the country.

To drop this allusion, which I am not able to carry much farther, I propose, in this last section, to exhibit to my reader the summary process by which our author treats several intricate and important questions; as *the spring of action in the deity, the distinction between the faculties of men and brutes*, and the doctrines, or pretended doctrines, of the *divinity of Christ, atonement, the new birth, and predestination*, with other smaller matters. None of these subjects, which have been thought to be very difficult, and which
have

have exercised the genius of the ablest men in all nations, occasion the least difficulty to Dr. Oswald. His common sense knows no difference of questions, but decides with equal *quickness, clearness, and indubitable certainty*, on every thing that you shall bring before it. Hear then in what manner our author decides the long and well debated question concerning the *spring of action in the deity*.

‘ The learned of our day,’ vol. 2,
 ‘ p. 156, ‘ will have us to think that hap-
 ‘ piness, mere happiness, is the ultimate
 ‘ end and object of the divine govern-
 ‘ ment.—They confidently affirm that
 ‘ a being completely happy in himself
 ‘ could have no other end in bringing
 ‘ creatures into existence, than to make
 ‘ them happy. But this is unpardonable
 ‘ rashness. For if the sole end of bring-
 ‘ ing creatures into being was to make
 ‘ them happy, then they could not be in
 ‘ pain or misery for a single moment ; be-
 ‘ cause the supreme ruler could not be
 ‘ disappointed of his end in one single
 ‘ instance,

‘ instance, or for one moment of time.
 ‘ Plans formed by beings of limited ca-
 ‘ pacity may fail in the execution, but no
 ‘ defect can be imputed to him whose un-
 ‘ derstanding is infinite, and whose power
 ‘ without control. This hypothesis, there-
 ‘ fore, must be fundamentally wrong. It
 ‘ is plain,’ vol. 2, p. 157, ‘ God does not
 ‘ all that is possible to be done to make his
 ‘ creatures happy.’

Having thus, contrary to his custom,
 condescended to overturn by reason a
 scheme that was founded on reason, he
 establishes another, and, as far as I know,
 a scheme intirely his own, which cannot
 fail to recommend it to my reader, on
 the foundation of common sense.

‘ Common sense,’ vol. 2, p. 157, ‘ will
 ‘ hardly authorize weak mortals to fix
 ‘ the ultimate end and object of the
 ‘ divine government, but the *greatest*
 ‘ *possible increase of moral worth* seems
 ‘ best to correspond to appearances, and
 ‘ to the dignity of the supreme ruler, and,
 ‘ probably,

‘ probably, was meant in the last age by
 ‘ the *glory of God*, and is now exchanged
 ‘ for the *happiness of the creature*, by
 ‘ those who favour a more lax theology;
 ‘ the tendency of which error is to bring
 ‘ down virtue to the rank of a mean or
 ‘ subordinate end; the place it always
 ‘ held with hypocrites and villains of all
 ‘ kinds, who regard it no farther than it
 ‘ serves their purpose.’

Here we see our author not depending
 intirely upon the force of his principle of
 common sense, but willing to take a little
indirect advantage, by representing his
 opponents as persons who favour a lax
 theology, and who regard virtue no far-
 ther than it serves their purposes. But
 not to digress.

‘ It is impossible,’ vol. 2, p. 111, ‘ that
 ‘ the deity should have any other object
 ‘ of his government besides the exercise
 ‘ and enjoyment of his own adorable per-
 ‘ fections.—He makes the good happy,
 ‘ and the bad wretched, not from any
 ‘ such

‘ such political reasons as influence human
‘ government, but from the essential per-
‘ fections of his nature.’

One would think that the scheme which our author adopts, viz. the greatest possible increase of moral worth (which differs materially from the scheme of *rectitude* proposed by Dr. Balguy, or that of *wisdom* by Mr. Grove) was liable to the very same objection which he thought unanswerable with respect to the scheme of benevolence. For it is as evident that God has not made all his intelligent creatures completely *virtuous*, as that he has not made them completely *happy*; especially as our author will not deny that the divine being might, if he had thought proper, have influenced the minds of his creatures, or have originally formed them so, that nothing could have overpowered their inclination to virtue. But common sense, it seems, declares that, though this objection was sufficient to overturn the scheme of benevolence, it is impertinence to urge it against this new scheme of our author's.

author's. So easily does this principle decide where there seems to be nothing to determine the judgment ; in which it bears a wonderful resemblance to the *self determining power* in man. But hear the oracle.

‘ Whether God,’ vol. 2, p. 342, ‘ might
 ‘ not have ordered things so, that men
 ‘ would have been laid under the same
 ‘ necessity of regulating themselves by
 ‘ the laws of nature, is an impertinent
 ‘ question, because we know he will not.’

However, to give us some little help to our conceptions, besides this authoritative determination of common sense, our author transports us into the invisible world of spirits, and gives us a prospect that cannot fail to demonstrate the unspeakable preference of his scheme above that of benevolence.

After describing a good man having
*broke loose from this cumbersome flesh, and
 escaped the vanities of life, and being
 brought*

brought into the presence of God, with what he feels then, and what he finds he has to do afterwards, he says, vol. 2, p. 177, ‘ This is a prospect we must allow to be grand ; and whether this, or a succession of pleasurable sensations, is the most worthy of the ultimate end and object of the supreme ruler, may be submitted to every one who is endued with the judgment and spirit of man.’

Let us now appeal to this new oracle on the subject of a much controverted point of divinity, about which profane reason might have busied itself to no purpose, and which has much embarrassed many christian divines, especially those who have received certain emoluments from religious establishments, on the condition of maintaining the same faith with the *all-wise* founders of those happy establishments. I now mean the knotty question of the *equality of the son of God with his father*. Now, by the help of this omnipotent common sense, we are able to keep clear of all difficulties, and even to steer evenly

evenly between the two opposite rocks of the *creation* and *no-creation* of the son of God.

‘ The son of God derives life from the
 ‘ Father in a manner totally different from
 ‘ creation, and which we neither under-
 ‘ stand, nor have any occasion to inquire
 ‘ into, any farther than is necessary to as-
 ‘ sure us, that he is of a rank as much
 ‘ superior to created beings, as he has
 ‘ obtained a more excellent name than
 ‘ they.’ Vol. 2, p. 128.

Now, by the way, I rather suspect that our author’s philosophy and systematical theology do not perfectly tally. The Assembly’s catechism, which I presume our author has subscribed, and by which he holds his church preferment, says that the three persons in the godhead are of *the same substance, equal in power and glory*, which I should think to be hardly consistent with the notion of the son deriving life from the Father; however it may be *softened*, or rather *obscured*, by

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saying

saying that this derivation is something essentially different from *creation*. But we may take it for granted that so *pious* a man as Dr. Oswald could not possibly *prevaricate* in a matter of this nature, especially after his own solemn declaration on the subject.

‘ We appeal to common sense, and
 ‘ defy them to offer a shadow of reason,
 ‘ why the man who prevaricates in reli-
 ‘ gion should not be as much the object
 ‘ of contempt and abhorrence, as he who
 ‘ prevaricates on any other subject of im-
 ‘ portance.’ Vol. 2, p. 115. I should
 be glad, however, if our author would
 condescend to clear up the consistency of
 his conduct in this case, for the satisfac-
 tion of some whose common sense is not
 so nice and distinguishing as his, and who
 cannot split so fine a hair,

With respect to the doctrine of *atone-
 ment*, our author’s common sense decides
 clearly in favour of orthodoxy, which is
 a great happiness, as it saves him the
 trouble

trouble of considering and answering a great number of shrewd objections to that supposed doctrine of scripture.

Speaking of the dispensation of the gospel, he says, p. 50, 'Messengers were
' dispatched to the different nations, call-
' ing upon them to forsake their vices and
' impieties, and to return to God, who
' was willing to receive them to favour,
' through the mediation of that divine
' person; who, having expiated their
' guilt by his death, has ascended into
' heaven.' He calls Christ, vol. 2, p. 98,
' a person of the highest dignity, who, by
' a course of unparalleled obedience, has
' *merited*, in the strictest sense of the word,
' favours of various kinds for his adhe-
' rents, which in no consistency with wis-
' dom, equity, or justice, could otherwise
' be conferred upon them. Can we sup-
' pose,' says he, vol. 2, p. 161, 'that a
' good God would suffer a person of such
' an amiable character, and one so near and
' dear to him, to undergo such exquisite

‘ sufferings, if justice did not make it necessary ?’

The doctrines of *divine influence*, and the *new birth* have given much exercise to some inquisitive minds, but as they give no trouble to our author, he wonders that any body else should have found the least difficulty in them. Common sense can solve these difficulties, and much greater.

‘ One cannot help smiling,’ says our author, ‘ at the pitiful shifts which the pretenders to learning go into, to extricate themselves from the embarrassment they are under with respect to the operation of the Holy Ghost, and the new birth, which to a man of true judgment, creates no difficulty at all,’ vol. 2, p. 137. Then, comparing this supernatural influence to the *light of the sun*, he says, ‘ Why then, may not he, with equal ease, and with equal safety to the order of nature, and without the least

‘ least infringement of any of its laws, produce a total change of sentiments and inclinations, with new habits of thinking and acting, in those who resign themselves to his influence, and conform themselves to his direction. If this subject were explained by the same rules of good sense, and true philosophy, which are employed on subjects of far less consequence, the *new birth* would be equally intelligible with any other of the productions of nature we seem to be best acquainted with.’

Hitherto our author's common sense has always happened to steer him pretty nearly into the safe and comfortable harbour of orthodoxy; but with respect to the doctrine concerning the *power of man to do the will of God*, I am afraid it will appear to have driven him quite wide of it. For if I have any knowledge of scholastic divinity, Dr. Oswald's doctrine on this subject is the very reverse of what the Scotch ministers are obliged to

subscribe, as well as to that of the church of England.

‘ Take one of the vulgar aside,’ vol. 2, p. 208, ‘ and point out to him *some* duties he neglects, and some vices he indulges. —He will acknowledge the fact, but will conclude that till God work it in him he can do nothing. This,’ says he, p. 208, ‘ they are taught to say.’ And so, if I be not greatly mistaken, Dr. Oswald himself is under an obligation, equivalent to the most solemn of all oaths, to teach them.

‘ To alledge the necessity,’ p. 212, ‘ of an interposition which we have no reason to expect, and which one in an hundred is not favoured with, is a heinous impiety: for it amounts to nothing less than a declamation, that the supreme being looks on, and sees ninety nine of a hundred perish for want of an interposition, which is necessary to determine them to do the right and shun the wrong.’

This

This is certainly very sound Arminian doctrine, but very unsound Calvinism. If our author holds his Scotch living, I hope he will explain, in his next, how he can do this, and keep clear of a dangerous refinement, and *prevarication in matters of religion*. Let him take care that this *common sense* do not a little interfere with *common honesty*, and christian sincerity.

The difference between the *intellectual faculties of men and brutes* has occasioned a good deal of difficulty both to philosophers and divines; but on this subject our author is equally clear and decisive as on all the others on which he has favoured us with his opinion. In short, it is Common sense that is *the characteristic of rationality*. *Every individual of the human race* has it, idiots excepted.

‘If,’ says our author, p. 186, ‘we know any thing at all of the specific difference between our understanding and that of inferior animals, it must con-

‘ fift in our having perceptions of truth
‘ which are imperceptible to them. In-
‘ ferior animals,’ p. 185, ‘ fly things of
‘ hurtful appearance, and purfue objects
‘ of pleafure and convenience, with the fa-
‘ gacity and earneftnefs, as if they really
‘ knew thofe powers in nature by which
‘ they may be profited or hurt. But that
‘ they do not know them in the manner
‘ we do; and, indeed, that they can have
‘ no idea of them at all appears from
‘ hence, that they never make the leaft
‘ attempt to employ thofe powers in their
‘ favour. There are numberlefs occa-
‘ fions,’ ib. ‘ on which inferior animals
‘ could relieve themfelves from danger
‘ and from death, if they had the leaft
‘ notion of many powers in nature which
‘ they could eafily lay hold of. It is
‘ worthy of notice,’ he fays, p. 183, ‘ that
‘ brutes never thruft one another over
‘ precipices, into ponds, or rivers, or into
‘ fire. They may do it by accident, but
‘ never through mirth, or malice, as chil-
‘ dren do; becaufe they have not thofe
‘ ideas of the laws of nature which chil-
‘ dren

‘dren have. Who doubts,’ p. 186, ‘that
 ‘many of the inferior animals, under deep
 ‘provocation, would burn houses, and
 ‘do other dreadful acts of mischief, if
 ‘they had the least idea of power in fire
 ‘to consume combustibles?’

Our author does not give himself the trouble to answer many objections, taking the easy method of treating them with contempt, as things that are, in their own nature, altogether impertinent, or I could mention several. Dogs may not have a fancy for pushing one another into ponds, or into the fire, thinking perhaps there may be no great diversion in it, but they mouthe and tumble one another about in a very pretty, and ingenious manner, just as if they knew as much of the laws of nature as relate to biting and tumbling; and some animals of the monkey tribe both divert themselves and plague others, seemingly, with as perfect a knowledge of the natural powers of various instruments which they make use of for that purpose, as any unlucky young boy
 in

in the world. As far as I see, brutes both judge and reason as properly as we do, as far as their ideas extend. But I mean not to discuss any of these deep subjects, but only make such observations as may tend to illustrate the sentiments of my author.

The last article I shall mention (and I do not know whether Dr. Oswald, my reader, or myself, is most pleased that I have got to the last article) is a very small one indeed, but nothing can properly be called inconsiderable that relates to this most wonderful new discovered faculty of the human mind. So the most trifling custom of a new discovered people engages more attention than the most solemn and important ones of our old neighbours. And though our author does not, in this case, mention any obligation he was under to his principle of common sense, it might possibly have been of some indirect use to him in the discovery.

Most persons who have any respect for religion, ask a blessing on their meat,
especially

especially when they sit down to dine in a social manner; and perhaps they may think they know the reason of this custom; but I am now authorized to inform them that they are much mistaken, and that they are not quite so wise as they fancy themselves to be. In proof of this hear our author.

‘ There may be something in man’s
‘ constitution which destroys the nutritive
‘ quality of bread, and may turn it into
‘ poison, which is a good philosophical
‘ account of the common practice of ask-
‘ ing a blessing on our food,’ p. 372.

Having now dined very plentifully at the expence of our author, I thank him, for myself and my readers, for the entertainment he has given us. And that he may make his own epilogue, I shall conclude with what he says of the greatness of his scheme, and his hopes of success in it. And to shew my readiness to adopt my author’s sentiments, as far as I possibly can, I beg my reader would fancy to him-
self

self that as soon as Dr. Oswald has repeated the following sentences, I also stand up, and, *mutatis mutandis*, repeat them audibly after him.

‘ I hope the public will take in good
 ‘ part,’ p. 390, ‘ this effort I have made
 ‘ to check a folly which has retarded the
 ‘ progress of knowledge in all ages, and
 ‘ threatened the present age with a per-
 ‘ version of judgment similar to what
 ‘ prevailed in that period, when, as Mr.
 ‘ Pope says,

Faith, Gospel, all seem’d made to be disputed,
 And none had sense enough to be confuted.

‘ It is not possible,’ says he to his friend,
 p. 349, ‘ to give at once a new and op-
 ‘ posite turn to men’s way of thinking ; but
 ‘ as I hope to satisfy your scruples in a
 ‘ little time, so I believe that in due time
 ‘ the bulk of mankind may be brought
 ‘ to a just way of thinking on this sub-
 ‘ ject.’

T H E

T H E

A P P E N D I X.

T H E
A P P E N D I X.

N U M B E R I.

*Of the resemblance between the doctrine of
Common sense, and the principles of
Dr. Price's Review of the questions and
difficulties in morals.*

I Have mentioned my surprise that none of the authors on whom I have been animadverting should seem to have heard of *Dr. Hartley's Observations on man*, except Dr. Beattie, who appears not to have understood him, and who pays him the trifling compliment of an *ingenious but fanciful author*. I must also express my surprise, though not in the same degree, that none of them should have mentioned *Dr. Price's Review of the*

the principle questions and difficulties in morals, which was published in 1758; and which, both with respect to the theory of the mind, and the practical application of it, contains all that is original, and that has the appearance of being just and useful in any of them.

This writer, whose superiority to Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, or Dr. Oswald, is exceedingly manifest, maintains that the *understanding* is the source of many of our most important simple ideas; as that of the *necessary connection of events in nature*, the *vis inertiae of matter*, *substance*, *duration*, *space*, *infinity*, *necessity*, *equality*, *identity*, *contingency*, *possibility*, *power*, and *causation*, &c. and more especially to this source he refers our *ideas of moral right and wrong*, and of *moral obligation*. It is, he observes, of the essence of these ideas to imply something *true or false* of an object, and that they by no means denote the manner in which we are *affected* by it; so that they cannot with any propriety be referred to that part of our
con-

constitution which has hitherto been distinguished by the appellation of *sense*.

This scheme has all the flattering advantages of the new doctrine of common sense, without the capital inconveniencies attending it. Like this scheme, it cuts off, if it be admitted, (and without this no scheme can have any operation or effect) all objections to primary moral truths, resting them on a simple appeal to the faculty of *intuition*; and refusing to reason upon a subject which is maintained to be as evident as the truth of the geometrical postulatam, that *if equal things be taken from equal things the remainders will be equal*. But this philosopher had more good sense than to load his scheme with the belief of the real existence of the external world; and he is more especially careful to keep intirely clear of every thing that can represent our ideas of virtue as *arbitrary* and *precarious*, which is the necessary consequence of this new scheme

If the ideas of moral right and wrong &c. be perceived by a *sense*, it depends upon our arbitrary constitution that we conceive of them as we do, or whether we perceive them at all; and we have no method whatever of investigating whether they have any foundation in the absolute *nature of things*. Whereas by making moral ideas the object of the *understanding* or intellect, *as such*, the principles of morality become part of the system of *necessary, eternal, and unalterable truth*, perceived by the divine being, as by ourselves, but altogether independent of his will, as well as of all other beings, and things whatsoever; as much so as the truth of the *postulatum* above mentioned, or of the proposition that *two and two make four*.

To exhibit as distinctly as possible this original scheme of Dr. Price's, with as much of the evidence of it as I can find expressed, in a short compass, by the author himself, I shall present my reader with

with the following extracts from his very elaborate work.

‘ I cannot help wondering,’ p. 48, ‘ that
 ‘ in inquiring into the original of our
 ‘ ideas, the *understanding*, which, though
 ‘ not first in time, is the most important
 ‘ source of our ideas, should have been
 ‘ overlooked. It has, indeed, been al-
 ‘ ways considered as the source of *know-*
 ‘ *ledge*; but it should have been more at-
 ‘ tended to, that, as the source of know-
 ‘ ledge, it is likewise the source of *new*
 ‘ *ideas*, and that it cannot be one of these
 ‘ without being the other.’

‘ The various kinds of *agreement* and
 ‘ *disagreement* between our ideas, which,
 ‘ Mr. Locke says, is its office to discover
 ‘ and trace, are so many new simple ideas,
 ‘ of which it must itself have been the
 ‘ original. Thus when it considers the
 ‘ two angles made by a right line, stand-
 ‘ ing in any direction on another, and
 ‘ perceives the *agreement* between them
 ‘ and two right angles, what is this *agree-*

‘*ment* besides their *equality*? And is not
 ‘ the idea of this equality a new simple
 ‘ idea, derived from the understanding,
 ‘ wholly different from that of the two
 ‘ angles compared, and representing self-
 ‘ evident truth?’

‘ In much the same manner in other
 , cases, knowledge and intuition suppose
 ‘ somewhat perceived or discovered in
 ‘ their objects, denoting simple ideas, to
 ‘ which themselves gave rise. This is
 ‘ true of our ideas of *proportion*, of our
 ‘ ideas of *identity* and *diversity*, *existence*,
 ‘ *connection*, *cause* and *effect*, *power*, *possi-*
 ‘ *bility* and *impossibility*, and of our ideas
 ‘ of *moral right and wrong*. The first
 ‘ concerns *quantity*, the last *actions*, the
 ‘ rest *all things*. They comprehend the
 ‘ most considerable part of what we can
 ‘ desire to *know* of things, and are the ob-
 ‘ jects of almost all reasonings and dis-
 ‘ quisitions.’

‘ It is therefore essential to the under-
 ‘ standing to be the fountain of new
 ‘ ideas.

‘ ideas. As bodily sight discovers to us
 ‘ the qualities of outward visible objects,
 ‘ so does the understanding, which is the
 ‘ eye of the mind, and infinitely more
 ‘ subtle and penetrating, discover to us
 ‘ the qualities of intelligible objects ; and
 ‘ thus, in a like sense with the former,
 ‘ becomes the inlet of new ideas.’

The whole of what Dr. Beattie and Dr. Oswald have written about the necessity of acquiescing in primary truths, and on the inutility and insufficiency of reasoning in many cases, is so fully expressed by Dr. Price, that one can hardly help thinking that they must have read him, and have commented upon him. But he is so clear and full, though concise, that any commentary was certainly unnecessary.

‘ The second ground of belief,’ p. 163,
 ‘ is *intuition*, by which I mean the mind’s
 ‘ survey of its own ideas, and the rela-
 ‘ tions between them, and the notice it
 ‘ takes, by its own innate light, and intel-

‘ lective power, of what absolutely and
 ‘ necessarily is, or is not, true and false,
 ‘ consistent and inconsistent, possible and
 ‘ impossible, in the natures of things. It
 ‘ is to this that we owe our belief of all
 ‘ self-evident truths, our ideas of the ge-
 ‘ neral abstract affections and relations of
 ‘ things, our moral ideas, and whatever
 ‘ else we discover without making use of
 ‘ any process of reasoning.

‘ It is on this power of intuition, essen-
 ‘ tial in some degree or other, to all ra-
 ‘ tional minds, that the whole possibility
 ‘ of all reasoning is founded. To it the last
 ‘ appeal is ever made. Many of its per-
 ‘ ceptions are capable, by attention, of
 ‘ being rendered more clear, and many
 ‘ of the truths discovered by it may be
 ‘ illustrated by an advantageous repre-
 ‘ sentation of them, or by being viewed in
 ‘ particular lights, but seldom will admit
 ‘ of proper proof,

‘ Some truths there must be which can
 ‘ appear only by their own light, and
 ‘ which

‘ which are incapable of proof. Other-
 ‘ wise nothing could be proved or known ;
 ‘ in the same manner as if there were no
 ‘ letters, there could be no words ; or if
 ‘ there were no simple or undefinable
 ‘ ideas, there could be no complex ideas.
 ‘ —I might mention many instances of
 ‘ truths discernible no other way than
 ‘ *intuitively*, which learned men have
 ‘ strangely confounded and obscured,
 ‘ by treating them as subjects of *reasoning*
 ‘ *and deduction*. One of the most impor-
 ‘ tant instances the subject of this treatise’
 (viz. morals) ‘ affords us, and another
 ‘ we have in our notions of the necessity
 ‘ of a *cause* of whatever begins to exist,
 ‘ or our general ideas of *power and con-*
 ‘ *nexion*. And sometimes reason has been
 ‘ ridiculously employed to prove even our
 ‘ own existence.’

The writers on whom I have been ani-
 madverting seem even to have borrowed
 their *language*, as well as their ideas from
 Dr. Price, who also uses the term *common*
sense, but with much more propriety than

they do. Of this I shall give two instances.

‘ The necessity of a cause,’ p. 31, ‘ of
‘ whatever events arise is an essential
‘ principle, a primary perception of the
‘ understanding; nothing being more
‘ palpably absurd than the notion of a
‘ change which has been derived from
‘ nothing, and of which there is no reason
‘ to be given; of an existence which has
‘ begun, but never was produced; of a
‘ body, for instance, that has ceased to
‘ move, but has not been stopped, or that
‘ has begun to move, without being
‘ moved. Nothing can be done to con-
‘ vince a person who professes to deny
‘ this, besides referring him to *common*
‘ *sense*. If he cannot find there the per-
‘ ception I have mentioned, he is not
‘ farther to be argued with; for the sub-
‘ ject will not admit of argument; there
‘ being nothing clearer than the point
‘ itself disputed, to be brought to con-
‘ firm it.’

‘ Were

‘ Were the question,’ p. 62, ‘ what that
 ‘ perception is which we have of *number*,
 ‘ *diversity*, *causation*, or *proportion*; and
 ‘ whether our ideas of them signify *truth*
 ‘ and reality, perceived by the under-
 ‘ standing, or particular impressions, made
 ‘ by the objects to which we ascribe them
 ‘ on our minds; were, I say, this the
 ‘ question, would it not be sufficient to
 ‘ appeal to *common sense*?’ This is not
 using the word *sense* according to the
 technical philosophical meaning of it,
 and making it, *as such*, the test of truth;
 but only appealing to it as another term for
 a *plain understanding*. But it is no un-
 common thing for commentators to
 mistake the meaning of their author.

I thought it right to point out what
 seemed to me to be the probable source
 of what has the appearance of *truth* and
reason, as also, perhaps, of the *mistakes*
 of the writers on whom I have been ani-
 madverting; though I must acknowledge
 that I have been led to entertain a
 very different opinion from that of Dr.

Price!

Price concerning the nature and origin of the ideas above mentioned. For, instead of being properly *simple ideas*, as he considers them, several of them appear to me to be exceedingly *complex*, or substitutes for *descriptions* and *definitions*; and that at first view they seem to be simple for the same reason that *white* is imagined to be a simple colour, before we have learned how to analyze it. As to the ideas of *moral right* and *wrong*, and *moral obligation*, instead of bearing the proper marks of simple and original ideas, necessarily resulting from the view of any object, they appear to me exactly to resemble ideas compounded of many parts, some of which are obtained earlier and others later, and which require time perfectly to coalesce into one. The minds of children are long destitute of them; they are acquired very gradually; they are at first extremely imperfect, but grow more perfect and accurate by degrees, as their growth is more or less favoured by the circumstances to which the mind is exposed: they are subject to great variations

variations in the course of our lives; and in some minds, those ideas are never perfectly formed, some incoherent rudiments of them only being observable.

I am rather surprized that Dr. Price should see any occasion for supposing the faculty by which we judge of the truth of propositions, as distinct from simple perception, to be the source of ideas; since every perception may be resolved into a *proposition*, and therefore necessarily suggests a *truth*. If I only open my eyes, and get the idea of a *white horse*, I as evidently perceive a *truth*, viz. that *the horse is white*, as I perceive a truth when I have the sentiment of *approving a generous action*; and the latter is just as much involved, and requires to be unfolded, before it can take the form of a proposition, as the former. I do not therefore see why this very accurate reasoner should consider *feeling* and *intuition* as two different grounds of belief, especially as he ascribes to feeling the *knowledge of our own existence*, and of the
several

several operations, passions, and sensations of our minds, p. 162. It appears to me to be a distinction without a difference to make the faculty by which we judge of these things, to be different from that by which we judge of *all self evident truths*, and get our *ideas of general abstract affections and relations of things*, our *moral ideas*, and whatever else we discover without making use of any process of reasoning; which, however, we have seen that he ascribes to *intuition*, as distinct from *feeling*. It equally requires an attention to what passes within our minds, or *reflection*, to discover the *operations and passions of our minds*, as to get ideas of *general abstract affections and relations of things*. We may live and act under the influence of these ideas without knowing any thing about them; but the same *reflex attention* to what passes within ourselves will equally discover them all. I do not mean to discuss this subject with Dr. Price, it being foreign to my present purpose. Some observations, however, the reader will find relating to it in the
preliminary

preliminary Essay, and more in the *Dissertations* prefixed to my edition of *Hartley's Observations on man*. But for every thing of this nature-I would more especially refer my reader to Dr. Hartley himself, to whom I am indebted for almost all my knowledge of this subject.

NUMBER II.

*Of Mr. Harris's hypothesis concerning
Mind and Ideas.*

I Think it not altogether improper, in this Appendix, to take some slight notice of the hypothesis of Mr. Harris (the ingenious author of *Hermes*) relating to *mind* and *ideas*, which is so like that of Dr. Reid, that it might have been expected that he would have acknowledged some obligation to him for it; or, at least, that (as Dr. Price has done) he would have *quoted* him, as expressing sentiments so very similar to his own. The hypothesis is singular enough; but, I believe, something a-kin to that of Malebranche; though, not having studied the writings of this French philosopher, I am not able to pronounce with certainty.

If I understand Mr. Harris aright, *all our ideas are innate*; having been originally
im-

impressed upon our minds by the Deity, and being only awakened, or called forth, by the presence of external objects. But unless he could have advanced some more *direct evidence* for this system than he has done, I think he is hardly to be justified for treating with so much ridicule and contempt the hypothesis of Mr. Locke and others, that ideas are properly *produced by the actions of external objects*; there being the same necessary connection between them, as between any other causes and effects in nature.

‘Mark the order of things,’ says he, p. 392, ‘according to their account of them. First comes that huge body the sensible world, then this and its attributes beget *sensible ideas*. Then, out of sensible ideas, by a kind of lopping or pruning, are made *ideas intelligible*, whether specific or general. Thus should they admit that mind was coeval with body, yet till body gave it ideas, and awakened its dormant powers, it could at best have been nothing more
‘than

‘ than a sort of dead capacity ; for innate
 ‘ ideas it could not possibly have any.’

There is a good deal of humour and fine description in our author’s representation of the various hypotheses of the use of the nerves in conveying ideas.

‘ At another time,’ *ibid.* ‘ we hear of
 ‘ bodies so exceedingly fine that their
 ‘ very *exility* makes them susceptible of
 ‘ sensation and knowledge ; as if they
 ‘ shrunk into intellect by their exquisite
 ‘ subtilty, which rendered them too delicate to be bodies any longer. It is to
 ‘ this notion we owe many curious inventions, such as *subtle ether, animal spirits, nervous ducts, vibrations, &c.* terms
 ‘ which modern philosophy, upon parting
 ‘ with *occult qualities*, has found expedient to provide itself to supply their
 ‘ place.’

This, however, appears to me to be an evidence rather of a fine imagination in our author, than of his fairness, or acquaintance with the subject. He could

not

not seriously imagine that any person ever supposed that *matter* was capable, by its *subtilty* only, of approaching to the nature of *immateriality*. All that has ever been supposed (and what facts will sufficiently authorize) is that ideas, and their affections, are the result of certain impressions made upon the system of the nerves and brain. To prove that this is an unphilosophical hypothesis, Mr. Harris must shew, not that we cannot *explain* the connection between thought and this material system, but that there *is no such connection*, and that the faculty of thinking in man can subsist without that system; which I think he will not attempt to do.

Let us now consider the arguments on which his own hypothesis is founded; which, as far as I have been able to collect them out of what he has written upon the subject, are the following.

First, ideas are *of the essence of mind*, and therefore, having no relation to corporeal

poreal things, cannot be produced by
 them. ‘The nature of ideas,’ p. 380,
 ‘is not difficult to explain, if we once
 ‘allow a possibility of their existence.
 ‘That they are exquisitely beautiful, va-
 ‘rious, and orderly, is evident from the
 ‘exquisite beauty, variety, and order,
 ‘seen in natural substances, which are but
 ‘their copies or pictures. That they are
 ‘*mental*, is plain, as they are *of the essence*
 ‘*of mind*; and consequently no objects
 ‘to any of the senses, nor therefore cir-
 ‘cumscribed either by time or place.—But
 ‘the intellectual scheme,’ p. 394, ‘which
 ‘never forgets deity, postpones every
 ‘thing corporeal to the primary mental
 ‘cause. It is here it looks for the origin
 ‘of intelligible ideas, even of those which
 ‘exist in human capacities. For though
 ‘those sensible objects may be the de-
 ‘stined medium to awaken the dormant
 ‘energies of man’s understanding, yet
 ‘are those energies themselves no more
 ‘contained in sense, than the explosion
 ‘of a cannon in the spark that gave it
 ‘fire.’

But

But this goes upon the supposition that mind is of such a nature, as that it can have no possible connection with matter, or be properly affected by it, which is contrary to all appearance, if the subject of perception and thought in man be *mind*. For, judging by the most obvious facts, and universal experience, nothing is more evident, than that the principle which we call *mind*, whether it be material or immaterial, is of such a nature, that it *can* be affected by external objects, and that its perceptions correspond to the state of the corporeal system, especially that of the brain: And there is the same reason to conclude that this affection is *natural* and *necessary*, as that the sound of a musical chord is the natural and necessary effect of the stroke of a *plectrum*. If my eye be open, and a house be before me, I as necessarily perceive the idea of a house; or if fire be applied to any part of my body, I as necessarily perceive the sensation of burning, as sound follows the stroke above mentioned. If a due attention to these facts obliges us to alter our notions of *mind*, and *materialism*, the received rules of philo-

sophizing compel us to do it; and these are certainly a better authority than the mere speculations of metaphysicians founded on no observations at all.

I readily admit our author's comparison of ideas to the *explosion of a cannon*, and of an external object to a *spark* that occasions it; but I wonder that he should make use of this comparison, which, in effect, overthrows his whole hypothesis. For is not the explosion of the cannon the *mechanical effect* of the production of elastic vapour, and of the increase of the expansion of the air, by heat? If ideas result from external objects, in a manner at all analogous to the explosion of gunpowder from the application of fire, I see no occasion for having recourse to any immaterial principle in man, or for supposing that ideas, *as such*, are so far *of the essence of mind*, that they can have no relation to time or place.

Mr. Harris, moreover, admits that sensible objects may be a *medium to awaken the dormant energies of man's under-*

derstanding, by which I suppose he means *ideas*, in the first instance, and *mental operations* afterwards. But if sensible objects have a natural power of *awakening* ideas, why may they not have a natural power of originally *exciting* them, in the same mind? Let Mr. Harris explain the difference. In both the cases some *mutual action*, or *affection*, must be supposed.

The manner in which our author thinks that he can reduce us to the necessity of admitting the derivation of ideas from *mind*, rather than from *body*, is so curious, that I shall transcribe the whole passage. ‘Either all minds,’ p. 400, ‘have their ideas derived, or all have them original; or some have them original, and some derived. If all minds have them derived, they must be derived from something which is itself not mind, and thus we fall insensibly into a kind of atheism. If all have them original, then are all minds divine, an hypothesis far more plausible than the former. But if this be not admitted, then must one mind

‘ at least, have original ideas, and the
 ‘ rest have them derived. Now, supposing
 ‘ this last, whence are those minds, whose
 ‘ ideas are derived, most like to derive
 ‘ them; from *mind*, or from *body*; from
 ‘ mind, a thing homogeneous, or from
 ‘ body, a thing heterogeneous; from
 ‘ mind, such as, from the hypothesis, has
 ‘ originally ideas, as from body, which
 ‘ we cannot discover to have any ideas
 ‘ at all?’

But it is no more necessary that bodies
 should themselves have ideas; in order
 to excite them in us, than it is necessary
 that a *plectrum* should have *sound* in
 itself, in order to excite it in a musical
 chord; or that a spark of fire should con-
 tain an explosion, in order to produce
 it, by its application to gunpowder; and
 yet nothing but *matter* and *motion* are
 concerned in these cases.

Secondly, Mr. Harris seems to think
 his hypothesis necessary to account for
 the *identity of the ideas* of different minds.
 ‘ Now

‘ Now is it not marvellous,’ p. 399, ‘ that
 ‘ there should be so exact an identity of
 ‘ our ideas, if they were only generated
 ‘ from sensible objects, infinite in number,
 ‘ ever changing, distant in time, distant
 ‘ in place, and no one particular the
 ‘ same with any other?’

But is there not equal identity or
 diversity in *external objects*, as there is in
 our *ideas* of them? It appears to me that
 the correspondence is so strict, that it
 amounts to a sufficient proof of our ideas
 having this very origin, and no other.
 Men in the same situations, that is, ex-
 posed to the same influences, we have rea-
 son to believe, will have the same ideas,
 in similar situations they will have similar
 ideas, and in different situations they will
 have different ideas, and different in
 proportion to the difference in their
 situations.

Thirdly, our author supposes the men-
 tal origin of our ideas necessary to ac-
 count for the correspondence there is be-

tween the ideas of the divine mind and those of ours, and consequently to the communication between him and us. ‘In ‘short,’ p. 395, ‘all minds that are, are ‘similar and congenial, and so too are ‘their ideas, or intelligible forms. Were ‘it otherwise, there could be no inter- ‘course between man and man, or (what ‘is more important) between man and ‘God.—Let ideas then,’ p. 399, ‘be ‘original; let them be connate and essen- ‘tial to the divine mind. If this be true, ‘is it not a fortunate event, that ideas of ‘*corporeal* rise, and others of *mental*, ‘(things derived from subjects so totally ‘distinct) should so happily coincide in ‘the same wonderful identity?’

Now, for my part, I see no great difficulty in admitting that the divine being should cause material objects to excite the very same ideas in our minds, that might come into his some other way. Besides, with respect to the divine mind, I think it is sufficient, in this case, to plead our utter ignorance of the nature or affections of
of

of it. This, however, I would observe, and I think it well deserves the serious attention of Mr. Harris, and Dr. Reid; that if things *material* and *immaterial* be so very remote in their nature, the one having a relation to time and place, and the other being incapable of any relation to either, in so much that they cannot possibly affect one another (and upon this notion only can our author deny the possibility of external objects impressing our minds) and if, as he asserts, all minds be *similar, homogeneous, and congenial*, matter can no more affect, or be affected by, the *divine mind*, than it can affect, or be affected by *ours*. Consequently no such thing can exist, or, if it do exist, it cannot have been created by God. If I be capable of drawing any consequence, this appears to be a just one. Let Mr. Harris or Dr. Reid invalidate it, if they can.

As to the origin and nature of *ideas* in the divine mind, I must be allowed to profess the same ignorance, as of the origin or nature of his *being*.

NUM-

NUMBER III.

The correspondence of the author with Dr. Oswald and Dr. Beattie, relating to this controversy.

HAVING thought proper to acquaint Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and Dr. Oswald, with my intention of animadverting upon their writings, I sent the same notice to each of them, at the same time; together with a printed copy of the preface to my third volume of the *Institutes of natural and revealed religion*; and having received answers from Dr. Oswald and Dr. Beattie, I have here inserted them, with my replies, for reasons that will sufficiently appear in the perusal of them.

As Dr. Oswald seems to lay peculiar stress on his *seventh letter*, to which he refers me; and I am willing to give him all possible advantage, I have subjoined the whole of it. But if any body can
think

think it to be of the least use to his purpose, or that it exhibits any thing more than another specimen of just such futile declamation as I have already quoted again and again, I own he sees more in it than I can see. I think it altogether unnecessary to make any particular remarks upon it. His fifth letter also, I think as little satisfactory.

To Dr. OSWALD.

REVEREND SIR,

THINKING it right that every person should be apprized of any publication in which his writings are criticized, I take the liberty to send you a copy of a *sheet* that will be soon published, in which I announce my intention to animadvert upon the principles of your *Appeal to common sense*.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

London, April 28, 1774.

REVEREND

REVEREND SIR,

I Have received your letter, announcing remarks you are to publish on my *Appeal to common sense*, with one inclosed sheet, containing these remarks for my perusal. This, I own, is gentlemanny; but I am in no disposition for accepting the challenge. I shall, however, point out a few things which may deserve your notice.

Though numbers of high rank for literature in this and the preceding age have aimed at nothing beyond high probability; and though the evidence offered by Dr. Reid, Dr. Beattie, and myself for primary truths doth not give you satisfaction, you ought not to be positive that no other than probable evidence belongs to the subject; but ought to allow that higher evidence, too much neglected hitherto, and of which you have no clear conception, may possibly belong to the primary truths of religion.

Your

Your allusion to a lottery ticket is indecent. The utmost assurance arising from the chance of a thousand to one, is burdened with a just and rational dread of disappointment; but the evidence peculiar to the primary truths of religion leaves no room for a dread of disappointment, that can be called just or rational.

When you consult your heart, you will, I hope, find your belief of the Copernican system different from your belief of the primary truths of religion, and founded on evidence of an inferior kind. The possibility, at least, of error attends the most complete demonstration; but no such charge lies against the primary truth of religion; and this circumstance is of too great importance to be slightly passed over.

I shall not promise that the fifth letter annexed to the first volume of my Appeal on the difference between possibility,
 proba-

probability, and certainty, or that the last book of the same volume, on the difference between reasoning and judging will give you satisfaction; but these are subjects you ought to be acquainted with, before you pronounce on the evidence which belongs to primary truths.

I should be shy of recommending a second reading of my Appeal to one who is positive that it contains just nothing; but if you will take the trouble of reading the seventh letter, annexed to the first volume, you may find that an appeal to common sense in behalf of obvious truth may amount to more than people's calling one another reciprocally fools and block-heads.

I thought, and still think, that divines of eminence ought to have offered something more than the highest probability for the primary truths of religion, and that I had a right to complain of their not doing so, without derogating from
their

their merit, or being liable to the imputation of arrogance from those who are in the daily exercise of uttering complaints of the misconduct of their superiors.

If you know no other evidence for the primary truths of religion than the highest degree of probability, you cannot be justly blamed for offering that, and that alone, to those under your care; nor have you the least occasion for quarrelling with others, who are possessed, or believe themselves possessed, of higher evidence; and I am of opinion you may employ yourself with more advantage to the public by pursuing other branches of science, than by deciding rashly on a subject which I see you have not studied.

When you have thought better of the matter, you will not, I presume, chuse to publish the sheet you sent me in the present form; but if you do, I shall expect you will do me the justice of publishing this letter along with it. I have declined
entering

entering into a controversy, but this I
insist on. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JAMES OSWALD.

Methuen, May 12, 1774.

REVEREND SIR,

THE sheet I inclosed was publish-
ed exactly as it was sent to you,
about a fortnight afterwards. But if it
had not, I should not have thought pro-
per to have printed your letter along with
it, as I do not see a shadow of a founda-
tion *in justice* for your insisting upon it.
Dr Reid, Dr. Beattie, and others, have
just the same right, and I do not profess
to be publisher for all the world. The
press is as open to you, as it is to me;
and if you do not think proper to have
recourse

recourse to it upon this occasion, the fault is not mine. It is possible, however, that, in my intended publication, I may insert this letter of yours; but if you saw it in the same light in which I do, you would request that I would not.

You say you *see I have not studied the subject*; and this letter alone proves to me that you have not thought sufficiently upon it. But neither am I a judge of you, nor you of me. The question is before the public.

Your friends, I doubt not, think very well of your writings; and on the other hand mine (among whom I have the honour to reckon a considerable number of the ablest scholars and divines of this kingdom) think exactly as I do with respect to them; and think it very proper that principles which appear to them so false and dangerous should receive some check; that, at least, it may appear that *all* christians are not so ready to aban-

A 2

don

don the only rational defence of religion. I am,

Reverend Sir, &c.
Calne, May 23, 1774.

I might farther observe with respect to some parts of Dr. Oswald's letter, that he places our belief of the *being of God*, and of the other primary truths of religion on the same foundation with that of the *external world*, the evidence of which I think I have shewn to be not strictly speaking *demonstrative*, though it admits of no *rational doubt*. In like manner what philosopher will say that the truth of the Copernican system admits of any rational doubt, though there is a *possibility* that it may not be true? The being of a God I consider as strictly *demonstrable*, which abundantly satisfies me with respect to it; though Dr. Oswald says, what I have no conception of, that *the possibility of error attends the most complete demonstration*. And when I suppose

suppose the other primary truths of religion to be as little liable to rational doubt as the truth of the Copernican system, I think no person can be of opinion that I do them any injustice.

The reception of the primary truths of religion, and especially of christianity, is represented in the scriptures as depending, in some measure, upon men's previous dispositions and moral characters. As our Saviour says, John vii. 17. *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* But this could not be the case if these truths were properly *self-evident*, so that no person who had common sense could reject them. No doubt the scribes and Pharisees, who rejected Christ, had common sense, as well as the twelve apostles; but their pride, ambition, and other vices, laid a strong and undue bias upon their minds, and prejudiced them against him. To use Dr. Oswald's own style, *I appeal to men of understanding*, whether it be not

a more rational account of the matter, to say that, in all ages, men reject the primary truths of religion, natural and revealed, because they are defective in *moral dispositions*, rather than in *common sense*.

As to the *indecenty* of my allusion to the doctrine of chances, I can only say that I am not sensible of it.

Had Dr. Oswald's book been written in the same strain with this letter (in which he says that, if I know no other evidence for the primary truths of religion than the highest degree of probability, I cannot be justly blamed for offering that and that alone) I should not have quarrelled with him as he terms it, for advancing what he calls his *higher evidence*. But I appeal to the extracts that I have given, and to the whole strain of his publication, if his violent and unjust censures of others, for not advancing more than they thought the nature of the case admitted, does not
abun-

abundantly justify the manner in which I have vindicated their conduct, and animadverted upon his.

Dr. Oswald is pleased to pay me a compliment in saying that ‘ I might employ myself to more advantage to the public, by pursuing other branches of science, than by deciding rashly on a subject which, he sees, I have not studied.’ In return to this compliment, I shall not affront him by telling him how very little of my time this business has hitherto taken up. If he alludes to my *experiments*, I can assure him that I have lost no time at all; for having been intent upon such as require the use of a burning lens, I believe I have not lost one hour of sunshine on this account. And the public may perhaps be informed, some time or other, of what I have been doing in the *sun*, as well as in the *shade*.

Dr. OSWALD's *Seventh Letter.*

‘ YOU seem to think that a sceptic will
‘ make light of the charge of folly
‘ that I bring against him; but will he
‘ make light of being convicted of folly
‘ to himself; for that is what I aim at?
‘ By appealing to common sense, I do
‘ not trust the cause of religion to a ma-
‘ jority of mankind, or to a certain
‘ number of select judges, but to every
‘ man of sense, and to the sceptic him-
‘ self; who, if he possesses that quality in
‘ any tolerable degree, will at length pro-
‘ nounce in favour of religion. Indeed,
‘ if a man is destitute of common sense,
‘ or if, by disease, or otherwise, that cha-
‘ racteristical power of the rational mind
‘ is so impaired, as to render him inca-
‘ pable of distinguishing between obvious
‘ truth and palpable absurdity, I do not
‘ sustain him a judge. But that, I pre-
‘ sume, is not a common case; for, as
‘ in the practice of our duty, we often
‘ find ourselves urged by opposite affec-
‘ tions,

tions, and may yield to the direction of
either, as we chuse; so in judging on
plain subjects, true and false sentiments
often present themselves to our mind,
in such a way as leaves us at liberty to
adopt the one or the other, as we chuse.
Have you not known persons far gone
in folly, who still retained so much dis-
cernment, that, upon some occasions,
they have caught themselves speaking
nonsense, have blushed, and turned
silent? I can recollect instances of per-
sons, in the beginning of a fever, who
have told those about them that they
were going to rave, and have actually
stopped themselves; and nothing is
more common than for those who are
getting drunk to perceive the growing
disorder by the nonsense which they
utter. If, indeed, they go on to drink,
they will perceive it no longer, but
turn downright fools, without the possi-
bility of being made sensible of the
disorder.

‘ I always avoid charging those faults
 ‘ on the will, which can be fairly placed
 ‘ to the account of the understanding;
 ‘ but cannot help thinking that sceptics
 ‘ and infidels might prevent a great deal
 ‘ of that absurdity they run into on the
 ‘ subject of religion: for, certain diseased
 ‘ cases excepted, the progress of folly is
 ‘ gradual, and the person affected may
 ‘ perceive it if he will, or may, in its
 ‘ first approaches, be made sensible of it,
 ‘ by the assistance of a friend. And I
 ‘ know no greater friendship that can be
 ‘ done to these people, than to set the
 ‘ difference between sense and nonsense
 ‘ full in their view: and am persuaded
 ‘ that if this good office had been done
 ‘ to mankind by the friends of religion,
 ‘ when the controversy first broke out, we
 ‘ had not only got rid of scepticism long
 ‘ ago, but also would have made a greater
 ‘ proficiency in useful knowledge than we
 ‘ have done: and I would fain hope that
 ‘ the evil may yet be redressed, by restor-
 ‘ ing the authority of common sense.

‘ Do

‘ Do not you think that something ought
‘ to be done for the honour of literature,
‘ and of the age in which we live? for
‘ what a shameful thing is it, that we
‘ should be found wrangling about first
‘ principles, when discoveries of truths
‘ unknown to those who came before us
‘ might, in all reason, be expected from
‘ a people who enjoy our advantages.
‘ We laugh at those subtil disputes of
‘ the schoolmen, which never could be
‘ brought to an issue; but are not aware
‘ of a conduct no less ridiculous, in writ-
‘ ing volumes of controversy about truths
‘ which no man of sense can gainsay.

‘ I know your zeal for freedom of in-
‘ quiry, and heartily agree with you; but
‘ cannot be reconciled to that silly vanity
‘ of maintaining either side of a question
‘ by plausible arguments; which you
‘ know was first introduced by the antient
‘ sophists, and brought again into reputa-
‘ tion by the Popish schoolmen, and is
‘ now become the chief faculty of modern
‘ sceptics,

'sceptics, and not discountenanced in the
'manner it ought by men of sense and
'learning.

'How often have you and I been dis-
'gusted with idle conceits, chimerical sup-
'positions, and monstrous paradoxes, in
'favourite authors, which they would not
'have had the boldness to offer to the
'public, if men of learning and judgment
'had acted with the spirit which became
'them? Do you think there would be
'any harm in obliging men of genius to
'put their opinions to the trial of common
'sense before they obtruded them on the
'unthinking multitude? And if any
'should, through petulance and presump-
'tion, neglect this necessary precaution;
'would it be any prejudice to the interest
'of truth, or of freedom of thought, that
'their gross absurdities, or crude concep-
'tions, were received by the public with
'that cold contempt, which they are sure
'to meet with in every circle of men of
'sense and spirit? I know no right any
set

' set of men can have to insult the com-
 ' mon sense of mankind; nor do I see any
 ' reason why the public should bear with
 ' freedoms from writers of any kind,
 ' which one man of spirit would not bear
 ' with from another.

' After all, I am as diffident of my suc-
 ' cess as you can be, both from a sense of
 ' my incapacity to do justice to the sub-
 ' ject, and a suspicion that mankind chuse
 ' either to be entertained with subtil de-
 ' bates, or to give up inquiry altogether;
 ' but I hope the public will take in good
 ' part this effort I have made,' &c.

See the remainder of this paragraph at
 the close of my remarks on this writer.

Aberdeen,

Aberdeen, May 27, 1774.

REVEREND SIR,

I Received yours of the 28th of April inclosing a printed sheet of a *preface* not then published, in which you express your disapprobation of *The Essay on Truth*, and intimate your design of animadverting further upon it. I thank you for this early notice of your intentions, and for the justice you do me in that part of your preface where you declare that you believe me to be a sincere friend to revelation.

The *Essay on Truth* is so well intended, and its principles so well founded, that its author can have nothing to fear from the animadversions of a man of science and candour. If I had not thought those principles true, I should never have given them to the world. If I did not still think them true, I should publish my recantation to-morrow; or, if I could, to-day.

All

All that you have said in your preface against *me* I shall answer in few words.

If your meaning, page 5th, line 19, is that '*I* represent common sense as superseding almost all reasoning about religion, natural and revealed,' you charge me with a doctrine which I do not, and never did believe, and which is no where either asserted or implied in any thing I ever wrote.

If you mean, page 6, line 20, that I have ever, in word or writing, taught, or insinuated, that '*religion in general*' (I suppose you mean natural religion) '*or christianity in particular,*' does not admit of a rational and satisfactory proof, you are, Sir, egregiously mistaken in regard to my principles.—My doctrine is only this, that all reasoning terminates in first principles, and that first principles admit not of proof, because reasoning cannot extend in infinitum; and that it is absurd for a man to say, that he disbelieves

believes a first principle, which his conduct shows, that he does not disbelieve.

If you charge me with supposing, (page 7, l. 4—14) that 'the being, unity, attributes, and providence of God, and a future state of retribution are either *intuitively* certain, or certainties of the same sort with the axioms of geometry,' you charge me with that which I never believed, or supposed, and which you will find nothing in my writings to justify.

You are pleased, Sir, to call common sense a *pretended new principle*. What you may mean by the word *common sense* I know not; but that which I call common sense, is a *real* part of the human constitution, and as *old* and as *extensive* as human nature. I am one of those, Sir, who do not like a doctrine one whit the better for its being new, nor do I think myself sagacious enough to discover in the human mind any thing which was never discovered there before.

You

You honour me with the epithet *Reverend*, to which I have no title. I have told the world in my book that I am not a clergyman: but I humbly trust I am a christian; and permit me to say, Sir, that I have better ground to believe that my writings have hurt the cause of infidelity, than you can have to insinuate the contrary, which in page 6, l. 17, in your preface you seem to do.

I would have answered you sooner, but have been prevented by business and bad health.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your very humble servant,

JAMES BEATTIE.

Sir,

SIR,

I Take the liberty to trouble you once more to express the pleasure I have received from the great frankness and generosity that are apparent in the letter you have done me the honour to write to me. I wanted no assurance of the goodness of your *intentions*, or *disposition*. The strain of your writings left me no room to entertain a doubt on that head. Whether the principles of your *Essay on truth* be *well founded*, is the only point of difference between us; and as the affair will soon be before the public, I shall not trouble you at present with any thing relating to it. As soon as my remarks shall be printed, and a complete copy of the book can be made up, it shall certainly be forwarded to you.

I also engage to show the same frankness and openness to conviction that you profess, and a perfect readiness to retract any thing that shall appear to be ill founded,

founded, or too severe, in my censure of your performance.

I may be mistaken, and see things in a wrong and unfavourable light, but I am far from meaning to *cavil*, and should think myself disgraced by taking any such advantage as unguarded expressions may furnish; though some controversial writers seem to think them justifiable. And, considering that your work is in possession of a very high degree of the public esteem, that my opinions on some of the subjects of our controversy are exceedingly unpopular, and not likely to be ever otherwise, and that I consider you as a friend to the cause that I have myself most at heart; I hope you will have the candour to conclude, that nothing would have induced me to have entered the lists with you on this occasion, but a sincere and pretty strong, though perhaps a mistaken regard to truth; the support of which, how much soever appearances may be to the contrary, is the only method of promoting, *effectually and lastingly*, every cause that is truly valuable, and worth contending for.

Considering the very different lights in which we are apt to view the same things, in this imperfect state, it were to be wished that we might all improve this circumstance into a lesson of mutual moderation; and that it might teach us to think as well as we possibly can of each other, and especially of the *moral influence* of our respective opinions. To me you appear to have been exceedingly to blame in this respect.

Perhaps no two persons professing christianity ever thought more differently than you and I do; which may appear odd in men of liberal education, and who equally think themselves free from prejudice, and to have been earnest and impartial in their search after truth. But I infer from your *writings*, and the obligation that I imagine your professorship lays you under to subscribe the *Scotch confession of faith*, that so the case is. Indeed, you seem never to have had the least acquaintance with such persons as myself, and my friends in this country are. But, notwithstanding this, I hope that a little reflection, aided
by

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E R R A T A.

Preface, P. 10, l. 6, for *superfeded*, read *would supersede*.

P. 222, l. 1, for *are*, read *or*.

290, *dele* the inverted commas from the word *sense*, l. 22,
to the end of the paragraph.

334, l. 10, for *he*, read *Dr. Reid*.

335, l. 10 for *actions*, read *action*.

by the candour you seem to be possessed of, will show you the impropriety of the style you have adopted with respect to some of the points of difference between us.

I propose to take the liberty, in my intended publication, to insert the letter you have sent me, as I am persuaded it will do you honour; and likewise show, that whatever countenance your writings may *seem* to have given to my charge, you really disclaim the principles I have ascribed to you. Your testimony will add great weight to my observations on that subject, especially in what I shall say to Dr. Oswald.

I am truly sorry to hear of your indisposition, and wishing the speedy and perfect re-establishment of your health, I am, with real esteem, SIR,

Your very humble servant.

J. PRIESTLEY.

Calne, June 29, 1774.

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