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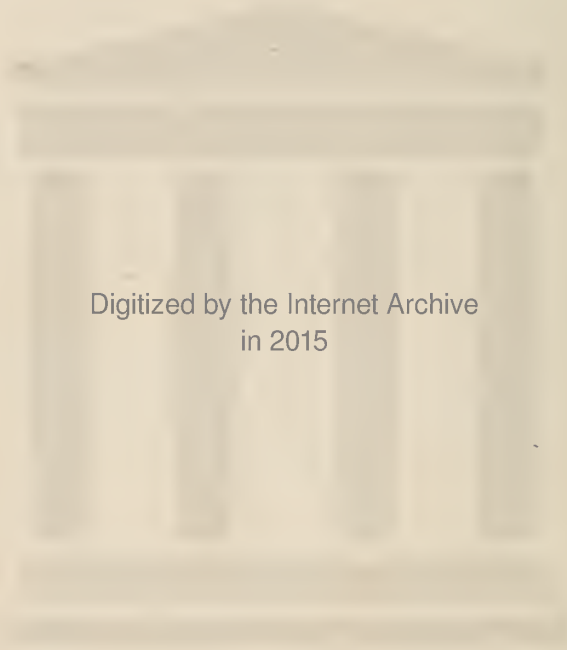

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Religion without Cant,

OR,

A PRESERVATIVE

AGAINST

LUKEWARMNESS AND INTOLERANCE;

FANATICISM, SUPERSTITION, AND IMPIETY.

By ROBERT FELLOWES, A.M.

OF ST. MARY HALL, OXFORD,

Author of A Picture of Christian Philosophy, &c. &c.

" Hæc conscius mihi sum non dicere me cujusquam odio, sed, in tanto et tam præsenti periculo, neminem arbitror esse debere cessatorem."

GROT. vot. pro Pac.

" Hostis non sum, nisi eorum dogmatum, quæ credo noxia aut pietati aut societati humanæ." Ibid.

" That is not truth that loves changes; and the new-nothings of schismatical preachers are infinitely far from the blessings of truth."

JER. TAYLOR, Supplem. Serm.

LONDON:

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1801.

" If the cauſe of politic affairs cannot, in any good ſort, go forward without fit Inſtruments, and that which fitteth them be their Virtues, let Polity acknowledge itſelf indebted to Religion; Godlineſs being the chiefeſt top and well-ſpring of all true virtues, even as God is of all good things. So natural is the union of Religion with Juſtice, that we may boldly deem there is neither where both are not. For how ſhould they be unfeignedly juſt whom Religion doth not cauſe to be ſuch; or they religious, which are not found ſuch by the proof of their juſt actions?"

HOOKER Eccl. Pol. B. v.

" Superſtition neither knoweth the right kind, nor obſerveth the due meaſure of actions belonging to the Service of God, but is always joined with a wrong opinion touching things divine." Ibid.

T. Benſley, Printer, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, London.

PREFACE.

EVERY friend to genuine Chriſtianity muſt lament the errors in which it is bewildered, and the corruptions by which it is oppreſſed. The beſt gifts of heaven are capable of the greateſt abuſe; and they are often the moſt abuſed. Reaſon was given us to diſtinguiſh right from wrong; to be the rule of action and the guide of life: yet, by ſome, this glorious faculty is hardly exerciſed at all; and, by others, it is employed only to do miſchief. Some uſe it rather to perplex than to unravel truth; and to make that intricate which God made plain. Revelation, which was deſigned as a beneficent auxiliary to human reaſon, and to afford full and ſatisfactory information on the dark and doubtful queſtion of a future

life,—a topic of inquiry, on which the utmoſt ſtretch of the intellectual powers of man could not advance beyond ſome faint analogy or ſome plauſible conjecture, has, by the ſceptical, been deemed an enemy to reaſon; and ſome of the faithful have ſuppoſed reaſon an enemy to it. Thus while ſome have imagined that a beleif in revelation fettered the free uſe of the rational faculties, others have thought that the free uſe of the rational faculties was inimical to the intereſts of revelation.

There is a ſort of ſpurious Chriſtianity, a ſtrange mixture of credulity and impoſture, of ignorance that moves compaſſion, and of hypocriſy that excites abhorrence, in which faith is commended more than goodneſs, and common ſenſe is loſt ſight of in the purſuit of myſtery; which has ſeldom wanted advocates in the Chriſtian world; and which has lately found numerous admirers in our own country. This undeſigning perverſion or

ſyſtematic depravation of the Chriſtian doctrine it is, in a great meaſure, the deſign of the preſent work to counteract; and, if poſſible, to reſcue the religion of the bleſſed Jeſus from a multitude of corruptions by which its uſefulneſs is diminiſhed and its glory is obſcured.——What are called the *doctrines* of Chriſtianity have been wilfully perverted and groſsly miſunderſtood. Conſtructions have been put upon them, which are not more contrary to reaſon than to ſcripture; and equally adverſe to the honour of God and to the happineſs of mankind. Of thoſe doctrines, which relate to the *fall*, *faith*, the *new birth*, *divine grace*, and which have often been made ſubſervient to the worſt of purpoſes, I have endeavoured to give a plain, a ſcriptural and rational explanation. Of that abſurd and unſcriptural fiction called "Original Sin," which, ſince the time of St. Auſtin, has been repreſented by viſionaries, fanatics, and impoſtors, as the moſt important and ſalutary conſtituent of vital Chriſtianity,

I have ſpared no pains to refute the error and to expoſe the abſurdity; and I have employed the more time on this ſubject, becauſe I am convinced that it will be found the root of numberleſs corruptions. If, in ſpeaking on this doctrine, I have uſed warmer language than men of a colder temperament may approve, my only apology is that ſuch language is the language of my heart. I could not well have employed different expreſſions, without doing violence to my conſcience as well as to my feelings; to my reverence for God and to my love for mankind. When the obligations of truth, of juſtice and of mercy are openly reviled or inſidiouſly undermined, I ſhould be totally unworthy of the profeſſion which I have embraced, if I did not ſtand forth their ſtrenuous and fearleſs advocate. Their intereſts are the intereſts of men at all times and in all places; and, in proportion as the general reſpect for them is relaxed, miſery will overſpread the world.

Many are the cauſes, which, at the preſent day, conſpire to favour the increaſe of vice and to promote the decay of virtue. Moral principle is not entirely, but is, in ſome degree, the offspring of favourable circumſtances; and certain it is that all circumſtances are not equally propitious to its culture or its growth. In ſome, it may be reared with leſs labour than in others; but the depreſſion of extreme want ſeems to oppoſe almoſt inſuperable obſtacles to its production *.

* The poſſeſſion of property generates ideas very congenial to the obligations of juſtice. It ſtrengthens the ſenſe of their importance by the weighty perſuaſions of ſelf intereſt. The moment we become proprietors of any thing, we begin to experience ſome diſtinct ſenſations of the right of mine and thine; ſome definite notions of what is due to ourſelves and to others; and what is juſtice but a practical regard for the rights of others? The ſenſe of juſtice ſeems ſtrongeſt in thoſe, who, having property, know that its ſecurity depends on the ſame ſenſe of juſtice in others. When we have no property to protect, we have little need of a ſenſe of juſtice in others; and our own ſenſe of juſtice becomes proportionally faint. To thoſe, in whom we wiſh to excite a vigorous ſenſe of juſtice, we ought to communicate property, which makes them feel a direct and palpable intereſt in the obligations of honeſty. In propor-

Difficult, indeed, will it be found to promote religious truſt and moral integrity among thoſe, who, going out every morning to their work and returning home at night

tion as property gets into fewer hands, and a greater number, from being deprived of its poſſeſſion or precluded from its attainment, feel no perſonal intereſt in the preſervation of its rights, it is probable that integrity will decline and roguery increaſe.

The ſpirit of the poor is broken and made abject when they are deprived of the means of bettering their condition. They then look on induſtry as vain, and frugality as hopeleſs; and they become idle, if not from a ſenſe of intereſt, at leaſt, often from feelings of ſpite and revenge, of which the gratification in vulgar minds often paſſes for intereſt. They ſee themſelves prevented from riſing above the level of their condition; and they almoſt ſpontaneouſly labour to fall as low in the ſink of penury as poſſible, in order to preſs with the greateſt poſſible weight on their rich ſuperiors. They conſider the great monopolizing tenants of the ſoil as their natural enemies; they regard them with rancour; and, as far as they have the power, they purſue them with hoſtility. They feel their circumſtances almoſt as deſperate as if they were in a ſtate of vaſſalage; and they endeavour to make others as well as themſelves feel the miſeries of their dependance. In this ſtate of moral degradation and of phyſical ſuffering, their ſentiments become depraved and their hearts unfeeling. Every ſympathy, which could diſpoſe them to benevolence, becomes gradually extinguiſhed; and they grow weak in intellect and ſavage in diſpoſition.

weary with toil, find that all their induſtry can furniſh only a ſcanty meal for themſelves, their wives and their little ones; a meal quite inadequate to the demands of exhauſted nature, and barely ſufficient to maintain the dreary vacuity of exiſtence! Difficult indeed will it be found to perſuade ſuch perſons that they can have any intereſt in a conſtant adherence to the obligations of truth, of juſtice, and of mercy! Great phyſical want, whoſe force on the mind is ſtronger than any arguments which you can apply, or any perſuaſions which you can uſe, will fruſtrate all your endeavours; and render all your inſtructions as vain as addreſſes to the winds or to the waves. You, perhaps, ſpeak to one, whoſe hungry ſtomach, whoſe wan and faded countenance, whoſe emaciated and feeble frame tell him, that he has no ſenſible, no immediate intereſt in the practice of thoſe virtues, which it is moſt the duty of the preacher to inculcate; and though you may remind him of a day of retribution and a future life, yet he will ſay, and, if he ſay not,

he will think, that that day is remote and that life uncertain! How few, how very few are thoſe, who do not live more by ſight than by faith! and the poor, whoſe rational faculties have been little cultivated and who cannot meaſure intereſt by a calculation of probabilities, are always governed more by ſenſation than by reaſon. To combat ſenſation, and, particularly, the ſenſation of hunger and thirſt, of cold and nakedneſs, by abſtract reaſoning or barren generalities; to prove the fitneſs of what is by the probable but uncertain ſtatement of what will be; muſt, in moſt caſes, be found an unavailing and fruitleſs taſk. Thoſe perſons, therefore, who are anxious to bring about a moral reform among the poor, ſhould endeavour to lay the foundation of it in a phyſical alleviation of their wants, and in a ſenſible diminution of their ſufferings *.

* May I hope that, during the adminiſtration of Mr. Addington, who appears to poſſeſs no ſmall portion of good ſenſe and a very large one of benevolence, ſome ſalutary plan for the relief of the poor will not only be debated but carried into effect!

Religion uſually flouriſhes moſt where there is the ſtrongeſt diſpoſition to thankfulneſs; but great want certainly takes away the motive and leſſens the willingneſs to be thankful. Gratitude will not live long without aliment. Can any religious man, who knows himſelf, and is ſuperior to diſſimulation, aſſert that he does not feel a ſtronger inclination to be thankful, to love God and to do good to his fellow-creatures after a refreſhing meal than on an hungry ſtomach? We naturally love to communicate our feelings to others; in happineſs and in miſery we want ſympathy: it increaſes our bliſs and diminiſhes our ſuffering. When we are in pain, our affliction is ſoothed by any artleſs expreſſions of ſorrow, which we can trace in the manner or the features of thoſe around us. A ſort of calm but bland and ſweet affection gets poſſeſſion of our boſoms; and which ſuſpends the action or leſſons the preſſure of our woe. Again, when our own feelings are pleaſurable, when our nerves thrill with joy

and our hearts beat with gladneſs, we are uſually conſcious of a ſtronger deſire to impart good than in a colder or leſs agreeable ſtate of the ſenſations.

Though the preſent increaſing luxury in one part of the community, with the increaſed and increaſing diſtreſs in another, do greatly favour the corruption of public morals, I think that another very vigorous and active cauſe of the declenſion of virtue and the increaſe of vice will be found in thoſe polluted, unreaſonable, and abſurd repreſentations of the Chriſtian religion, which have, of late years, been with too little conſideration patroniſed by the great, and with too much facility liſtened to by the populace. Of thoſe perſons, who ever think ſeriouſly of going to heaven, the majority would fain travel thither in company with that guide who requires the feweſt ſacrifices at their hands; who orders the leaſt ſelf-denial and permits the greateſt ſelf-indulgence. Thus they are pre-

diſpoſed to lend a willing ear to the inſtructions of any religious juggler who endeavours to perſuade them, that faith without holineſs, grace without exertion, or righteouſneſs by imputation will ſuperſede the neceſſity of perſonal goodneſs, and exempt the favoured convert from the painful toils of practical morality. Such admonitions, coloured over with a great deal of cant, in order to diſguiſe the rottenneſs of the ingredients and the unwholeſomeneſs of the mixture, have been called "*Evangelical Preaching*;" and, at other times, emphatically "*Preaching the Goſpel*;" and the great and everlaſting principles of moral duty have been ſhameleſsly libelled, and moſt induſtriouſly lowered in the public eſtimation, by men profeſſing to teach the holy doctrine of the holy Jeſus.

The attempts which have been made, of late years, to bring what has been too contemptuouſly termed "*moral preaching*," into diſrepute, are too notorious to be forgotten, and

too deſtructive of national virtue not to be mentioned with abhorrence. That kind of preaching which has been called *moral*, and which conſiders Chriſtianity more as a rule of life than a bone of contention, prevailed almoſt univerſally among the clergy in this country from the reſtoration, till beyond the middle of that century which we have lately ſeen brought to a concluſion; and I ſhould be happy to learn from the preſent numerous venders of what is called *Evangelical Chriſtianity*, in what period of this country, truth, juſtice, and charity, were more reſpected by the great maſs of the people, or when the moral principle operated with more ſtrength and more ſucceſs than when this mode of religious inſtruction, which it is now the faſhion to decry, was ſo generally approved? To diſcourage moral preaching is to blaſpheme morality. It is to make truth, juſtice, and mercy, appear baſe and worthleſs. It is to degrade them in the opinions of mankind. It is, beſides, to deny Chriſt; it is to vilify his

authority, and to deride his inſtructions; for, what did Chriſt inculcate more than practical goodneſs? more than pure and genuine and unſophiſticated morality? If Chriſt himſelf, who ought to be unto the miniſters of his religion not more a pattern for the lives which they lead than for the doctrines which they teach, preached nothing more than practical goodneſs, or the doing of good, what did he inculcate more than moral duty? For, is it not the perfection of moral duty to be zealous in doing good? Thoſe perſons, therefore, who ſcoff at *moral preaching*, and vilify *moral preachers*, are enemies to goodneſs, and to thoſe who labour to promote the doing of good. All preaching, which does not gravitate towards moral duty, which does not make the diminution of moral evil and the increaſe of moral good its object and its end, its primary and its ultimate conſideration, is unchriſtian, unſcriptural, and profane. It is diametrically oppoſite to the doctrine of Chriſt and to the genius of Chriſtianity. The reli-

On the motives to and the criterion of moral action, which I have occasionally mentioned in the progress of this work, I may, perhaps, differ from some writers of great celebrity. Utility is by many considered as the only criterion of virtue. Now, though an heathen or an infidel may, in the blindness of their minds or in the hardness of their hearts, consider utility as the sole test of virtuous action; I think that a Christian may appreciate virtue by a test, which is less fallible and precarious, less liable to be productive of error or of misery. By a believer in Christianity the will of God as declared in the sayings of Christ ought to

finds no rest. In establishments which may for the most part be considered as bodies at ease, there is at some periods a certain "vis inertiæ;" a gravitating tendency to quiescence, but which rouses in their opponents all the energies of action. The activity of those who are inimical to our religious institutions is stimulated by interested expectation, and all the malevolent passions rush in to increase the flame. But, whatever may be the zeal of their enemies, it must be confessed that many, very many of the clergy have, of late, displayed no ordinary vigour and ability in the defence of Christianity against unbelievers and of the establishment against sectaries.

be conſidered as the ſovereign criterion of moral action; for, if he adopt any other, he will often be in danger of violating the will of God, as it has been proclaimed in the Chriſtian revelation.

If we conſider utility, or, as an elaborate writer, whoſe paradoxes have often excited ſo much ſurpriſe and afforded ſuch ample materials for controverſy and for ridicule, has called it in other words *a preponderance of general good* and *an overbalance of pleaſurable ſenſation*, to be the only teſt of virtue, what reſtraint do we lay on the ſecret thoughts and intentions of the heart, which are as ſuſceptible of the relations of vice and virtue as our outward actions? How is utility violated by indulging a ſecret wiſh to ſeduce your friend's daughter or to ſleep with your neighbour's wife? Yet there is no doubt that, conſidering the true criterion of virtue to be a conformity of the inward thoughts as well as the outward actions to

the will of God, ſuch wiſhes are heinous violations of morality. Indeed caſes might be adduced, in which the moſt nefarious acts of falſehood and injuſtice, in which the commiſſion of adultery and even murder, might be quite conſonant to the principle of *utility*; or, in which theſe crimes might produce a general overbalance of pleaſurable ſenſation; and, conſequently, every enormity, at the very thought of which our nature ſhudders and our blood runs cold, might thus, in particular inſtances, be reputed virtuous. Such are the errors into which we might be led by adopting this very unſafe and very unſcriptural criterion of morality. Obedience to the will of God, which, according to my notions as a Chriſtian philoſopher, is the only genuine criterion of virtue, may, in particular caſes, be productive of an overbalance of *preſent* evil to the individual and perhaps to ſociety; but *preſent* good or *preſent* evil, which are inconſiderable in quantity and ſhort in duration, are not ſo much to be conſidered as that

greater future good which is to be revealed. The Chriſtian feels the force of this queſtion; "*what ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?*"

If we make utility or "*a general over-balance of pleaſurable ſenſation*" the only teſt of virtue, we ſhall ſoon denominate many actions to be virtuous which are contrary, and many to be vicious which are agreeable to, the will of God. There can be no doubt but that, in the majority of inſtances, virtue is productive of a preponderance of *preſent* good and preſent pleaſure to the individual and to ſociety; but there are many particular caſes in which, as Chriſtians, we are expreſsly commanded to ſacrifice the good which is preſent for that which is future, to forego pleaſurable ſenſation in this world for glory and happineſs in the next. To his firſt followers, Jeſus ſaid, "Whoſoever he be, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple." To his followers in all coun-

tries and all ages he exclaims, " He that loveth father or mother better than me, is not worthy of me." " If thy right eye cauſe thee to offend, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee; for it is better for thee, that one of thy members periſh, than that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell."

If moral action were, in all caſes, productive of an overbalance of temporal good or pleaſurable ſenſation, who would be ſo unwiſe as to offend? What influences the conduct of men ſo much as *preſent* good or *preſent* pleaſure *? But Chriſtianity never makes either preſent good or preſent pleaſure the right motive to or the right criterion of virtuous action; but, without the leaſt allurement of any good or pleaſure to be experienced in this world, it uniformly and in-

* When I uſe the words *preſent* good or *preſent* pleaſure in this preface, I do not always mean that good or that pleaſure which may be *immediately* conſequent on any action, but any good or pleaſure, *which are confined within and not extended beyond the boundaries of this mortal life.*

flexibly enjoins obedience to the will of him, whoſe ſervants we are, whoſe ſayings we are to obſerve, and whoſe example we are to imitate. I do not, indeed, ſay that in all caſes a Chriſtian will refuſe to act before he conſiders what is the will of God, for, in the buſtle of the world, time will not always be found ſufficient for ſuch deliberation; nor, in the common affairs of life, will ſuch deliberation be often neceſſary; for, when the love of God or the ſpirit of Chriſtian charity, which is the perfection of Chriſtian virtue, has acquired a due aſcendancy in the ſoul, a man's general conduct in the little detail as well as the great tranſactions of life, cannot but be conformable to the will of God; and whatever may be the complexity of human motives, all virtuous action muſt, at laſt, be reſolved into conformity to the will of God. Chriſtianity allows no other criterion of virtue; and thoſe who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, only labour in vain to diſcover any other in ſome barren abſtraction or ſome vague and

indeterminate principle, when they have a very plain and definite rule of right placed before them in the ſayings of Chriſt; to which all the wiſdom of the greateſt among antient or modern ſages will be found but vain babble and fruitleſs ſpeculation.

An eaſy and ſafe and practical rule of virtue, which individuals may readily conſult with reſpect to their conduct towards others, is that recommended by our Saviour; "whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you do ye even ſo to them." He who, on any particular occaſion, feels that he has done to another, what he could not reaſonably judge right to be done to himſelf in the like circumſtances, may be convinced, that he has acted wrong, and done what is not virtuous. Let any individual apply this rule as a ſtandard for any part of his behaviour towards his fellow-creatures and he will find it invariably juſt. If I have told a lie to my neighbour, if I have defrauded him in any matter, I cannot cer-

tainly compare my conduct with this rule without condemning myself. With respect, therefore, to the judgments which we ought reasonably to pass on our own conduct towards others, this saying of the Christian lawgiver, "whatsoever ye would, &c." will, I think, constitute an uniformly and perfectly just criterion of virtue; but, perhaps, we cannot so invariably apply it to appreciate the conduct of others towards ourselves; for ignorance of their circumstances and of the intentions in their hearts, may cause their conduct to be differently modified towards us than we may think that it ought to have been, or than we feel that this maxim "whatsoever, &c." will approve.

If we do that to others, which we should think it unfair and unreasonable that others should do to us in the like circumstances, we condemn ourselves; we wilfully commit a vicious action. But, others may possibly do to us what we should condemn ourselves for

doing to them, and yet not offend againſt this criterion of virtue; for many little circumſtances which do not come under our cognizance, or the contemplation of things under different relations from what we do, may cauſe their ſenſations of rectitude in this particular caſe to be different from our own; and may thus induce them to approve what we condemn. In judging the conduct of others we cannot ſafely decide on their merit or demerit, by the varying teſt of our own ſenſations.

But though this teſt of virtue "whatſoever ye would, &c." may ſometimes prove erroneous in its application to the conduct of others, it would be found ſtrictly true and juſt in all caſes, if we could reciprocally exchange ſituations and ſenſations. Thus, if a perſon in need aſk me for a loaf of bread, which I may have it in my power to give, he may deem the refuſal of his requeſt a violation of this rule, "whatſoever ye would,

&c;" but it may happen, that I could not comply with the petition, without doing an injury to thoſe more near to me or more dear to me; and who have a reaſonable claim to *preference* in my regard. I may not, for inſtance, be able to ſatisfy this perſon's hunger, without cauſing hunger in my own family. In theſe circumſtances let the perſon, who ſolicits the benefaction and he of whom it is ſolicited for a moment change places; and then the former may not only ſee but feel that I do not offend againſt the great Chriſtian law by not granting his petition. Thus if people would for a moment reciprocally endeavour to identify themſelves as it were with each other's circumſtances and ſenſations, this rule might become a very juſt criterion *, by which to eſtimate not only

* I cannot help, in this place, intruding on the attention of the reader a remark, which forcibly ſtrikes me at this moment, that this rule of doing to others whatſoever we would that they ſhould do to us, which our Lord ſo ſolemnly enjoins and ſo forcibly applauds, as containing the ſubſtance of the law and the prophets, proves in a moſt

their own goodneſs but the goodneſs of their fellow-creatures.

As man is made for immortality, and as the greateſt good which he can enjoy in this life is ſo ſmall in degree and ſo ſhort in duration,

ſatisfactory manner, that he did not aſſent to the modern doctrine of the original and radical corruption of human nature; for the precept itſelf could not be correct and would not ſerve as a rule of action, nor would ſo much ſtreſs have been laid on it, *if our feelings themſelves did not atteſt the obligations and ratify the practice of morality.* Jeſus, therefore, evidently ſuppoſes our frame to contain in ſome meaſure within itſelf the rule of virtuous action; our ſenſations to bear teſtimony to moral rectitude, and to argue forcibly in favour of truth, juſtice, and mercy. By thus ſuppoſing a rule of virtuous action in the human conſtitution, he evidently intimates that the principle of virtue is a predominant ingredient in the nature of man, and that virtue itſelf is enthroned by the appointment of God, not only in the outer courts but in the inmoſt ſanctuary of the heart. This inference may to ſome appear far-fetched; but thoſe, who, not contented with a ſuperficial view of things, have a capacity for profound inveſtigation, will, I truſt, agree with me that this injunction of our Lord, *whatſoever*, &c. includes the ſtrongeſt, the moſt rational, and to a genuine Chriſtian the moſt convincing arguments that can be adduced againſt the doctrine of original ſin;—the ſource of ſo much abſurdity, ſo much vice, and ſo much miſery!

that it is nothing when compared with the eternal good which is to be revealed, it is plain that Chriſtians who believe that an eternal reward is reſerved for the righteous, ought to regulate their conduct more by the conſiderations of the future than of the preſent. The injunctions of Chriſt and his apoſtles evidently tend to deter us from ſin by the fear of future torments; and they incite us to righteouſneſs by the aſſurance of an eternal recompenſe. They threaten the ſinner with the *outer darkneſs, where there is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*; and they animate the juſt by the promiſe of an eternal weight of glory. Chriſtianity therefore certainly derives our primary motives to virtuous action from the intereſts of eternity. Virtuous action will, indeed, in the majority of caſes, be found productive of *preſent* good *; but caſes may and ſometimes will occur, in which it may be productive of *preſent* evil. On theſe

* My uſe of the word *preſent* has been already noticed above.

occaſions, if a man were virtuous only from the hope of, or with a view to preſent good, or in the expectation of an overbalance of pleaſure to accrue to himſelf or to others in this mortal life, he might perhaps, at laſt, find virtue, like Brutus, unſatisfactory; and, in the emotions of his impatience, be ready to arraign the moral government of God.

If we conſider virtuous conduct as relative to our *future* good, virtue will, when beheld under this aſpect, be found *in all caſes* our greateſt poſſible good; and, as in the majority of caſes, our real preſent and our eternal happineſs will be found cloſely connected, and, as the ſame virtue, which always tends to the acquiſition of the laſt will be found, *in moſt inſtances*, to promote the firſt, virtue muſt be deemed our greateſt good viewed only in its relations to this ſhort life; and, in thoſe caſes, in which the rigid performance of our duty may expoſe us to any temporal inconvenience or diſtreſs, that inconvenience and diſtreſs

will be endured with patience by him, who places his truſt in the promiſes of Chriſtianity.

The great perfection of Chriſtian virtue is to keep the ſayings of Chriſt, to be temperate, juſt, beneficent, in oppoſition to our preſent profit or preſent pleaſure. We are placed in circumſtances, in which ſuch a dereliction of preſent for future good will be occaſionally demanded of us. If temporal pleaſure or profit were the *conſtant* concomitant of virtuous action, the obligations of virtue would be performed with as little difficulty as any of the animal functions. We ſhould follow after truth, juſtice, and charity, with as little reluctance as we eat when we are hungry or drink when we are dry. But the primary motive to virtuous action, which Chriſtianity approves, is the deſire of and the truſt in that everlaſting good which Chriſt has promiſed to thoſe who keep his ſayings; and we may find ſecondary motives in that preſent good, that ſatisfaction and ſelf-complacency, that

the more thoſe individual acts which conſtitute the habit of temperance, of truth, of juſtice, or charity are repeated, the more they will be influenced by thoſe motives which are taken from the intereſts of eternity. Every ſucceeding action will not only borrow force from the preceding, but will be more vigorouſly influenced by the motive which produced the act that went before it. Thus the ſtrongeſt motive to virtue, by which a true follower of Chriſt will be directed, is his greateſt poſſible good; *and that conſidered more with a view to the future than the preſent, to eternity than to time.*

If we adopt that criterion of virtue which I have defended, becauſe it appears to me moſt accordant with the genius of Chriſtianity and with the ſanctions of its heavenly founder, we ſhall not try the morality of actions by the degree of their *utility*, or by any *general overbalance of pleaſurable ſenſation*, accruing to the agent or to ſociety, but by

the degree of their conformity to the will of God, as it has been made known to us in the Chriſtian diſpenſation. Chriſtians are, in general, too lax in their notions of moral obligation. They direct the attention to a falſe teſt of moral duty. They do not adhere with ſufficient conſtancy to this all-important doctrine that *moral action is a ſtrict conformity of the heart and mind, of the thoughts, the affections, and the whole conduct to the will of God.*

Morality may be proved to be the will of God by various inductions of reaſon, and to which recourſe may be had in order to elucidate or to ſtrengthen the authoritative injunctions of revelation. It may be proved to be the will of God, by the order of the moral world, in which phyſical is made the corrective of moral evil; by the nice and curious adaptation which there is in goodneſs to produce happineſs; by the fitneſs which there is in temperance, truth, juſtice, and charity, to promote the good of the individual and the

well-being of ſociety; by the wonderful and univerſal congruity which there is between truth and juſtice, and the natural unvitiated ſentiments of mankind; by the preſent uneaſineſs and the trembling apprehenſion of thoſe who do evil; and by the preſent ſatisfaction and the joyful hope of thoſe who do good; even in countries where revelation is unknown. Theſe conſiderations, which natural reaſon will ſuggeſt, may be adduced to prove that morality is the will of God; but a Chriſtian is not *ſo much* to inculcate moral action becauſe it is required by the fitneſs of things, becauſe it is agreeable to the natural ſentiments, to the common ſenſe and the common feelings of mankind, as becauſe it is conſonant to the will of God, and commanded in the goſpel of his Son; without obedience to which we ſhall periſh everlaſtingly. On this as well as other points I have without any equivocation or diſguiſe laid before the reader the ſober conviction of my reaſon and the warm perſuaſion of my

heart; and though I hope that I have never treated with ſcorn, I truſt that I have never copied with ſervility, the opinions of any writer, whether antient or modern, whether among the living or the dead.

Chriſtian divines often miſtake through ignorance, or miſtate through prejudice, the true meaſures of Chriſtian piety. They do not ſufficiently call the attention of the young, of the old, and the middle-aged to the eternal importance of practical ſoberneſs, righteouſneſs, and godlineſs.—Finding the great indifference of Chriſtians in general to theſe moſt intereſting topics, finding ſome ſeparating religion from morals, or morals from religion, making the goſpel of Jeſus contemptible or ridiculous, polluting it with cant, or perplexing it with ſophiſms, lowering its ſublimity by their frivolous and unworthy gloſſes, or burying its ſimplicity under an abyſs of dark and doubtful diſputations, I have endeavoured in this work, as

well as in my Picture of Chriſtian Philoſophy *, to warm the hearts of men with the ſpirit of true righteouſneſs, and to lead them into a right track of thinking on the doctrines and the duties, on the true character and genius of Chriſtianity.

ROBERT FELLOWES,

Curate of Harbury, near Southam, Warwickſhire.

Harbury,
Auguſt 3, 1801.

* My own feelings would convict me of ingratitude, if, on this occaſion, I did not offer my public thanks to my much revered and much loved friend Dr. Parr, for the earneſt, the energetic, and affectionate manner in which he has vindicated the Picture of Chriſtian Philoſophy from the miſrepreſentations of the *Britiſh critics*; and, perhaps, I ought, at the ſame time, to return my thanks to thoſe gentlemen for having been the occaſion of my receiving ſo much elegance of praiſe from one, who is equally diſtinguiſhed by the vigor of his intellect and the fervor of his benevolence; who is a philoſopher without dogmatiſm, a critic without bitterneſs, and a prieſt without intolerance and without guile.

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ERRATA.

Page 2, line 7, note, for *Anti-Calviniſts* read *Anticalviniſt*. P. 5, l. 13, note, after *Ed.* r. 1679. P. 5, l. 28, note, for *lorem* r. *lonem*. Ibid. for *Coronbertium* r. *Cornbertium*. Ibid. for *nebulorem* r. *nebulonem*. P. 5, l. 29, note, for *rem* r. *nem*. P. 6, l. 10. for *cum que* r. *cumque*. P. 6, l. 13, note, for *abeo* r. *ab eo*. P. 14, l. 3, note, for *ermente* r. *ex mente*. P. 21, l. 23, note, for *ſeppatatione* r. *ſuppatatione*. P. 21, l. 30, note, for SEPELLERUNT r. SEPELIERUNT. P. 22, l. 27, note, for *tales* r. *talis*. P. 23, l. 23, note, for *ſuo* r. *ſa*. P. 23, l. 4, note, for *unaquæquæ* r. *unaquæque*. P. 23, l. 15, note, for *perannos* r. *per annos*. P. 24, l. 28, note, for *retinendus ve* r. *retinendusve*. P. 28, l. 22, for *utrumque* r. *utramque*. P. 35, l. 3, note, dele *fallible*. P. 65, l. 1, for *ſins* r. *ſin*. P. 73, l. 1, dele 18, and conſider the paragraph as united with the preceding. P. 89, note, I have, unwittingly, conceded to the advocates for the doctrine of *original ſin* the high ſanction of the immortal Hooker; but, on a more attentive peruſal of the whole works of this glorious defender of the Engliſh proteſtant eſtabliſhment, I am convinced that he gave no more credit to the doctrine of hereditary guilt and imputed ſin, than Jeremy Taylor of Down and Connor, the good and wiſe churchman, or than John Taylor of Norwich, the honeſt and artleſs Preſbyterian. P. 147, l. 13, for 40 r. 39. P. 149, l. 3, for 41 r. 40. P. 155, l. 6, note, for *quitus* r. *quibus*. P. 174, l. 8, dele 35 and conſider the paragraph as united with the preceding. P. 200, l. 1, note, for *ſpirit* r. *ſpirits*. P. 273, l. 1, for *the* r. *they*. P. 295, l. 17, note, dele *united*. P. 295, l. 10, note, for *a negative not a poſitive quantity* r. *negatively not poſitively*. P. 303, l. 12, for *of the* r. *or the*.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

The Fanatics unmaſked, ſome of their miſchievous tenets examined, illuſtrated, and refuted; with various practical obſervations.

1. WHAT our Lord ſaid of the falſe teachers of his time, "*by their fruits ye ſhall know them,*" may, with great propriety, be recommended as a teſt, by which to diſcover the falſe teachers of the preſent age; who, without any capacity to inſtruct, or any authority to preach, are ruſhing into the Chriſtian church, ſubſtituting the combinations of fraud for the truths of inſpiration, or making the abſurdities of fancy the baſis of religion.

2. "By their fruits ye ſhall know them." We need no other teſt by which to prove the falſehood of thoſe dark and complex, thoſe fanciful and bewildering doctrines, which the brawling votaries of Fa-

naticiſm * are ſpreading abroad, inſtead of the plain and reaſonable religion of the goſpel. The malignity

* Where I uſe the word Fanatic and Fanaticiſm, the reader may, if he pleaſes, *in moſt places*, ſubſtitute the words Methodiſt and Methodiſm. Fanatics are very numerous among that maſs of people, who are called Methodiſts, and who are divided into two great factions, denominated,—the Calviniſtic and the Arminian Methodiſts; but who differ, as I have intimated in the preface to the Anti-Calviniſts, little in the nature of their doctrine, and nothing in the *miſchief of its tendency*. Both are *furious* ſupporters of the deſtructive doctrine of innate and hereditary depravity.—But in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, *all Fanatics are not Methodiſts*; *nor are all Methodiſts Fanatics*; and, for this reaſon, I have uſed, in the following pages, a term of a larger ſignification than the term Methodiſts or Methodiſm, and not circumſcribed within the pale of any particular ſect of Chriſtians. Moſt of the pernicious tenets, however, which I have expoſed and refuted in this work, if they be not *excluſively* profeſſed by the Methodiſts, are yet more generally embraced, and more ſtrenuouſly defended by them, than by any other Chriſtians in this country.—Perhaps I might add, that there are many Methodiſts in the church as well as out of it. Thoſe clergymen, who aſſume the ſplendid title of Evangelical preachers, are, for the moſt part, Methodiſts, in the preſent acceptation of that word; and are united in an offenſive and defenſive league with the ſtationary and the itinerant champions of Methodiſm; preaching the ſame doctrine, and *employing both art and induſtry to* ESTABLISH *the ſame impoſture*.—Let the ſober and ſerious part of the Clergy, who hold faith in a good conſcience, who are friends to genuine and reaſonable Chriſtianity, exert all their diligence, and all their zeal, to defeat the machinations, and to fruſtrate the attempts of theſe Anti-Chriſtian teachers. Let them endeavour to baniſh the deſtroying Demon of Fanaticiſm from the

of Fanaticiſm, in order to be detected, and when detected, to be abhorrred, requires only to be obſerved in its effects on the conduct of thoſe, in whoſe hearts its baleful genius has fixed its dwelling, annulling the ſanctity of their promiſes, imparting a ſpirit of extortion to their dealings, and ſpreading the canker of covetouſneſs over their affections; for it ſeems as impoſſible to gather figs on thiſtles, or grapes on thorns, as it is to find the obligations of truth, juſtice, and charity, reſpected by thoſe, whoſe doctrine, *which is diametrically oppoſite to the belief of their* NECESSITY, neceſſarily and uniformly relaxes their hold on the conſcience, and deſtroys their influence on the life.

3. When the great moral duties, the weighty matters of the law, which our Lord ſo forcibly inculcated, and ſo uniformly practiſed, are affirmed not to belong to the covenant of ſalvation, and when the oppoſite tranſgreſſions are maintained to be the inherent propenſities of our nature, ſuch doctrines muſt, unavoidably, cauſe vice to flouriſh, and virtue to decay.—When iniquity is openly defended under the banner of religion, and the ſanctions of heaven are forged to abet the luſts of ſin, who can wonder that the everlaſting principles of truth, and juſtice, and mercy, are deſpiſed?

boſom of the Church of England; and purſue it with the unrelenting warfare, *not of artillery, but of argument*, to the very ends of the earth.

4. Religion affords the only ſolid baſis on which to raiſe a ſuperſtructure of practical goodneſs; but the Fanatics make even religion itſelf the foundation of unrighteouſneſs. They ſubſtitute what they call faith and grace; of which they entertain the moſt ſtrange, confuſed, and unſcriptural notions, for the ſanctity of moral obligation. They do not conſider grace as a help to goodneſs; but a certain inviſible ſomething, which ſuperſedes its neceſſity. It is rapturous ſenſation, not ſober reaſon, which eſtabliſhes *their* faith. They do not repreſent their converſion as ſpringing from the conviction of the mind, and the perſuaſion of the heart, working a ſlow and gradual change in the ſtate of their affections, and in the habits of their conduct;—they rather imagine it, like the converſion of St. Paul, miraculous, ſudden, and inſtantaneous. *They* pretend to know the very hour when it took place; and thoſe among them who have not yet experienced this magic operation on their nerves, are continually waiting for its arrival; till impatient expectation, working on the fancy, and fermenting in the brain, at laſt, in ſome more auſpicious hour, produces a thrill in their feelings *

* Calvin, no doubt, felt the ſame rapturous vibrations at his heart, when he ſent Servetus to the ſtake. The great *humanity* which the fiery zealot diſplayed on that occaſion, may be learned from the following extract from Grotius. "Calvinus, qui antequam Servetus (is autem ipſius judicium ſuper ſcriptis ſuis expetiverat) veniret Genevam, ſcripſit (exſtat ipſius Lutetiæ manus) ad Farellum *ſiquid ſua valeret auctoritas,*

more delicious or more violent than uſual, which they aſcribe to the agency, or miſtake for the deſcent

effecturum ne vivus abiret. Stetit pollicitis; nam *eoquo ſuo accuſatore ſubmiſſo* (de quo ipſe in epiſtolis editis ſe jactat) *qua erat auctoritate facile effecit ut vivus ureretur Servetus,* exemplo valde periculoſo et facilè in ſuos auctores recaſuro." On this bloody tragedy Grotius makes the following very judicious remarks. At de Trinitate non per omnia bene ſenſit Servetus: fieri poteſt; *facilis enim lapſus in rebus adeò ſupra humanum captum poſitis At Serveti cauſtor an iſto in argumento ſatisfecit omnibus? Nihil minus. Sorbonici plures hereticarum opinionum, Lutherani prope omnes Arianiſmi eum accuſant. Urendus ergo fuit, ſi in judices incidiſſet, apud quos tanta erat Sorbonicorum aut Lutheranorum, quanta ipſius erat apud Allobroges auctoritas.* Grot. op. Ed. Tom. iii, p. 503.

Calvin not only felt no remorſe on this occaſion, but aſſerted, " *Non modo liberum eſſe magiſtratibus pœnas ſumere de cœleſtis doctrinæ corruptoribus, ſed, quod illis licere nolunt imperiti,* DIVINITUS ESSE MANDATUM. Grot. Tom. iii, p. 655. No doubt Calvin was viſited with what his modern followers would term *an experience of Grace, when he deliberated on the murder, when he ſuborned the accuſer, and ſet fire to the faggot.* It was a maxim with the Calviniſts in the time of Grotius, and which they, no doubt, bequeathed to their pious deſcendants, that " *non auferre ſtatum gratiæ adulterii et homicidia.*"

Calvin was as celebrated *for the urbanity of his ſtyle, and the gentleneſs of his rebuke, at leaſt, as much as he was for the tenderneſs of his heart, and the purity of his conduct.* For inſtance, when Caſtellio oppoſed his notions of predeſtination, " nebulorem et Satanam vocat: Coronhertium et nebulorem et carem; Scriptorem de officio pii viri in hoc religionis diſſidio, qui erat Caſſander, ipſi autem putabatur eſſe Balduinus, appellat frontis ferreæ hominem, pietatis expertem, profanum, impudentem, impoſtorem, ἀστοργον (*ſine naturali affectu*) pe-

of the Holy Ghoſt. When they have once felt the tranſporting glow of devotional lunacy, or, as they may term it, " *experience of grace,* " they fancy themſelves *new creatures,* purged from the lees of the old Adam; and delivered from the manacles of the fleſh. They then, for the moſt part, think their ſalvation ſure. " The change," ſay they," " has taken place; and *new light* dawns on the darkneſs of our hearts."

5. Theſe deluſions of the Fanatics produce, as might be expected, an extreme careleſſneſs about the mo-

tulantiæ deditum. Ei ſcripto cum ſe oppoſuiſſet Balduinus, vocat eum hominem nihili, obſcænum canem, improbum falſarium, multa ſceleſtè ac nequiter cogitantem, et conſpirantem cum improbis nebulonibus, cynicum, ſcurram, perfidum, fatuum, belluina rabie, Satanæ addictum. Caſſandrum *αὐθάδη (ſibi placentem)* moroſum, lamiam, larvam, ſerpentem, peſtem, carnificem." Grot. op Tom. iii, p. 655. Grotius continues, " hanc maledicendi libidinem Calvinus in epiſtola ad Bucerum *κατ, εὐφημισμὸν (per emollitionem)* impatientiam vocat: cum que eâ magnam ſibi ait eſſe luctam: et nonnihil ſe proficere, ſed nondum id conſecutum ut belluam domuerit."—On this penitent confeſſion of the ſanguinary bigot, Grotius makes this ſhrewd remark: " Si quis poſt id abeo ſcripta leget, inveniet eum profeciſſe *ſed in pejus:* adeo ei illud placebat, QUOD NON VOLO, FACIO." This, " *quod non volo, facio,*" is a favourite ſentiment in the mouth of his admirers of the preſent century; and I leave the reader to imagine *to what purpoſes it is commonly applied.*—I ſhall conclude this note in the words of Grotius: " Hæc non adfero quod mihi cum mortuis libeat luctari, ſed, QUIA VIDEO ITA PLERUMQUE EVENIRE, UT QUISQUE MORES IMITETUR EJUS, QUEM SIBI SUMSIT MAGISTRUM. Grot. op. Tom. iii, p. 656.

rality of their conduct; a contemptuous neglect of the practical duties of religion. Making holineſs to conſiſt more in turbulence of ſenſation than in rectitude of action; and meaſuring the will of God by the falſe and varying ſtandard of their feelings: it is no wonder that they think themſelves privileged from the obſervance of truth, of juſtice, and all the endearing charities of life.

6. The grace of the Fanatics,* to which they aſcribe ſuch marvellous effects, operates on the ſentiments, without the concurring agency of the reaſon, and changes the character without the conſent of the will. With them, grace invalidates the uſe of religious inquiry, and ſuperſedes the neceſſity of moral exertion.—Who can calculate the miſchief of ſuch opinions?

7. By the new covenant of ſalvation, and, probably, according to fixed and general laws, to which the divine will may have made the ſpiritual helps, promiſed in that covenant, ſubſervient, good endeavours †, on the part of man, ſeem the conditions to

* The doctrine of grace is only ſlightly touched on here; the reader will find it more fully diſcuſſed in that part of this work which is entitled, The Doctrine of Grace.

† In the parable of the ſower we read that none of the ſeed brought forth fruit but that which was ſown in good ground.

which grace is appended on the part of God. They appear introductory to its infusion, and the medium of its agency. Good endeavours are associated with the free gift of grace; and grace increases their strength, and facilitates their execution. Wherever there is an earnest striving after moral righteousness, a thirst of the affections, and a labour of the will to perform the law that is impressed on the conscience, and inscribed on the heart (as in the case of Cornelius, whose prayers and alms had gone up as a memorial before God), the grace or favour of God is shed upon the soul.

8. Grace is not only a blessing on the actual exertions of man to do the will of God, but a power given us to do it more effectually. When grace is thus *used*, it produces more grace; and the right and reasonable application of the increased and increasing portions of grace, which the righteous receive, gra-

Good seed is no more fruitful than bad, unless there be, at the same time, goodness in the ground in which it is sown; and the better the soil, the more prolific the seed, and the more abundant the harvest. Grace is never operative and fruitful *in any but a good and honest heart*. The soil of the heart must be *prepared* to receive it: and what preparation of the heart does God require, as fitting the individual for the infusion of his favour, but the love of truth, of justice, and of mercy; and honest endeavours, according to the utmost of our *natural* ability, to practice the duties of truth, of justice, and of mercy?

dually promotes the growth, and matures the ſtrength of thoſe habits of holineſs which lead to immortality.

9. If ſenſation, according to the fanciful hypotheſis of the Fanatics, were the only channel through which the communications of grace were made to flow, and to which its experience were confined; then it would be rather a pleaſure to be enjoyed, than a power to be exerciſed; it would rather be an appeal to our animal, than our rational nature; rather an agreeable impulſe on the fleſh, than a purifying aſpiration on the ſoul. But if moral goodneſs be the covenanted condition to which grace belongs, *not of right*, but *by the mercy of God* *, and if an increaſed deſire of improving in righteouſneſs, and an increaſed activity in doing the will of God, be the only true ſcriptural teſt of its poſſeſſion, then grace muſt, certainly, be not ſo much an ecſtaſy to raviſh, as a talent to employ; and it appears, from various intimations in ſcripture, and from many analogies in the natural world, that grace muſt be uſed if we wiſh it to be increaſed; and that it will not be increaſed if it be not uſed.

10. The more continually we labour to do good, the greater averſion we ſhall feel to do evil.—Many

* In the Chriſtian covenant the *cauſe* of our ſalvation is the love and mercy of God; and the *conditions are our obedience to his laws, ſincere, though imperfect*; *our honeſt, though weak, endeavours*; *our upright, though, ſometimes, not ſinleſs lives.*

a penitent, of whoſe return to righteouſneſs there has been the happieſt promiſe and the faireſt hope, has relapſed into ſin, from indulging *a falſe confidence*, and ſuppoſing that becauſe he had recovered from the paſt, he was ſafe for the future. When a man's vigilance againſt temptation relaxes, he is almoſt ſure of falling into a ſnare.—It is dangerous to rely *entirely* on our own ſtrength. He, who does it, thinks the help of God ſuperfluous; and the temerity of this vain imagination cauſes that help not to be had, when it is wanted; and not to be found, when it is ſought. Man muſt, indeed, ſtrenuouſly exert, and ſedulouſly ſtrengthen his ſenſe of right and wrong; he muſt oppoſe his natural power to do good to his wayward inclinations to do evil, before God will aſſiſt him with ſuccour from above. But he, who labours to do good, ought always to remember with humility, that he will labour in vain without divine co-operation. He ſhould work; but he ſhould work without pride; and ſtrive without preſumption. He ſhould be animated with zeal, but his zeal ſhould be tempered with caution; and he ſhould be reſolute, but his reſolution ſhould be moderated by a godly fear. Let us never be unmindful of him who dwelleth on high; and without whoſe favour all our thoughts are but as air, and all our exertions only vanity. As we are totally dependant, every moment of our lives, on the will of him who made us, it is our duty in all that we do, in all that we plan, or all that we attempt, to implore him to work together with us, and to direct

our ſteps in that way in which it is beſt for us to go.

11. The growth of holineſs into a habit, or into a ſettled, undeviating diſpoſition to beneficence, is not the effect of ſome momentary glow of devotion, or of ſome tranſient longing after God;—it is, and muſt be, a work of time; and thoſe who know themſelves, and thoſe who have ſearched into the hearts, and ſurveyed the conduct of others, know that many relapſes and convaleſcences, many deliverances from ſin, and many returns to unrighteouſneſs, uſually happen before the good ſeed of the word is thoroughly rooted in the heart, and made fruitful in the life. Salvation in the way in which I conſider the nature of the covenant to which it is attached, is a work of more difficulty and danger than is commonly imagined; bacauſe it depends, conditionally, on the habits of goodneſs which we form in this mortal life; and which, amid the temptations by which we are ſurrounded, and to whoſe influence we are almoſt every hour expoſed, ſeem difficult to acquire; and more eaſy to loſe than to retain.—But if thoſe notions which the Fanatics propagate, be genuine truths inſtead of vain deluſions, then the idle may obtain admiſſion into heaven, and the crown of glory may be worn by the worthleſs, who can breathe the ſtream of ſelf-love upon their nerves, till they ſeem to thrill with joys which ſeraphs feel.

12. To the ſcoffer it may be amuſing, but to the

genuine Chriſtian it muſt be afflicting to obſerve, how the Fanatics garble the goſpel to promote their own intereſted ends. Whatever may be the meaſure of their underſtanding, they certainly do not want ingenuity in perverting the ſcriptures to ſupport their prejudices, and in making them utter a ſound in tune with their whims. Neglecting thoſe parts of the covenant of ſalvation, on which no clouds and darkneſs reſt, they pay an almoſt *excluſive* attention to the moſt obſcure and myſterious paſſages in the epiſtles of St. Paul. By the help of what they call *inward light*, which they think communicated excluſively to their own ſect, they deem themſelves qualified to interpret the abſtruſeſt doctrines without thoſe aids of erudition which more ſober people think neceſſary for the purpoſe. The *inward light* of the Fanatics enables them to dive into the profoundeſt depths of theology, and to unfold its darkeſt myſteries:—As in the writings of the Evangeliſts, they meet with truths, little congenial to their unhallowed ſpeculations,—truths eaſy to be underſtood, and conſequently difficult to be perverted; they cull moſt of the hard ſayings, with which they puzzle the ignorant, and entrap the unwary, from the epiſtles of the apoſtle to the Gentiles.

13. Abuſing the writings of St. Paul*, as ſome

* Καθως και ὁ ἀγαπητος ἡμων ἀδελφὸς Παυλος κατὰ τὴν αυτῷ δοθεισαν σοφιαν ἐγραψεν ὑμιν, ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς,

unlearned and unſteady perſons ſeem to have done in the apoſtolic age, they wreſt them to their own

λαλῶν εν αὐτᾶις ωερὶ τέτων, εν αἷς εστι δυσνοητα τινα, ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεις και αστηρικτοι στρεβλῶσιν ὡς και τας λοιπὰς γραφας, ωρος την ἰδίαν αυτῶν ἀπώλειαν. 2 Ep. Pet. iii. 15, 16.—In this paſſage, I know that the majority of editors and commentators read, εν οἷς, inſtead of εν αἷς; but ſuppoſing εν οἷς to be the true reading, which is by no means certain, then οἷς muſt refer to τετων; and the meaning will be, that, in the epiſtles of Paul, there are many topics diſcuſſed which are difficult to be underſtood; and which had been fatally perverted by ſome, who wanted knowledge, and by others, who wanted principle.—Whether St. Peter allude to the obſcurity of the manner, or to the obſcurity of the matter, is not very neceſſary to inquire; but at preſent, it is certain, that many paſſages in the writings of St. Paul do contain τα δυσνοητα, both on account of the obſcurity of the ſtyle, and the obſcurity of the ſubject. The ſtyle is tinctured with Rabbinical idioms; and the matter, perhaps, in ſome degree, with the Rabbinical philoſophy. St Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and, before his converſion, he had made a great progreſs in the learning of the Jews.—To the ſagacious, I need not repeat an old obſervation, "*ſervabit odorem Teſta diu*," &c. Thoſe who know human nature, will immediately perceive the juſtneſs of the remark; and I ſhall not waſte my time in endeavouring to make it ſatisfactory to thoſe who do not. St. James, in his epiſtle, 11, 14, 26, evidently intended to combat, and to counteract ſome of thoſe erroneous and miſchievous notions on the nature and efficacy of faith which begun to prevail in his time, and which ſeem to have originated in the innocent miſtake, or the wilful perverſion of the doctrine itſelf, as it is laid down in the epiſtle to the Romans. In the preface to his Five Points, Whitby refers to the learned Dodwell

deſtruction; deducing from them doctrines which they do not countenance; and encouraging themſelves in iniquity, on the preſumed ſanction of their authority *.

14. If ſome things in the epiſtles of St. Paul were hard to be underſtood in the age in which they were written, as St. Peter himſelf confeſſes, they muſt certainly be more obſcure after the lapſe of ſo many centuries, than they were in that period when the facts, to which they alluded, were recent; when the diſſenſions which they were intended to pacify, the hereſies they were to combat, and the ſophiſms they were to refute, were matters of public notoriety,

(Proleg. ad I. Stearn de obſtin. § 41) as ſaying, "that St. Paul being bred a Phariſee, ſpake there (in the 9th chapter to the Romans), and is to be interpreted, ermente Phariſæorum, *according to the doctrine of the Phariſees concerning fate, which they had borrowed from the Stoicks.*" On Rom. viii. 2. Whitby ſays, "Here the apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak according to the philoſophy of the heathens, with which the Jews began to be acquainted, that man was not to be denominated from his body, or his ſenſual and carnal part, but from his mind, his νες or λογικη διανοια, which, in Philos' phraſe, is ὁ εν εκαςω ἡμων ανθρωπος, *the man within us.*"

* It is well known that St. Paul is very wont, μεταςχηματιζειν, to ſpeak in the perſon of another, whoſe character he aſſumes, and whoſe ſentiments he utters; as Rom. iii. 7, and particularly in Rom. vii. 14—25, and other places, *which are always perverted by the Fanatics.*

and topics of common converſation.—But the ſtationary preachers, and the itinerant heralds of Fanaticiſm, ſome of whom can hardly read a ſentence in Engliſh, and the majority of whom are ignorant of the learned languages, think themſelves qualified, by the exceſs of their *inward light*, to make clear what St. Peter pronounced dark, and to unravel what he thought intricate; and they paſs decrees as peremtory as the determinations of a Papal bull on points of faith and doctrine, on which others, who are not favoured with the ſame miraculous penetration, think with doubt, and talk with diffidence.

15. Where the goſpel is moſt plain and moſt forcibly practical, the Fanatics perplex it with ſubtilties, or make its energy of none effect by their interpolations. In their devotions they pay much leſs homage to the Father than to the Son; and, indeed, they often addreſs their petitions to the one, without any reference to the other. They make the one characterized by *the inflexible ſeverity of juſtice*; and to the other they aſſign, excluſively, the winning attribute of mercy. To the Lord's prayer they allow little authority;—they either paſs it over in ſullen ſilence, or they repeat it with unauthorized additions.

16. In their inſtructions, the paſtors of Fanaticiſm labour more earneſtly and more effectually to depreſs the ſpirits, and to bewilder the minds of their audience, by the ravings of myſticiſm, than to im-

preſs them with thoſe truths which, by coming home to their intereſts and boſoms, may ſave their ſouls. With ſcrupulous care they overlook, or with contemptuous ſcorn they deride thoſe paſſages in the ſcriptures which are as clear as they are uſeful; and which relate to thoſe duties, of which the practice will be neceſſary as long as the world endures. Though they pay ſo great a deference, and ſo excluſive a regard to the authority of St. Paul, they liſten with little ſatisfaction, even to the teaching of their favourite apoſtle, when he extols charity above faith; when he declares love to be the bond of perfectneſs, and the end of the commandment; when he exhorts Chriſtians to be ready unto every good work, and *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.*

17. That moral corruption has experienced a great and unparalleled increaſe of late years is what no obſerving man can deny, and what every good one muſt deplore. Within the period of the laſt thirty years, the once freſh, and healthy, and vigorous morality of Engliſhmen has withered away; and the principles of the people have undergone a rapid and fatal deterioration. Almoſt every tender feeling is chilled; and almoſt every generous ſentiment has decayed. The ſanctity of truth and honeſty ſeem almoſt effaced from the conſcience of the people; and I have ſtrong reaſons for believing that my calculation is not exaggerated, when I ſay, that the

practice of thoſe virtues, and the reverence for their immutable obligations are, at leaſt, ten times leſs now than they were about half a century ago *.

* The following extracts from a book which preſents many curious, but afflicting details of the dying virtue of the people, may afford ſome faint idea of the preſent ſtate of Engliſh morals. The facts themſelves are, for the moſt part, confined to the metropolis; but they will exhibit ſome data, by which we may form no very imperfect gueſs of the general morality of the country. The moral or immoral character of the people, who are placed more within the vicinity of the ſeat of government, exhibits an imperfect likeneſs of the popular manners in places more remote. For in the preſent ſtate of luxurious civilization, when the communication between the metropolis and the diſtant provinces of the empire is ſo expeditious and ſo frequent, corruption ſoon ſpreads from the centre to the extremities; and the villages become infected with the abominations of the capital.

" *The number of the receivers of ſtolen goods in the metropolis alone* HAS INCREASED WITHIN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS FROM 300 TO 3000."—Colquhoun on the Police of the Metropolis, ed. 6th, p. 12.

" Scarcely a waggon leaves London, which does not carry boxes and parcles of baſe coin into the country; particularly to the ſea-ports, camps, &c.—In the ſeveral public houſes, hawkers, pedlars, gamblers, Jews, &c. &c. are regularly ſupplied with counterfeit money at an advantage of near 100 per cent. in their favour." p. 16.

" There are in the metropolis and country at leaſt 120 principal dealers in, and coiners of, baſe money, beſides numerous utterers; of whom more than 650 perſons have either been proſecuted or convicted, within the laſt 7 years." p. 19.

" In the courſe of 7 years, not leſs than 4262 perſons who

18. Not many years have elapſed ſince the inhabitants of moſt of our villages might go to ſleep, in

had been put upon their trial by the grand jury, were let looſe upon the public by acquittals." p. 21.

" The drivers of gentlemen's carriages are generally entruſted to buy hay, ſtraw, corn, &c. for their horſes; and they uſually cheat their maſters of 5s. in every load of hay; of 2s. 6d. in each load of ſtraw; and 1s. in every quarter of corn." —Middleton quoted by Colquhoun.

" It has been eſtimated that 20,000 buſhels of ears of wheat, and other grain, are carried off every Sunday morning, in the neighbourhood of London, and 10,000 more during the other ſix days of the week, or one million and a half in a year; which, valued at only 6d. each, would amount to £.37,500." —Middleton, ut ſup.

Mr. Middleton calculates that the depredations committed on the landed intereſt, amount to 4s. per acre per annum; or eight millions ſterling.

" The principal gaming houſes, at the weſt end of the town, have ſtated days on which they have luxurious dinners (particularly Sundays), when merchants' and bankers' clerks, and other perſons, intruſted with money, are invited. The expences, attendant on ſuch houſes, were ſuppoſed to amount to £.150,000 annually." p. 140.

" The gambling and lottery tranſactions of one individual in the metropolis, are ſaid to be productive of, from 10 to 15 ſuicides annually!!!" p. 325.

" The aggregate ſums loſt and won at the different gaming houſes in the metropolis, in the courſe of a year, are ſuppoſed to amount to £.7,225,000." p. 143.

" The amount of fraudulent inſurances in the lottery are calculated at £.10,460,000."

Such a hiſtory of accumulated and rapidly accumulating depravity, as Mr. Colquhoun's excellent work exhibits, is well

perfect security, with their windows open, or their doors unbarred, without any danger of moleſtation, or the hazard of a ſingle depredation. At that time, juſtice and truth were more revered. An oath was held inviolate; the meaneſt mechanic, and the pooreſt day labourer were impreſſed with an *awful ſenſe* of its importance: it was deemed an appeal to God; and too ſacred to be trifled with; but at preſent, falſehood is little more heeded, than if truth were only a puff of air.

19. The moral principles of the people have received a terrible ſhock; they have, indeed, almoſt undergone a total revolution in favour of vice. The great increaſe of luxury, and the great preſſure of taxation, a great luſt of ſplendour on the one hand, and a great diminution in the means of ſubſiſtence on the other, have certainly conſpired to pour a rank pollution into the national manners; and to ſpread the gangrene of guilt over the whole heart of the community. But, *among the other active and powerful cauſes*, a cauſe whoſe influence is vaſt and conſtantly increaſing, is *the wide diffuſion of the deleterious*

fitted to excite the reflections of the contemplative, the ſorrow of the good, and the diſmay of the provident. The genuine religious principle, which was once ſo operative, which once ſo powerfully impelled to good and diſſuaded from evil, ſeems to be daily loſing its influence on the heart, and its authority over the conſcience: *and the more that falſe and miſchievous doctrine, which the Fanatics teach, prevails, the more will it decline.*

tenets of the Fanatics; which I am convinced, from a diligent and diſpaſſionate obſervation of their effects, have a direct tendency to wither every ſhoot of integrity on the conſcience, and to accelerate the growth of the moſt deſtructive crimes*.

* The propagation of vice is, likewiſe, not much impeded by the diffuſion of what is called the *new morality*, which is the old morality (I mean the morality of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe authority is inconteſtable, and whoſe origin is divine) diveſted of its ſanctions; its ſtrength waſted, its glory faded; a body, full of animation and beauty, turned into a maſs of putreſcence and corruption. The principles of the Philoſophiſts, and the principles of the Fanatics *are not very diſſimilar in their tendency to do miſchief*. The latter gravitate to the centre of hereditary corruption; the former to that of perſonal depravity. With the Fanatics immorality is the decree of God; with the Philoſophiſts morality is nothing but the whim of man. With the Fanatics immorality is a matter of neceſſity; with the Philoſophiſts morality is only a matter of human convention. The Fanatics think that the practice of truth and juſtice will have no influence on our happineſs in another life; the Philoſophiſts maintain that there is no life beyond this; and, conſequently, that truth and juſtice can have no relation to what has no exiſtence. In the agapæ of the Fanatics deſire is often indulged without reſtraint; becauſe it is thought to contribute to the perfecting of the ſaints in love; in the ſchools of the Philoſophiſts promiſcuous concubinage is licenſed for the *general good*; and which *general good* means the wayward appetite of every individual.

Luſt and cruelty are very common features in the picture of Fanatics of all ages and countries. In theſe high diſtinctions, the Fanatics of the preſent day have, probably, been ſurpaſſed by the Fanatics of old; but the *former only want circumſtances*

20. By decrying moral duties, or talking of them with a contemptuous ſneer (as if pure morality and pure

equally favourable, ignorance among their fellow-creatures equally denſe, AND POWER IN THEIR OWN HANDS EQUALLY STRONG, *to make the latter hide their diminiſhed heads; and yield to* THEM *the proud pre-eminence in cruelty and luſt.* The Fanatics of old were ſo much attached to continence, that they thought marriage a crying ſin; but hiſtory teaches us that their pompous pretenſions to chaſtity were a rank impoſture. Speaking of the intolerant bigots and hypocritical religioniſts of former times, " Certum eſt," ſays a great writer, and one of the pureſt friends to pure chriſtianity, " quoniam omne æſtuantis libidinis remedium caſti matrimonii uſu ipſis interdictum eſt, in illicitam venerem, omni abjecto pudore licentioſe proruere, ac in voluptatibus carnalibus fœde volutari. Eraſmus ad notata Beddæ, tom. ix. p. 401. ait: Eſt apud Germanos Epiſcopus quidam, qui ipſe dixit in convivio, *uno anno ad ſe delata undecim millia ſacerdotum, palam concubinariorum.* Nam tales ſingulis annis pendunt aliquid Epiſcopo. Item, in locis pleriſque, Epiſcopi et eorum officiales, non ſolum ſacerdotum tolerant concubinatum, dummodo certa perſolvatur pecunia: *ſed et ſacerdotes continentes, et qui abſque concubinis degunt, concubinatus cenſum perſolvere cogunt, aſſerentes, Epiſcopum pecuniæ indigum eſſe, qua ſolutâ, licere ſacerdotibus, ut vel cælibes permaneant, vel concubinas alant.* Idem Eraſmus in ſuppatatione errorum Beddæ, tom. ix. p. 484. hæc habet. Quid mirum ſi ætate Auguſtini dictæ ſunt aliquot virgines ſanctimoniales nupſiſſe, cum hoc ſæculo tot dicantur eſſe monaſteria, *quæ nihil aliud ſunt quam publica lupanaria, plura privata; tum in his ipſis, quæ maxime probatæ diſciplinæ ſunt, multo plures ſunt quæ velum habeant, quam quæ virginitatem.*—Novi quoſdam, *qui puellas, quibus fuerant abuſi,* QUO RES PREMERETUR, SEPELLERUNT IN MONASTERIIS.—Magnifice Bedda clamat, abſit, abſit, ut quiſ-

religion could ever be divided), the busy propagators of Fanaticism cause morality to be an object of deri-

quam admittatur ad sacerdotii dignitatem, qui carnis in totum non contemnit illecebras; quum hodie inveniantur, qui quinquaginta habent concubinas, ne quid addam sceleratius. Ib. p. 569, et p. 985, de interdicto carnium usu. Inter sacerdotes quanta raritas eorum, qui caste vivunt? De his loquor qui domi palam alunt concubinas uxorum loco. Nec enim attingo nunc secretiorum libidinum mysteria. *Tantum ea loquor, quæ vulgo quoque notissima sunt.* Sceleratius autem est quod narrat p. 1380, respons. ad quendam febricitantem: quendam Theologiæ professorem Dominicanum, nomine Joannem, sibi Antverpiæ, in ædibus Nicolai Middelburgensis Medici, nominasse Theologum Lovaniensem, unde acceperat, quod quendam pastorem sacrarum virginum, qui confessus est, se cum ducentis habuisse stupri consuetudinem, inabsolutum dimiserit. Sed quid opus est testimonia ex autoribus singularibus proferre? Ipsæ leges Inquisitionis, quæ Sacerdotibus, non tantum fœminas, sed proh scelus! etiam pueros in sacramentali confessione sollicitantibus, pœnas decernunt, indicium sunt, crimina hæc, in impuro isto cælibatu, nimis esse vulgaria et frequentia." Vid. Limborch. Hist. Inquisit. Amstel. 1692, p. 33, 34.

That we may form some faint conjecture of the *tender mercies* of Fanaticism, let us enter the walls of the Inquisition, taking Limborch for our guide.

" Carceres hi in Hispaniâ et Lusitaniâ vocantur *santa casa* hoc est sancta domus. Omnia, scilicet, in hoc officio sunt sancta. Structura eorum, prout eam describit autor historiæ Inquisitionis Goanæ, talès est, ut pluribus captivis asservandis sit accommodata. Constant nempe variis porticibus, quorum singuli in varias exiguas cameras sunt distributi, figuræ quadratæ; quarum latera singula sunt decem pedum. Illorum duo sunt ordines, quorum alter alteri superstructus est; suntque constructi opere fornicato. Superiores illuminantur per crates

sion rather than of reverence in the minds of their converts. They are taught that heaven may be

ferreos, sed supra viri etiam proceri staturam elevatos. Inferiores sunt subterraneæ, obscuræ, sine ulla senestrâ, et superioribus angustiores. Parietes sunt crassitudinis quinque pedum. Unaquæquæ camera duobus ostiis clauditur; interius crassum est et ferro obductum; pars illius inferior constat crate ferreo; in superiore parte exigua est senestella per quam captivo cibus, lintea, aliaque necessaria porriguntur, clauditurque duobus ferreis obicibus. Exterius ostium solidum est sine ulla aperturâ; illud ordinariè mane ab hora sextâ, usque undecimam aperiri solet, ut aer carceris aliquatenus repurgetur." Limb. Hist. Inquis. 158. "In Hispania, ut mihi narravit Isaacus Orobio nonnunquam dantur carbones, qui igne accenduntur, ut ipsi cibum suum coquant; aliquando conceditur candela; *sed qui in carcere subterraneo detinentur, plerumque sedent in tenebris; in iisque perannos aliquot detinentur; nemini eos adire aut alloqui licet*; nisi solis carceris custodibus; idque statis tantum horis quando cibum porrigunt. *Non licet ullos habere devotionis libros; sed in tenebris et solitudine detinentur, ut tam tetri carceris horrore frangantur, illiusque tædio* EA CONFITEANTUR QUÆ SÆPE NON COMMISERUNT." p. 159. "*Nulli in carcere mutire, ullumve sonum edere licet; sed altum in eo servatur silentium.* Si quis ejulet, aut infortunium suum deploret, aut, clarâ voce, Deum precetur, aut cantet, sive psalmum, sive hymnum suorum, mox adsunt carceris custodes, qui in porticu continuas agunt excubias; omnemque etiam minimum sonum, audire possunt, monentque in domo hâc silentium esse servandum. Si non pareat captivus, iterato cum monent custodes. Si nihilominus pergat captivus, custos, aperto carcere, fuste eum egregiè dedolat; non tantum ut ipsum castiget, sed et deterreat alios; qui, quoniam cameræ sunt contiguæ altumque servatur silentium, et ejulatum et sonitum ictuum qui infliguntur,

obtained on eaſier conditions, than thoſe habits of actual goodneſs, which are ſlowly acquired, and diffi-

commodè audire poſſunt. Addam hic narratiunculam, quam ex quorundam ore habui, undequam ſeverè ſilentium hoc obſervetur, colligere licet. *Captivus quidam tuſſiebat: adſunt excubitores; monent ut tuſſim omittat, quia illicitum eſſet in domo hâc ullum emittere ſonum.* Ille reſpondit, hoc arbitrii ſui non eſſe: nihilominus, *cum ſecundo monitus tuſſim non omitteret, ipſum denudatum pluribus ictibus miſerè contundunt: cum hâc ratione tuſſis augeretur, aliquoties verberatus fuit; donec tandem verberum vehementiâ mortuus fuit.*" p. 161, 162. *The ſenſitive conſciences, and the refined morality of the Inquiſitorial Fanatics* will be evident from the following relation: " Hiſpali homo quidam pauper ac ex ſudore ſuo quotidianum ſibi et familiæ victum parans, cui Clericus quidam uxorem violenter abductam detinebat, nullâ, interea, neque Inquiſitione neque alterius tribunalis autoritate atrocem injuriam vindicante. Is pauper, dum inter alios ejuſdem conditionis homines, de purgatorio, forte, exoritur ſermo, excepit ipſe ruſticanâ potius ſimplicitate, quam certo conſilio, ſe ſatis quidem habere purgatorii, cui peſſimus nebulo uxorem violenter averterit, &c. Is ſermo ad aures boni Clerici delatus, ingeminandi in pauperem injuriam, occaſionem obtulit, illumque, ut male de purgatorio ſentientem, apud Inquiſitores accuſat. *Erratum hoc pauperis ſancto tribunali dignius eſt habitum in quod autoritate inquiſitoriâ vindicaret, quam ſcelus Clerici.* Itaque ob illud tantulum verbum miſer capitur, detruditur in inquiſitoriis ergaſtulis biennio toto; ac demum in triumphum eductus damnatur ad geſtandum Sanbenitum per triennium, quod in privato carcere exigat; eoque exacto, an dimittendus liber, retinendus ve adhuc ſit in carcere dominorum Inquiſitorum arbitrium eſto. Neque qualibuſcunque, pauperis alioquin hominis, fortunis eſt parcitum, ut uxor Clerico, quod verò ſupererat tenuiſſimarum fortunarum, poſt

cultly retained; which cannot be generated without labour, and may be loſt without watchfulneſs.—But

diuturnum illum carcerem, inquiſitorio cederet Fiſco," p. 328. The wanton manner in which the Inquiſitorial Fanatics ſhed the blood of the innocent, and afterwards endeavoured to atone for the moſt atrocious murders by the fouleſt lies, will appear from the following narrative, which no man can well peruſe without horror: " Ceperunt, eodem fere tempore, in eâdem Hiſpalenſi Inquiſitione nobilem quandam fœminam Joannam Bohorquiam, uxorem Franciſci Varquii, viri imprimis clari ac Higueræ Domini, filiam verò Petri Garſiæ Xereſii Hiſpalenſis civis opulentiſſimi. Captivitatis cauſa fuit, quod ſoror ipſius Maria Bohorquia ſpectatæ pietatis virgo, quam poſteà ob piam confeſſionem igni tradiderunt, in tormentis declaraſſet, ſe aliquoties, cum ſorore ſuâ de eâ doctrinâ contuliſſe. Quum illam in carcerem conjecerunt, gerebat uterum ſemeſtrem fermè quâ de cauſâ neque adeo arctè eam recluſerunt, neque cum ipſâ agebant eâ ſævitiâ, quâ cum aliis vinctis ſolent, fœtui nimirum conſulentes. Octavo a partu die fœtum illi auferunt; quiuto decimo vero eam recludunt; eandemque, cum aliis vinctis omnibus, conditionem cogunt experiri; ac cauſa ipſius quo rigore quibuſque ſolent artibus agitari cæpta. In tantâ calamitate id tantum ſolatii afflictæ contigit, quod virgo quædam valde pia, quam ob pietatem poſteà inquiſitorius quoque ignis abſumpſit tetri illius carceris fortè data eſt comes. Eam puellam ad torturam quâdam die eductam, atque in carcerem a torturis reductam, adeo quaſſatam omnibuſque membrorum compagibus diſſolutam, ut in junceo lectulo ad laborem potius quam ad quietem utrique conceſſo, vix ac niſi magno cum cruciatu volveretur, ſummâ animi pietate, quando externis officiis nullus, aut certe perexiguus ibi erat locus, proſequuta eſt. Vix iſta cæperat a torturæ quaſſatione convaleſcere, quum ad eundem ludum illa educitur; ibi tanta atrocitate in burro torque-

the Fanatics repreſent their *inward light* as a better guide to heaven, than purity of heart and holineſs

tur, ut chordis ad ipſas brachiorum, ſemorum ac crurum tibias uſque penetrantibus, carceri moribunda reſtitueretur, ſanguine per os affatim è veſtigio erumpente, diſruptis haud dubiè viſceribus, octavo demum à torturâ die mortua ſit. Quum ad eam condemnandam ſufficientia teſtimonia, licet omnibus inquiſitoriis artibus conquiſita ac procurata, defeciſſent, quando accuſata eo nata ſorte loco, ut negotii ipſius apud plebem eſſet omninò aliqua reddenda ratio, neque res ullo modo diſſimulari poſſet, in primo triumphi actu, qui ab ipſius morte fuit indictus, ſententiam ſuam pronuntiari jubent in hæc verba. Quoniam hæc domina in carcere abierit (ſuppreſſis haud dubie cauſis) et ejus cauſâ inſpectâ et diligenter examinatâ innocens fuerit deprehenſa, idcirco Sanctum Tribunal eam ab omnibus gravaminibus, per Fiſcalem illi intentatis, pronuntiare liberam, licetque prorſus abſolutam in ſuâ tum innocentiâ tum exiſtimatione reſtituere jubereque bona ipſius omnia quæ in Sequeſtri rationes venerant, eis reſtitui ad quos ex jure pertinerent, &c. *Ac ita demum poſtquam eam in tormentis belluinâ truculentiâ necaverunt, liberam pronuntiarunt.*" p. 319. 320. Let us now enter the chamber of torture in which the Fanatic Demons uſed to feaſt their eyes on the ſavage barbarities which they perpetrated. " Locus torturæ in Inquiſitione Hiſpanâ, ut plurimum ſolet eſſe antrum quoddam ſubterraneum, ac perobſcurum, ad quod, multis oſtiis prætergreſſis, pervenitur. In eo eſt erectum tribunal, in quo Inquiſitor et Proviſor et Scriba ſedent. Accenſis luminibus et ingreſſo torquendo carniſex, qui alios omnes intus jam exſpectat, inter omnes eſt ſpectaculo et contemplatione dignus. Is totus eſt co-opertus nigrâ veſte ex lino ad pedes longâ adſtrictâ undique adhærente corpori, caput habet velatum oblongo nigroque caperone, quo faciem totam contegit, relictis duobus modò parvulis ad viſum feneſ-

of life; and they make the *delirium* of ſenſation a ſubſtitute for integrity of character.

tellis. Hæc omnia eò tendunt, ut majore terrore concutiatur animo ac corpore miſellus, hac imprimis diaboli alicujus imagine, cujus manibus torqueri debet." p. 321. "Ratio autem torquendi et tormentorum gradus nunc in Hiſpanica Inquiſitione uſitati, optime cognoſci poſſunt, ex hiſtoriâ Iſaaci Orobio Judæi Medicinæ Doctoris, qui a quodam Mauro ſervo ſuo, ante hac ob furtum juſſu ſuo verberato, delatus fuit Inquiſitioni quaſi Judæus; et poſt quadriennium ab alio inimico ſuo de alio facto, unde Judæus agnoſceretur, iterum delatus fuit; quique ſe pertinaciſſime Judæum negavit. Hiſtoriam torturæ, prout eam ex ore ipſius habui, breviter hic adſcribam. Poſtquam, integro triennio, in carcere Inquiſitionis detentus fuit, et aliquoties examinatus, criminaque objecta ipſi indicata, ut ea confiteretur, ipſeque ea conſtanter negaret, tandem ex carcere ſuo fuit eductus, et per varios anfractus deductus, in locum torturæ. Fuit id circa veſperam. Erat locus ſubterraneus, ſatis amplus, fornice ſtructus, parietes undique velamine nigri coloris tecti; muro affixa erant candelabra, totumque conclave illuminabant candelæ iis impoſitæ. Ab unâ parte erat locus quidam cameræ inſtar, ſeparatus; illic menſæ affidebat Inquiſitor cum Notario; ita ut locus hic ipſi viſus fuerit domicilium mortis, tetro aſpectu undequaque terribilis. Hic eum Inquiſitor denuò monuit, ut veritatem confiteretur, antequam inchoarentur tormenta ipſius. Cùm reſponderet ſe veritatem dixiſſe, Inquiſitor graviter proteſtatus eſt, quoniam ob pertinaciam ipſius ad torturam deveniendum eſſet, S. Officium innoxium fore, ſi inter tormenta ſanguinem emitteret aut animam efflaret. His dictis linteum corpori ipſius obductum eſt, et, ab utrâque parte, adeo violenter conſtrictum, ut tandem anhelitus ipſi præcluderetur: cum jam animo deficeret, ſubito lintei extremitates ſunt remiſſæ, et cum jam denuò reſpirare inciperet, maxi-

21. In whatever village the Fanatics get a footing, drunkenneſs and ſwearing,—ſins, which being more

mam, ex ſubitâ illâ mutatione, paſſus eſt animi auguſtiam ac dolorem. Hoc tormento ſuperato, eadem monitio repetita fuit, fatere veritatem, antequam inchoentur tormenta tua; eaque monitio, ſuperato quovis tormento, antequam novo exponeretur, ſemper repetita fuit. Itaque cum in negatione perſiſteret, pollices illius funiculis exiguis arctiſſimè conſtricti ſunt, adeò ut membra extrema admodum intumuerint, et ſanguis inter juncturas unguium expelleretur. Poſtea muro fuit applicitus, et exiguo ſcabello impoſitus. Muro affixæ erant parvæ trochleæ ferreæ, per quas funes ducti variis in locis corpus ejus ambiebant, præſertim brachia et crura: tortor, magna violentia, funiculos hoſce trahens, corpus ipſius muro applicabat; interim manus ac pedes, digitique manuum ac pedum arctiſſime funiculis conſtricti ſummo percellebantur cruciatu, non aliter ac ſi flammis diſſolveretur. In mediis hiſce cruciatibus tortor ſubitò ſcabellum pedibus ipſius ſubtraxit; adeo ut miſer, ſine ullo fulcimento, pependerit funibus undique conſtrictus, et pondere corporis funium nodos arctius adſtringente. Mox novum tormenti genus ſuccedit. Inſtrumentum exiguæ ſcalæ inſtar, duobus conſtans lignis erectis, et quinque tranſverſis anteriùs acuminatis illi ex adverſo oppoſuit tortor, idque, motu quodam accommodato, maximâ vi in utrumque ejus tibiam impegit, adeò ut utraque tibia, quinque ictibus ſimul validiſſime percuſſa affligeretur dolore intolerabili, adeò quidem ut in animi deliquium inciderit. Mox ad ſe reverſo ultimum tormenti genus inflictum eſt. Funibus brachia ejus non procul a manu aſtricta ſunt; illis tortor ſe implicuit, ita ut dorſo ejus corio munito circumducerentur; tum ſe reſupinavit, pedibus que muro oppoſitis ſumma vi funes diſtendit, donec brachiorum carnem uſque ad oſſa penitus perciderit; idque tormentum ter repetitum eſt, funibus illis duorum circiter digitorum ſpatia a priore

expoſed to the eye of the world, would be ruinous to their great pretenſions to ſuperior ſanctity, will, perhaps, be found to decline; but I am convinced, from perſonal obſervation, that lying and diſhoneſty, that every ſpecies of fraud and falſehood,—ſins, which are not ſo readily detected, but which ſeem more

vulnere brachio appoſitis, eademque vehementiâ conſtrictis. Contigit vero, cum ſecundo funes conſtringerentur ut in prius vulnus relaberentur, unde tanta violentiâ ſanguis effluxit, ut moriturus videretur. Mox vicino conclavi advocati ſunt. Medicus et Chirurgus, quos ſemper præſtò eſſe oportet, ut ſimili in caſu, ſententia eorum rogetur, an, abſque mortis periculo, tortura continuari poſſit, ne irregulares fiant judices eccleſiaſtici, ſi forte reus in tormentis moriatur. Illi Orobio minimè inimici, reſpondent, virium ſatis ſupereſſe, ad reliqua tormenta ſuſtinendum: et ſic eum præſervarunt, ne tormenta jam ſuperata denuò ipſi infligerentur, quia ſententia fert, ut omnia illa tormenta ſucceſſivè uno tempore infligantur; ſi ob mortis periculum deſinendum ſit, poſteà rurſus omnia tormenta, etiam quæ jam tolerata fuerant, ſucceſſivè infliguntur ut ſententiæ ſatis fiat. Mox veſtibus ſuis involutus, in priorem carcerem deportatus eſt; et ſeptuaginta dierum ſpatio, vix a vulneribus ſuis ſanatus. Quoniam in tormentis nihil confeſſus fuerat, condemnatus eſt non ut Judaiſmi convictus, ſed ſuſpectus, ad infamem veſtem *Sanbenita*, integro biennio, geſtandum, eoque elapſo ad perpetuum è regno Hiſpalienſi exilium." p. 323, 324.

I have made theſe copious extracts from Limborch, becauſe the reader will, I truſt, find them both curious and intereſting; and they will probably deſcribe the genius of Fanaticiſm and the temper of Fanatics, better than the moſt elaborate metaphyſical diſſertation.

clofely connected with worldly advantage, will be found, invariably, to increafe *.

22. Inftead of inculcating truth, juftice, brotherly kindnefs, charity, all the domeftic and focial virtues, the Fanatics amufe their hearers with a great deal of whining, unintelligible cant about their " dear fouls," their " precious fouls;" while their bodies are cover-

* In feveral parifhes, when fome of the fenfible and incorrupt miniflers of the eftablifhment, have been inculcating from the pulpit the great obligations of truth, juftice, and mercy, and enforcing their performance by every fanction which the gofpel fupplies, and every perfuafion with which an Eternity of good can operate on the heart,—the champions of Methodifm, who happen to have erected their ftandard in the fame village, and who ufually fend two or three fpies to the parifh church to bring them intelligence of what has been faid, make a common practice of telling their audiences at the next meeting, that difcourfes on truth, and juftice, and mercy, have nothing to do with Chriftianity; that moral works, being *only filthy rags* (a favourite expreffion with thofe enemies to goodnefs), will not conduce to their falvation; and that they muft rely on Chrift's righteoufnefs, without troubling themfelves about any righteoufnefs of their own. I leave the reader to judge what effect fuch preaching, enforced by a great deal of cant, and often the moft confummate art, muft have on the ignorant and the credulous who are plainly told that fraud and falfehood are no obftructions in the way to heaven, provided they only go to that meeting within whofe unhallowed walls the Anti-Chriftian jugglers circumfcribe the capacity of falvation.

ed with rags, incruſted with filth, or waſting with diſeaſe;—a ſtate of miſery and indigence, to which they are too often reduced by neglecting their proper calling, and the reaſonable worſhip of their foreſathers, to liſten to the pernicious jargon of ſome juggling fiend, who, inſtead of edifying them by the ſimple truths, or cheering them by the ſweet conſolalations of pure Chriſtianity, uſually breathes the ſteam of deluſion on their minds, the blaſt of diſſenſion on their homes, and the anguiſh of ſuperſtition on their hearts.

23. To teach the ſimple and the ignorant as the emiſſaries of Fanaticiſm teach them, that they come from the womb utterly diſpoſed to evil and indiſpoſed to good, is in fact, to tell them that they are born with an innate propenſity to commit theft, adultery, murder, and every crime. When ſuch a prepoſterous and moſt pernicious doctrine has been deeply rooted in their minds, and forcibly impreſſed upon their hearts, it muſt neceſſarily exert the moſt miſchievous influence on their conduct *.

* The Fanatics are very induſtrious in eſtabliſhing Sunday ſchools, in order to gangrene the principles of the country; and to give an unkind, unſocial Calviniſtic complexion to the manners of the people. Sunday ſchools are, in many villages, the ſucceſsful medium of inſtilling the poiſon of Methodiſtic immorality into the young and innocent.

24. By teaching people as the Scripture, from the beginning to the end, encourages us to teach them, that they are born with a faculty to diſcern good from evil, and with a capacity to chooſe which they pleaſe, by teaching them that the firſt is their happineſs, and the laſt their miſery; that the firſt is their glory, and the laſt their ſhame; by teaching them that God will puniſh the one, and reward the other; and that if they will, with ſincerity, exert their natural power to do good, the favour of God will *aſſiſt* them in the performance, we certainly are more likely to make them (for we take a more reaſonable and ſcriptural method of making them) ſober, honeſt, and true, of exciting the love of virtue, and the deteſtation of vice, than by impreſſing them with a belief that they bring into the world a conſtitution imbued with every evil, and devoid of every good propenſity *. By the firſt, we excite their endeavours to

* "Sin," ſays Jeremy Taylor, "creeps upon us in our education ſo tacitly and undiſcernibly, that we miſtake the cauſe of it; and yet ſo prevalently and effectually, that we judge it to be our very nature, *and charge it upon Adam, to leſſen the imputation upon us, or to increaſe the licence or the confidence*; when every one of us is the Adam, *the* MAN OF SIN and the parent of our own impurities." Life of Chriſt, fol. ed. 1678, p. 38.—Thoſe Fanatics who are the moſt zealous ſticklers for the doctrine of original ſin, are always moſt remarkable for perſonal depravity. Rejoicing in the ſoothing vanity of *imputed* righteouſneſs, or patiently enduring the wounds and bruiſes and putrefying

do good, by the laſt we increaſe their inclination to do evil; by the firſt we animate the conſcience to

fores of imputed guilt, they feel themſelves liberated from all the reſtraints of truth in their words, and all the reſtraints of honeſty in their actions.

The doctrine of original corruption is, indeed, *in ſome degree*, ſanctioned by the ninth article; but that article admits of an explanation, that will entirely do away the miſchievouſneſs of the doctrine; and it muſt be remarked that the doctrine itſelf is not at preſent, and never has been ſince the reſtoration, the belief of the great majority, and particularly of the moſt learned and upright members of the Church of England. And though the doctrine ſhould be more expreſsly authorized by the articles than it appears to me to be, yet it cannot well be called the doctrine of the Church of England, when it is not the doctrine of the majority of the members, who compoſe that church. For we muſt remember that the Church of England is not a non-entity, or an immaterial abſtraction, but a viſible, palpable, corporeal reality. It is not a *dead* but a living body. When therefore we wiſh to aſcertain the true doctrine and belief of the Church of England, we are not to inquire ſo much what *was* the doctrine and belief of its clergy in paſt ages, as what *is* the doctrine and the belief of the clergy, or the church, at the preſent day. That which *was* the doctrine and belief of the clergy in paſt ages, was the doctrine and belief of the church in *their* time; and that which is the doctrine and belief of the clergy in this age, is the doctrine and belief of the church in *our* time: for a church is not only a maſs of brick and mortar, or of ſtone and ſand, but a collection of faithful men, warm with animation and life, inculcating the duties of the goſpel, and inſtructing the people in the way of righteouſneſs. The ſermons of a clergyman of the preſent day may not entirely accord with the tenets of the majority of the Clergy who lived

ſtruggle againſt iniquity, by the laſt, we only depreſs the ſpirits, and make the natural frame of man,

two hundred years ago, and ſo far may differ from the doctrine of the Church of England two hundred years ago; and yet they may not differ from the preaching of the great majority of the clergy in his own time; and therefore may be conformable to the doctrine of the church in his own time; for as the majority of the *living* members, and particularly the moſt learned, upright, and judicious members of the Church of England, conſtitute the Church of England, they may, without formally repealing any of the articles, put any conſtruction upon them which they think beſt; and that conſtruction is the legal doctrine of the church in their time; and, in that ſenſe, and according to that conſtruction, the articles may and ought to be ſubſcribed; and he, who thus ſubſcribes them, maintains what it is ſo neceſſary to maintain, an unity of doctrine with the majority of his brethren; *and is, conſequently, a better friend to the Church of England, than he is who may ſubſcribe the articles in a ſenſe more agreeable to the letter, but more adverſe to the general conſtruction of the clergy; and conſequently to the received doctrine of the Church.* As the Church of England is not an union of dead men but of living, an unity of doctrine muſt mean not an accord of opinions with the dead ſo much as an accord of opinions among the living; and as the creed of the Church of England ought not to be conſidered in any other light than the general creed of its living teachers, thoſe who oppoſe that creed, though they may maintain opinions more congenial to the articles, yet, as the opinions which they maintain, are hoſtile to thoſe of the great corporate body of the eſtabliſhment, they muſt be conſidered rather as foes than as friends to the real intereſts of the church to which they belong. Conſider this, ye Evangelical preachers, and take to

which muſt be the work of God, an invincible argument for the practice of unrighteouſneſs.

yourſelves the reproaches with which ye are ſo eager to oppreſs the reputation of others.

As the framers of the articles were fallible men, they were liable to err; and as it is probable that, in ſome few inſtances, they have erred through ignorance or prejudice, they cannot be deemed infallible expoſitors of ſcripture. We are not to interpret the ſcripture by the articles; but the articles by the ſcripture. Subſcription to the articles, by no means diveſts any miniſter of the Church of England of all right of private judgment; but every clergyman would be ſtripped of this inalienable right, if he were compelled to make the articles the excluſive interpreters of the Chriſtian doctrines, the ſtandard of their purity, and the meaſure of their truth. In this caſe, we had better throw the whole maſs of commentators, and ſcholiaſts, and critics into the fire; and even, inſtead of ſtudying the ſcriptures themſelves, ſtudy nothing but the articles; to whoſe dogmas we ſhould bow our heads and bend our knees. We muſt either ſurrender ourſelves paſſive ſlaves to the verdict of the articles; or we muſt allow thoſe, who ſubſcribe them, the right of private judgment; and, if private judgment be allowed, we muſt concede to individuals the privilege of differing from the articles on any topics, in which thoſe articles appear to them to differ from the ſcripture. The articles themſelves do not appear to me to deny any one this right; for the ſixth article ſays, "Holy ſcripture containeth all things neceſſary to ſalvation; *ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to ſalvation.*" Here the framers of the articles undoubtedly intended to give a tacit permiſſion to the exerciſe of private judgment; and to that freedom of inquiry which is ſubſervient to the beſt

25. That man does poſſeſs a capacity either to do good or evil, and which the fall did not deſtroy, may

intereſts of religion. In the twenty-firſt article, the framers ſilently confeſs their own fallibility, when they ſay, that *general councils may err, and ſometimes have erred, in things pertaining to God.*

Religious knowledge, like knowledge of other kinds, is certainly progreſſive; and its progreſs has been very rapid of late years. The ancient languages are better underſtood, the manners and cuſtoms of the eaſt have been more accurately inveſtigated, and, above all, a more juſt, and liberal, and Chriſtian mode of thinking has taken place. Controverſy is conducted with more moderation; and animated by a more enlightened criticiſm. The framers of the articles were wiſe and enlightened men for the age in which they lived; but they did not poſſeſs ſagacity to anticipate the diſcoveries and improvements of future ages; nor ought we to ſuffer their deciſions to render thoſe diſcoveries fruitleſs, or thoſe improvements vain.

The ſcriptures cannot be properly interpreted without the exerciſe of our rational powers; and we are expreſsly enjoined to ſtudy the ſcriptures ourſelves, and not be contented with letting others ſtudy them for us. We are not to embrace a doctrine, merely becauſe other fallible men, like ourſelves, have embraced it before us; but becauſe we, on mature inquiry, believe it to be a ſcriptural doctrine. Chriſt only is the maſter of our conſcience upon earth; and we are to call no man maſter but Chriſt. We are not to abandon our private judgment in religious matters; but are impartially and diligently to ſearch the ſcriptures. This is the ſovereign duty of every man who undertakes to inſtruct others in the way of righteouſneſs; and no ſubſcription to any articles upon earth can invalidate the obligation or ſuperſede the practice. We are to pay all juſt and reaſonable deference to the articles; and to the authority of thoſe great and good men who framed them; but their de-

be proved by the plain and incontrovertible authority of Scripture, which no mutilated or perverted

ciſions are no meaſure for our conſciences; and their authority is to be leſs valued than that of Chriſt.

The framers of the articles lived at a period when mankind were juſt emerging from ages of the groſſeſt ignorance, and the moſt oppreſſive ſuperſtition. They had beſides, for the moſt part, been nurtured in Popiſh prejudices; and though thoſe prejudices had undergone a violent revolution; yet ſome portion of their influence ſeems to have remained; and which probably operated ſilently and imperceptibly on the concluſions which they drew, and the doctrines which they taught. The impreſſions of youth are ſeldom, perhaps never, entirely effaced. We muſt alſo conſider that the framers of the articles living in a period when the human mind, diſcerning the impoſture which the court of Rome had practiſed on it for ſo many ages, began to throw off the chains of ſuperſtition, and when, as might be expected, the moſt diſſonant opinions prevailed on the moſt important doctrines, had a moſt difficult taſk to execute, in order to ſteer clear of all extremes; and it muſt be confeſſed that they finiſhed their work with ſingular ability and moderation. Though they yielded, as prudent men will always yield, to the ſpirit and genius of the times in which they lived, yet comprehenſion and charity are very remarkable in their deciſions. But though, when I compare the exemplary moderation and good ſenſe which the fathers of the Engliſh Proteſtant Eſtabliſhment diſplayed in the formation of the articles, with the darkneſs and intolerance of the age in which they lived, I am ready to paſs the higheſt encomiums on their wiſdom and their mildneſs; yet I am far from thinking that their notions in theology ought or were intended to bind their ſucceſſors to the end of time. This would be to ſuffer them to eſtabliſh that dominion over the minds and con-

texts that Fanaticiſm can adduce, or ſophiſtry can combine, can ſet aſide.

ſciences of the miniſters of the goſpel, from which they had reſolutely attempted, and happily accompliſhed their own emancipation.

There is a general uſage in matters eccleſiaſtical as well as civil, which aboliſhes ſome laws, without formally repealing them, and eſtabliſhes others, without formally enacting them. A law, like many in the Engliſh ſtatutes, is often ſuffered to die a peaceful death. The power of enforcing it is not taken away; but general diſuſe ſuſpends its operations; and it becomes as if it did not exiſt. None of the articles of the Church of England have been formally repealed; but it is very certain, that the literal ſenſe of ſome of them has been, in a great meaſure, explained away by the conſtructions, and, if I may ſo expreſs it, abrogated by the unanimous conſent of the moſt illuſtrious divines. In the writings of Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Tillotſon, Clark, Whitby, Jeffery, Butler, Warburton, Balguy, and other ornaments of the Church of England, we meet with many paſſages, which indirectly attack the ſpirit, and with others which are directly contrary to the plain ſenſe and letter of the articles.

Now, the practice of the greateſt divines gives to other members of the Church of England the privilege of diſſenting and a right to diſſent from thoſe articles which they oppoſed; and which the majority of the living Clergy, whoſe animated bodies conſtitute the corporate legal reality, and whoſe avowed opinions conſtitute the actual doctrine of the church, do not approve. A literal repeal of any of the articles might, perhaps, in the preſent temper of the times, be productive of more evil than good; but a ſilent repeal of them, ſuch as has taken place, is calculated to produce great advantage without any material inconvenience.

26. In Geneſis iv. 7, the Lord is repreſented as ſaying to Cain, whoſe jealouſy was provoked by the

It will be ſaid, that oaths are to be taken in the ſenſe in which they are adminiſtered. This is certainly true in moſt caſes; but it will not hold good in caſes where oaths are adminiſtered in terms, *on which very different conſtructions may conſcientiouſly be put*; and are uſually conſcientiouſly put by the different perſons whom they are adminiſtered. Thus, if, for inſtance, every clergyman were obliged to ſubſcribe to the articles in the ſenſe in which the oath of ſubſcription is adminiſtered to him, the conſtruction of the ſame articles by the ſame perſon, might be made to change ſeveral times in his life, in order that it might tally with the conſtruction of the different parties, before whom the oath of ſubſcription might be taken. Thus, if a perſon were to be ordained deacon by a Calviniſtic biſhop, he muſt ſubſcribe the articles in one ſenſe, and if ordained prieſt by an Arminian biſhop (ſuch as a great majority of the Engliſh biſhops are), he muſt ſubſcribe them in a different. Before the firſt he muſt ſwear to believe in the doctrine of abſolute perſonal election and reprobation, &c. &c. and before the laſt he muſt ſwear that he does not believe any ſuch things. To avoid theſe embarraſſments, and this impiety, it ſeems right that the articles ſhould be ſubſcribed, not in that ſpecific ſenſe in which they are underſtood and believed by the perſon who adminiſters the oath of ſubſcription, but either in that particular ſenſe which is moſt agreeable to the conſcience of the individual who ſubſcribes, or in that general ſenſe which is to be collected from the writings of the moſt learned and judicious members of the Church of England who are dead, and its moſt learned and judicious members who are living. *No falſehood can be practiſed where there is no intention to deceive on the one hand, and where nobody is deceived on the other.* Thoſe who are ſo for-

diſtinguiſhing marks of the divine favour, which Abel had received, " *If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not*

ward to caſt the moſt ſlanderous imputations on the veracity of the Clergy, would do well to conſider this obſervation:

It is not to be ſuppoſed, that the miniſters of the Church of England ſhould ever agree in the conſtruction, or unite in the belief of thirty-nine propoſitions, ſome of which relate to queſtions the moſt dark and difficult in the whole compaſs of human inquiry; queſtions, too, which agitate the hopes and the fears of men; their deareſt intereſts and their fondeſt expectations; queſtions, in the diſcuſſion of which, the wiſeſt may be perplexed, and the fearleſs be diſmayed. On many abſtruſe and intricate topics in theology, men of the fevereſt probity, the greateſt penetration, of profound reſearch, and various erudition, have often differed from each other, and have as often differed from themſelves at different periods of their lives. Any man may give an aſſurance of what his belief has been for the paſt; but, on any matters of uncertain ſpeculation, no man can ſafely or conſcientiouſly ſtipulate what his belief ſhall be for the future. If any man ſhould undertake to think on any doubtful queſtion ten years hence in preciſely the ſame manner that he does at preſent, he undertakes more than he can perform; and no one is bound to impoſſible conditions.

A man's preſent belief, as far as it is rational and ſincere, muſt be always determined by the weight of evidence; and it will vary as the evidence varies; it will grow ſtronger as the evidence grows more convincing; and it will become weaker as the evidence decreaſes; or as the probabilities in favour of a contrary opinion are increaſed. On any doubtful queſtions, which admit of degrees of proof, or of probability, an honeſt and rational man will embrace that ſide of the queſtion, in favour of which the proofs are the ſtrongeſt; or the probabilities preponderate. Thus a degree of evidence, which at one period

be accepted; and if thou doeſt not well, ſin lieth at the door." Here God himſelf, not long after the fall,

of life ſeems ſufficient to determine the choice and to fix the aſſent may appear inſufficient at another. No man can bind over his conſcience to believe, or his reaſon to ſupport what he now believes, all the reſt of his life; and no power on earth can give him the capacity to do it; or take from him the right of not doing it. The attempt would be as vain and fruitleſs, not to ſay as impious, as an attempt to fetter the winds, or to ſtill the waves.

The knowledge of every man who reads and thinks, as every clergyman ought to read and to think, is and muſt be in a ſtate of continual progreſſion; and of courſe his opinions on many matters of doubtful ſpeculation may undergo many changes, without any change taking place in the purity of his conſcience, or the integrity of his heart; without any diminution of his regard for the church of which he is a member; or any deduction from his uſefulneſs as one of its miniſters.—To diffuſe a ſpirit of good will between man and man, to conciliate the affections of the people to the government, and to awaken in the government an attention to the intereſts of the people; to promote the growth of all the domeſtic and all the ſocial virtues, to melt the obdurate and to confirm the penitent, to raiſe the weak hands and to ſtrengthen the feeble knees, to animate the righteous and to direct the eyes of the wretched to the realms of immortality;—theſe are the great, and noble, and worthy ends, and uſes of an eſtabliſhed church; and theſe ends may be obtained, and this good may be produced, where there is not an uniformity of opinions among its miniſters on topics of doubtful inquiry; or where ſome of them ſubſcribe the thirty-nine articles in their plain literal ſenſe, and others in one that is totally different.

In theſe remarks, in which I have ſpoken my mind clearly

expreſsly intimates that Cain had a power to chooſe either good or evil; and that his happineſs depended on the choice which he ſhould make. In conformity to this paſſage: St. John ſays, 1 Ep. iii. 12, that Cain's *works were evil; and thoſe of his brother's righteous.* But had the fall ſo far vitiated the nature of man, as to have ingenerated a permanent diſpoſition to evil, and indiſpoſition to good, the works of Abel muſt have been as unrighteous as thoſe of his brother. In Geneſis vi. 5, it is teſtified of Noah, "*that he was a juſt man, and perfect, and walked with God;*"—a character totally incompatible with the ſuppoſition, that the fall rendered human nature vicious and unſound to the very

and intelligibly, but I truſt with becoming moderation, my wiſh is to defend the great and good Anti-Calviniſtic majority of the Clergy againſt the malicious aſperſions of the Calviniſtic minority; and to vindicate the rights of the former to freedom of opinion, and freedom of inquiry; rights, which the latter, who are enemies to truth and reaſon, would willingly take away. I love, I venerate the Church of England with all her imperfections. Though I am not ſo warm an admirer as to panegyriſe her wrinkles; or ſo infatuated a lover as to imagine that her freckles add to her beauty; yet I am conſcious that ſhe has qualities which deſerve the eſteem of her friends, and the reſpect of her enemies. If her faults be many, *they are greatly exceeded* by her virtues. And who is there, even among her bittereſt foes, who can cenſure the ſimplicity of her rites or the ſolemnity of her ſervice? Who is there, not callous to every emotion of piety, that will not laud the beauty of her liturgy, the devotion with which it glows, and the charity which it inſpires?

core. Of Job, it is said that he was "*perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;*" and, in another passage, God himself is represented as calling Job "*a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.*" Surely nothing can more strongly prove St. Austin's favourite doctrine of innate corruption to be unscriptural and erroneous; for had Adam's guilt been infused into his posterity, so as to produce a continual aversion to good, and an unceasing conversion to evil, there could not, after the first transgression, have been a single perfect and upright man upon the whole face of the earth. But as there have been, since the fall, several perfect and upright men who feared God, and eschewed evil, these examples prove, that men were under no natural or innate bias to unrighteousness; and that there were so many sinners in the world, not because sin was a mechanical necessity, but *because men grossly abused their capacity to do good, and not to do evil.* In Acts x. we read of Cornelius, a centurion, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." Indeed, in all ages and among all nations, there have been righteous as well as wicked; there have been some who have obeyed, though there have been more who have transgressed the law written on their hearts; the law whose practice reason approves, and whose obligations conscience feels.

27. If God be a moral governor, man must be a

moral agent; that is, capable of chooſing good or evil; for, without ſuch a capacity, human actions would be no more ſuſceptible of the relations of morality, than the movements of a machine. Moral agency conſiſts in the *voluntary preference* of good to evil, or of evil to good; and without which, God cannot be, with reſpect to man, a moral governor; for the notion of a moral government is incompatible with that of a mechanical neceſſity. But the doctrine of original ſin, which is taught by the Fanatics, deſtroys the moral government of God; for man could not make a voluntary election between good and evil, if he were, from the womb, indiſpoſed to good, and diſpoſed to evil.

28. As the notions of original ſin, which are entertained by the Fanatics, invalidate the moral government of God, they muſt, of courſe, take away all motives to righteouſneſs and devotion, to obedience and adoration. If God be not a moral governor, he muſt be a careleſs ſpectator of human actions, indifferent to vice or virtue; and hence mankind could cheriſh no hope of conciliating his favour; and need entertain no dread of exciting his diſpleaſure. For, once ſet aſide the belief of God's moral government; and all actions, as they reſpect the relations between God and man, become alike. They loſe the characteriſtic diſtinctions of good and evil; and God himſelf ceaſes to be an object worthy of religious adoration. For we might as well worſhip

wood and ſtone, as a God who does not concern himſelf about us; and who, whatever may be our conduct towards him, regards us neither with pleaſure nor diſpleaſure, with fondneſs nor averſion. What emotions of piety, of hope or fear, of love and gratitude, could the worſhip of ſuch a being kindle in the ſoul?

29. The great and glorious attribute of God, the excellence of his excellencies, the perfection of his perfections, is his *goodneſs*; that goodneſs which is every where manifeſted in the works of creation; and in the pages of ſcripture. But the genius of Fanaticiſm obſcures the unclouded ſunſhine of the divine glory; for it ſuppoſes that God conſtituted all the generations of men ſinners, appointed to damnation before they were born; and that of all thoſe who come into the world, only a very ſmall portion is elected to ſalvation, while millions and millions are created on purpoſe to be tormented for ever in fire and brimſtone. This doctrine, which is not more replete with abſurdity than with blaſphemy, approaches nearer to the chilling ſyſtem of the Atheiſt, than to the cheering doctrine of the goſpel. The Atheiſt denies the exiſtence of God; the Fanatic annihilates the ſuppoſition of his goodneſs; and what ſentient and intelligent being is there who would not prefer no God at all to a God *without goodneſs*? Strip God of his goodneſs, and the imagination inſtantly repreſents the Deity as a Devil; for the divine

power, abſtracted from that goodneſs, which directs its operations, excites ſenſations more allied to trembling abhorrence, than to thrilling love.

30. What is the preciſe nature of juſtice, as it reſpects the government of God, it may be difficult to define; but on this, I think, we may ſafely rely, that the proceedings of God towards man will not be ſuch as might reaſonably be accuſed of injuſtice, if they were the proceedings of one man towards another. Our notions of juſtice are, for the moſt part, diſtinct and clear; and in which we ſeldom err, unleſs from the abuſe of reaſon or the contempt of conſcience. Our ſenſations themſelves, in a meaſure, teach us to diſtinguiſh juſtice from injuſtice; and that ſenſe of right, which is either innate in the heart, or which the leaſt exerciſe of reaſon will diſcover, will prevent any conſiderable miſtake in queſtions which ſo nearly concern our own intereſt, and the intereſt of our fellow-creatures. Now, we cannot imagine that God, in his dealings with us, will act contrary to thoſe principles of juſtice which he has made ſo evident to the mind, and ſo genial to the heart; and which he has, moreover, expreſsly commanded us to obſerve in our conduct towards each other. This ſuppoſition would make God act contrary to his own will and his own decrees. No good and wiſe legiſlator who impoſes laws on others will violate them himſelf; nor can we, for a moment, believe, that God would ordain laws, to which he himſelf would not conform.

If God tell man to do no wrong to his brother man, we may ſafely truſt that He will not tranſgreſs his own decrees by doing wrong to mankind.—But the perverſe and wicked doctrine of the Fanatics ſuppoſes that God is fallible, and inconſiſtent with himſelf; that he does not conform to his own laws, and does not abide by his own decrees *. According to our ſenſe of right and wrong, which is the gift of God, and according to the ſpirit and to the letter of God's laws, it would be an act of outrageous cruelty in any human lawgiver, to puniſh a man for crimes which he never committed, or to hang him for a robbery which was perpetrated by one of his remote progenitors; and in the guilt of which his deſcendants could not be involved. If any human legiſlator ſhould attempt to put in practice ſuch an oppreſſive ſentence, it would revolt every heart; and every hand would be raiſed to reſiſt the execution. If it would be unjuſt in any human tribunal to put the innocent in the place of the guilty, a ſimilar conduct, if practiſed by God, would be contrary to the laws of juſtice, which he ordained; and it would be reprobated by that ſenſe of right and wrong, which his goodneſs imparted to us; and by which we diſtinguiſh good from evil, and mercy from oppreſſion.

* The laws of God are the emanations of his wiſdom, of his juſtice, and his goodneſs; and God can no more act contrary to them, than he can act contrary to wiſdom, to juſtice, and to goodneſs.

31. There seems no proposition in theology more clear than this; that God prefers the righteous to the sinner; that those who keep his laws are the objects of his regard, and those who violate them, of his displeasure. But if all men were, according to the hypothesis of the Fanatics, inherently and radically vicious, utterly indisposed to good, and disposed to evil, they would all be, in respect to moral qualities, on the same level, and one could have no better claim to preference than another. Whence then do the scriptures assure us, that God does prefer some to others; the just to the unjust; for if human nature were as corrupt as the Fanatics represent it, there could be none that did good, or eschewed evil; and, in this case, God would be made to prefer one individual to another without a cause for preference. Such reasoning, with respect to God, is impious and absurd.

32. If some individuals be more the objects of God's love than others, it must be because some excel in moral qualities more than others; for a difference in moral qualities can alone form a ground of preference in the sight of the moral Governor of the world. If moral qualities do form a ground of preference, and if God do, as the scriptures fully assert, prefer some men to others *on this account*, then all men cannot be equally sinners, or equally disposed to evil, and indisposed to good; for this supposition would leave no motive for a reasonable preference; and we

cannot ſuppoſe the preference of God to be unreaſonable.

33. But the Fanatics will pretend, that, though all men are born ſinners, ſome are made righteous by the ſpecial appointment of God; that, though all the deſcendants of Adam do come into the world, reeking with pollution, and infected with guilt to the very core, God does, of his own free will, give to ſome few choſen people, *his own elect*, a power to become righteous, which he denies to others. But this ſuppoſition will not bear examination; for it makes the Father of Spirits act with the ſullenneſs of bigotry or the wantonneſs of caprice, arbitrarily creating ſome for happineſs and others for damnation.

34. If God give to ſome a power to be righteous which he withholds from others, this power muſt be either a conditional or an unconditional gift, either granted with or without any endeavour to obtain it. If it be an unconditional grant, then, as ſome are made righteous by a divine appointment, others are made ſinners by a divine appointment;—that is, they are made righteous againſt their will, and ſinners without their choice. This is entirely to confound and to deſtroy the diſtinctions of good and evil: for, without changing the language of morals, and aboliſhing every notion of right and wrong, a man can no more be called a ſinner, who is made ſo without his concurrence, or righteous, who becomes ſo againſt

his inclination, than he could be called black who is born white, or white who is born black.

35. If the divine ſuccour, by which people become righteous, be a *conditional* grant, if any previous moral exertion be requiſite to obtain it, or any previous moral fitneſs to receive it, then righteouſneſs and unrighteouſneſs become very diſtinct things; for the will is inſtrumental in their production; and there is a cauſe for preference in the one which is wanting in the other. The firſt, by a certain congruity which ſeems invariably obſerved in the economy of the moral world, deſerves the divine favour; and, by the ſame congruity, the laſt incurs the divine diſpleaſure. To the firſt, which doeth good, belong glory, and honour, and immortality; while tribulation and anguiſh are awarded to the laſt, becauſe it doeth evil. But the ſuppoſition, that the divine favour, which ſtrengthens the feeble and refreſhes the faint, is a *conditional* grant, is totally incompatible with that ſyſtem, which the ſanguinary zealot of Geneva eſpouſed, and which ſucceeding Fanatics have ſupported. According to their doctrine, men are made righteous againſt their will, and wicked without their choice; and God vouchſafes his regard to ſome which he denies to others; not becauſe the former uſe their utmoſt endeavours to obtain it which the latter do not uſe, but becauſe He acts without motives, diſtinguiſhes without a cauſe of diſtinction, prefers without any reaſon for preference, puniſhes where there

is no guilt, and rewards where there is no integrity. Such are the blaſphemies which the Fanatics utter againſt the Moſt High!

36. That the Fanatics ſhould make ſo many converts, is little to be wondered, when we conſider how agreeable their doctrines are to fleſh and blood, and on what eaſy terms they promiſe an eternity of bliſs to the dupes of their impoſture. They throw wide the gates of heaven to the ſinner; and ſhut them againſt the righteous. Their religion is popular and pleaſing, becauſe it requires ſo little ſelf-denial. With them ſalvation depends on the impulſes of feelings; with *us* it is the conſequence of righteous habit. With *them* repentance is a miraculous infuſion; with *us* it is a ſorrow for ſin, generating newneſs of life. With *them* one tranſport of the nerves, beating with devotional extravagance, is more likely to lift the ſinner to heaven, than a whole life ſpent in the practice of virtue. Great religious formality, great auſterity in the manner, and great ſanctity in the look canonize *their* ſaints; while *we* reckon among the juſt, only thoſe, who poſſeſs that inward purity which cleanſes the thoughts, and that goodneſs which is manifeſt in the conduct. The Fanatics reſt *their* entire hopes on the fiction of imputed righteouſneſs; but while we judge the blood of the atonement the only *cauſe* of our ſalvation, we think that it is not that blood of ſprinkling by which individuals will be ſaved from the wrath to come, unleſs it purify their ſouls from

actual sin, and render them A PECULIAR PEOPLE ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. The Fanatics think grace necessary to perseverance in righteousness; and we think the same; but *they* suppose grace irresistible; while we think that it may be quenched; *they* say that it operates against, *we* assert that it works in conjunction with, our will; and that it is a talent which will be withdrawn if it be not turned to a good account. *Their* doctrine is a chaos of mystery; in which the wise and the foolish are alike bewildered; *our* doctrine is plain, and artless, and intelligible; which the simple cannot mistake; and the way-faring man may understand. The religion which *we* preach meliorates the heart; *theirs* only inflames the passions. *We* address the understanding; *they* agitate the intemperance of the imagination. *We* are sedulous to promote active usefulness; *they* excite only a barren confidence or a comfortless despondency. *Our* system is favourable to the growth of virtue and of happiness; *theirs* tends to the increase of vice and misery. We deliver those instructions which are fitted to make good husbands, good fathers, good children, which encourage all that is amiable in domestic, and all that is upright in civil life; while the counsels which they give, and the lessons they teach, produce either a sullen indifference, or a fierce contempt for all those ties which are the dearest to the heart, and the most binding on the conscience.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

Man was a free agent, accountable for his actions before the fall, and has continued so ever since.

1. That man was made an accountable being at the beginning, and that he has continued so ever since, is a truth which the scriptures fully establish; and to which good and wise theologians of all ages have assented.

2. An accountable being means, a being endued with a capacity to discern good from evil, and responsible for the use of it. The right use of this capacity constitutes religious obedience; the wrong use of it constitutes disobedience or impiety.

3. As we possess a capacity to discern good from evil, that capacity is a law of our nature; which we could have derived only from him who gave us this

mortal life, and placed us in this probationary world. To prefer moral good to moral evil, is to obey the law of our rational nature; as to prefer phyſical good to phyſical evil, pleaſure to pain, and food to hunger, is to obey the law of our animal conſtitution. To obey the law of our rational nature, or rightly to uſe our capacity of diſcerning good from evil, is to obey the will of God; who gave us the capacity and made us reſponſible for the exerciſe.

4. If we are conſtituted beings, accountable for the morality of our actions, or, in other words, for the conformity of our conduct to the law of our rational nature which is the will of God, it follows, that we poſſeſs not only the faculty of diſcerning good from evil, but alſo the free uſe of it, in chooſing either the one or the other, as it ſeemeth to us beſt; in either conforming or not conforming our actions to the law of our rational nature, or the will of our Creator. We cannot be accountable for impoſſibilities. We cannot be reſponſible to the Judge of all the earth for not uſing that which we do not poſſeſs; or which is not ſubject to the will, or the rational faculty of man.

5. We either do poſſeſs the faculty of diſcerning between good and evil, or we do not poſſeſs it. If we do not poſſeſs it, we cannot be called to account for not exerting the energies of a nonentity; if we do poſſeſs it, we muſt poſſeſs the power of calling it into

action. If we poſſeſſed the faculty of diſcerning good from evil, or of diſtinguiſhing between the nature and tendencies, the happy and unhappy conſequences of certain actions, and yet did not poſſeſs the faculty of voluntarily exerting it, we could not be accountable for the voluntary exertion of it. If we poſſeſſed a power of diſtinguiſhing between ſweet and bitter, between things noxious and things innocent, between poiſons and their antidotes, and yet when ſugar and gall, when a loaf of bread and a ſtone, when a fiſh and a ſerpent were ſet before us, we did not poſſeſs the power of reaching out our hands and taking that which we knew to be good and wholeſome and nutritious, in preference to that which we knew to be deſtructive, the power of diſtinction would be uſeleſs; becauſe it could not be exerciſed; and, in this caſe, would it not be tyrannical, that we ſhould be puniſhed for not exerciſing it? In the ſame manner, if we poſſeſs a power of diſcerning moral good from moral evil without the faculty of exerting it, the not exerting it cannot juſtly be laid to our charge by a reaſonable being, ſuch as God muſt be.

6. If, therefore, we do not poſſeſs the faculty of diſcerning between good and evil and next of chooſing between them, we cannot be accountable for our actions. And if we be not accountable for our actions, then there is no ſuch thing as a law of our rational nature, to which our conduct ſhould be conformable; for, in this caſe, it would be a law, firſt, which we could not

know, and next which we could not obey. It would, therefore, be no law at all; for how can that be a law to us, or a law which we can be required to obey, or responsible for not obeying, either whose obligations we do not know, or which the lawgiver himself has, by a *constraint on our nature*, prevented us from obeying, and determined us to violate? Such a supposition would be to make human nature and the whole economy of the moral world a system of absurdity, and the author of it a capricious demon, characterised by injustice, and delighting in torture. Such are the inconsistencies and impieties into which those persons are necessarily carried who maintain that man is, from the womb, utterly indisposed to good and disposed to evil; and meriting eternal damnation for a transgression to which he was not accessary; which he had neither power to choose or to refuse, to perpetrate or to prevent.

7. As the advocates for the loathsome doctrine of hereditary corruption pretend that the fall destroyed the capacity of man to do good, and left him nothing but a capacity to do evil, that it extinguished the life of religion in the soul, that it estranged all his affections from the law of God, and impressed on his disposition and habits an irresistible bias to all manner of iniquity, let us carefully examine the brief and, probably, *in some degree*, allegorical account*,

* Le Clerc says, "hanc historiam nascentis orbis, licet simplici contextam, ut videtur, stylo, non carere schematibus;

which the ſcripture has left of that event, and we ſhall find that it gives no authority whatever for ſo ſtrange a ſuppoſition.

8. The original anceſtors of mankind were no ſooner ſeated in paradiſe, than they found themſelves in a ſtate of trial. And the trial on which they were put, at that time, was not the trial of their obedience to the moral law, but to a poſitive precept, "*Thou ſhalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*"

9. Our firſt parents, when in paradiſe, where the earth ſpontaneouſly brought forth every thing to ſupply their wants, and where they were the only inhabitants, were not tried by their obedience to the law of moral obligation; becauſe they could, in that ſtate, be under no poſſible temptation to falſehood, to adultery, to injuſtice, or any other immorality. The violations of truth and juſtice are uſually occaſioned by the force of temptations to which Adam and Eve, placed in the garden of Eden, were inacceſſible. God, therefore, inſtead of making their enjoyment of his favour depend on their obedience to the ſtatutes of the moral law, which they had no temptation to violate, made it depend on their obe-

unde minus mirum videtur, ſi quædam in ſuperioribus ut jacent, intelligenda non ſint, quamvis nuda ornamentis narratio, primo intuitu videtur." Cleric in Geneſ. iii. 22. See Warb. Div. Leg. b. ix.

dience to a ſingle injunction, *not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*; which did operate as a charm upon their ſenſes; which was grateful to the eye, and pleaſing to the ſmell; and which, conſequently, exerciſed their ſelf-denial; and formed a ſatisfactory teſt of their obedience.

10. A ſtate of temptation is neceſſary to beings accountable for their actions. Accountableneſs ſuppoſes a capability of merit or demerit, or, in a religious ſenſe, a power of obtaining the favour or of incurring the diſpleaſure of God. But how can a capability of obtaining, or a qualifying fitneſs for receiving the divine favour, exiſt in actions, *which did not originate in preference?* A ſtate of moral probation, or a ſtate in which we are capable of merit and demerit, of obedience and diſobedience to the divine will, neceſſarily ſuppoſes the encounter of oppoſite motives in the breaſt of man; and the fitneſs or right application of moral agency conſiſts in making a right choice between them; in preferring the motives to obedience to thoſe which incline us to diſobedience; and in regulating our conduct by the former, rather than by the latter.

11. Our firſt parents, though they had no temptation to violate thoſe laws of moral obligation, in obedience to which righteouſneſs now conſiſts, were yet placed in a ſtate of moral agency, and capable of merit or demerit, as far as they were capable of obe-

dience or disobedience. Even, in paradise, they were, in some measure, operated upon by contending motives; and they were required to make a right use of the freedom of their will in choosing between them. They were liable, as the history proves, to the external agency and the internal influence of temptation; and their moral agency consisted in combating the one and repelling the other. They beheld the tree of good and evil waving its fair and beautiful fruit (probably more attractive in its appearance, than the fruit that grew on any of the other trees in the garden) before their eyes. The outward attractions of the fruit operated on their senses; and concurred with the prohibition to eat, to inflame desire. In quenching the desire, and in obeying the divine injunction, their morality and their happiness consisted. The command was positive *not to eat* of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and obedience to it was enforced by this denunciation, "*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"

12. Our first parents were thus placed in a state of temptation; and subjected to the influence of opposite motives. The forbiden fruit, acting on their senses, inflamed their appetites, and inclined them to disobedience; while the love of him, who had provided for them such abundance of delights, and gave them full power to enjoy all the varied luxuries of paradise, *with this single exception*, combined with the fear of

incurring the penalty which he threatened, seemed more forcibly to impel them to obedience.

12. But our first parents, a good deal like their descendants, seem to have been vanquished by the desire of *present* gratification. Beguiled by the *immediate* pleasure, they disregarded the more distant consequences. They perhaps practised upon themselves delusions of a self-imposture, similar to that which we are so often accustomed to practise upon ourselves, in those cases in which our appetites are inflamed by the nearness of some present, but criminal indulgence. They, perhaps, imagined, that if they transgressed, the transgression might be concealed; or that the consequences might not be so bad as were threatened. Conscious of the goodness of God, they might fondly hope that one single offence would not so far provoke his wrath, as to cause him to deprive them for ever of all the happiness which his bounty had provided; to drive them from his presence and doom them to misery and destruction. Thus it is probable, that they listened to the vain imaginations of their own hearts; they suffered the flame of sensual desire to make its inroads into the soul, till it became too violent to be extinguished. They ate of the fruit which they were commanded not to eat; they violated the injunction of God; and brought death into the world.

14. Hence we see that our first parents were no

ſooner created, than they were tempted like as we are; that they had, as we have, reaſon and conſcience and freedom of will to vanquiſh temptation; but that by not liſtening to the ſuggeſtions of reaſon and not minding or not believing the denunciations of God, and by abuſing their natural freedom of moral agency which his goodneſs had imparted, they ſuffered a temptation to overpower them, *which they might have overpowered.*

15. That the moral powers, or the powers of reſiſting temptation, and of conforming to the law of a rational nature or the will of God, were ſtronger in Adam, than they have been in many of his deſcendants, by no means appears from any ſuggeſtions in the account of the fall, or in any other parts of ſcripture. The contrary is rather proved by the hiſtory; for Eve ſeems, *as far as can be gathered from the relation of Moſes, to have yielded to the firſt temptation, and to have been vanquiſhed by the firſt impulſe of unlicenſed deſire.* Many of the frail and fair daughters of Eve, who from her derive ſorrow and travail in the conception of children, ſeem to have ſucceſsfully reſiſted temptations ſtronger than thoſe by which their female progenitor was overcome. How then can it be truly ſaid, that there was, in our firſt parents, an original righteouſneſs which has been entirely loſt in their deſcendants? Let us not be deceived by fine-ſounding words, or by the honeyed cant of faſhionable authorities; let us examine the ſcriptural

account of the creation and the fall, and we ſhall find, that that which is called original righteouſneſs never exiſted; and, conſequently, could never be loſt. For what does the word *righteouſneſs* mean in the language of ſcripture, or what can it mean in the language of common ſenſe, but *a habit of doing right*, of obeying the divine will, in preferring good to evil, and obedience to diſobedience? Our firſt parents could not have been created in, or born with this habit of righteouſneſs; for if they had, they would have continued righteous.

16. When a habit is formed by repeated acts, it becomes a permanent principle of action; that guides us with eaſe, and that we reſiſt with difficulty; and much more powerful would be an habit of righteouſneſs, incorporated in the frame, and ingenerated in the ſoul by the author of our being; but that ſuch a habit was not ingenerated in Adam or in Eve, is clear from this, that they appear to have embraced the firſt temptation to *unrighteouſneſs*; and to have tranſgreſſed, almoſt as ſoon as they had an opportunity of tranſgreſſing. Real righteouſneſs (not the counterfeited righteouſneſs of imputation *) conſiſts in a

* Whitby calls the imputation of Chriſt's perfect and active obedience to us, a very falſe and pernicious doctrine: and he proves, that it is contrary both to ſcripture and to reaſon. See his diſcourſe on the imputation of Chriſt's perfect righteouſneſs in his Teſtament. "In the holy ſcriptures," ſays

vigorous habit of reſiſting remptations to ſin, and of following the true motives to holineſs; but our firſt parents ſeem either not to have poſſeſſed, or not to have *exerted*, the power to acquire ſuch a habit; for they were no ſooner tempted than they fell.

17. It appears then, from the records of inſpiration, that what is called original righteouſneſs, is a mere fiction, fit only for ſome canting fanatic * to inculcate, or ſome ſuperſtitious old woman to embrace; for, even for a minute, ſuppoſing that man did ever poſſeſs an ingenerate habit of righteouſneſs, ſuch an habit could not have been implanted in the human nature without annihilating all ideas of merit or demerit, without totally deſtroying the freedom of chooſing between good and evil, and aboliſhing the ſtate of moral probation in which man is placed;

Whitby, " there is no mention made of the imputation of any man's ſin, or righteouſneſs to another, *but only of the imputation of his own good deeds for rightcouſneſs, or of his own evil deeds for puniſhment.*" See Whitby's N. T. vol. ii. p. 235.

* In proportion as a man is averſe to the cant of religion, he is attached to the reality; and in the ſame degree that he practiſes the cant, he is eſtranged from the reality. This remark may, perhaps, deſerve the attention of the evangelical preachers whoſe continual cant about faith, grace, imputed righteouſneſs, and imputed ſin, is a convincing proof that they love darkneſs better than light, and myſtery better than common ſenſe, *becauſe their deeds are evil.*

and which ſuppoſes, in moſt caſes at leaſt, ſomething like an equality in the motives, which incline the will to good or to evil. But an irreſiſtible bias to good, ſuch as what is called original righteouſneſs, ſuppoſes in our firſt parents, would have counteracted any bias to evil, and have annihilated the influence of the motives to diſobedience; but that ſuch a bias to good was not impreſſed on the firſt anceſtors of the human race appears from this, that they wanted ſtrength and reſolution to defeat one wayward inclination to unrighteouſneſs.

18. Man was originally created, as the ſcriptures aſſure us, in the image of God; and his image ſtill remains in all who are born into the world; *and nothing but acts of diſobedience to the divine will can efface it in us, any more than in our firſt parents* *. Till acts

* Mr. Wilberforce ſeems to ſuppoſe, that the moral part of human nature is a maſs of putrefaction. But Mr. Wilberforce will not, I hope, think his authority depreciated, if I preſume to pay leſs deference to his opinions, than to thoſe of Sir Matthew Hale, the righteous and the wiſe, and thoſe of Biſhop Butler, the penetrating and profound. Sir Matthew Hale, in his primitive origination of mankind, ſays, "I come now to conſider of thoſe rational inſtincts, as I call them, the connate principles engraven in the human ſoul; which, though they are truths acquirable, and deducible by rational conſequence and argumentation, yet they ſeem to be inſcribed in the very *craſis* and texture of the ſoul, antecedent to any acquiſition by induſtry, or the exerciſe of the diſcurſive faculty in man; and,

of ſins are committed, there is the lovely impreſs of a divine character upon the human nature; ſuch as

therefore, they may be well called anticipations, prenotions or ſentiments characteriſed and engraven in the ſoul, born with it, and growing up with it, till they receive a check by ill cuſtoms or educations, or an improvement and advancement by the due exerciſe of the faculties. I ſhall ſhew, firſt, what they are: ſecondly, what moves me to think that ſuch are connatural.

" 1. Touching the former, I think thoſe implanted and connatural anticipations are theſe; namely, that there is a God; that he is of greateſt power, wiſdom, goodneſs, and perfection; that he is pleaſed with good, and diſpleaſed with evil; that he is placable; that he is to be feared, honoured, loved, worſhipped, and obeyed; that he will reward the good and puniſh the evil; a ſecret ſentiment of the immortality of the ſoul, or that it ſurvives the body to be capable of rewards and puniſhments, according to its deportment in this life; certain common notions of moral good and evil, of *decorum* and *turpe*; that faith and promiſes are to be kept; that a man muſt do as he would be done by; that the obſcene parts and actions, though otherwiſe natural, are not to be expoſed to public view, obvelatio pudendorum; that a man muſt be grateful for benefit received. Theſe, and ſome ſuch common notions or intimate propenſions, ſeem to be connaturally engraven in the ſoul antecedently to any diſcurſive ratiocination; and though they are not ſo diſtinct and explicit, yet they are ſecret biaſſes, inclining the human nature primarily to what is uſeful and convenient for it, in proportion to the ſtate of an intellectual nature: That, as we ſee in brutes, beſides the exerciſe of their faculties of ſenſitive perception and imagination, there are lodged in them certain ſenſible inſtincts antecedent to their imaginative faculty, whereby they are pre-determined to the good and convenience of the ſenſible life; ſo there are lodged in the very *craſis* and

we behold in the innocence of ſmiling infants; on whoſe conſciences is no ſin, and in whoſe hearts is

conſtitution of the ſoul, certain rational inſtincts whereby it is pre-diſpoſed, inclined, and biaſſed to the good and convenience proportionable to a rational and intellectual life; a certain congenite ſtock of rational ſentiments and inclinations, which may go along with him, and fairly incline him to ſuch a trade and way as is ſuitable to the good of his nature; ſo that he is not left barely to the undetermination, incertainty, and unſteadineſs of the operation of his faculties, without a certain ſecret and gentle prediſpoſition of them to what is right, decent, and convenient for their manage and guidance by theſe common anticipations, inclinations, and connatural characters engraven in the ſoul.

" 2. And that which inclines me to believe this, is not only the congruity of the ſuppoſition to the convenience of the human nature, and the inſtance of the ſenſible inſtincts in the animal nature proportionate to their convenience, and the great importance of them to the convenience thereof; but alſo that, which is obſervable in the attentive conſideration of the manners of mankind in general, which ſeems to have thoſe common ſentiments in them, and to accord in them in a very great meaſure: and though evil cuſtoms and education much prevails among men, yet it doth not wholly obliterate theſe ſentiments, at leaſt from the generality of mankind. It muſt be agreed that theſe rational inſtincts, as I call them, are not always ſo vigorous and uniform in their actings as the animal inſtincts of brutes are in their kind, which partly proceeds from that liberty of will that is in the human nature, which many times ſuſpends or interrupts their energy and operation, partly from that mixture of the ſentient appetite with the actings of the reaſonable ſoul, which oftentimes tranſport it. Even the more ſimple and uncompounded any nature is, the more uniform are its motions and actings; the natural inſtincts and propor-

no guile. Innocence, or *a freedom from any moral taint*, which is the true image of the divine nature

tions even of things inanimate (as of heavy bodies to deſcend) are more uniform than the very inſtincts of brutes, who have a more complicated form or nature: but as this accidental interruption of rational inſtincts doth not diſprove their exiſtences, ſo man hath a greater advantage by the exerciſe of his reaſon and intellective faculties, to remove thoſe interruptions, and improve thoſe connatural ſentiments or rational inſtincts to his ſingular uſe and benefit, which abundantly recompenſeth thoſe interruptions."

"Again," ſays Sir Matthew Hale, "I appeal to the moſt knowing men in the world that have but had the leiſure to think ſeriouſly and converſe with themſelves, and that have kept their minds free from the fumes of intemperance and exceſs, paſſion and perturbation, whether next under divine revelation their beſt and cleareſt ſentiments of morality at leaſt have not been gathered from the due animadverſion and inſpection of their own minds, and the improving of that ſtock of morals that they there find, and the tranſcribing of that original which they found firſt written there. It is true, that it is with the connatural principles inſcribed in our minds as it is with our faculties, they lie more torpid, and inactive, and inevident, unleſs they are awakened and exerciſed like a ſpark involved in aſhes; and being either ſuppreſſed or neglected, they ſeem little better than dead; but being diligently attended, inſpected, and exerciſed, they expand and evolve themſelves into more diſtinction and evidence of themſelves. And, therefore, it was not without ſome kind of probability that ſome of the ancients thought that ſcience was little elſe than memory or reminiſcence, a diſcovery of what was in the ſoul before. But whatever may be ſaid of other matters, certainly *the firſt draughts and ſtrictures of natural religion and morality are*

impreſſed upon the human, is born with us; and if we die before we have learned to diſcern good

naturally in the mind." See Hale's Primitive Origination of Mankind, fol. London, 1677, p. 61, 62, 63.

The following are ſome of Biſhop Butler's notions of human nature: "There is not at all any ſuch thing as ill will in one man towards another, emulation and reſentment being away, whereas there is plainly benevolence or good-will: There is no ſuch thing as love of injuſtice, oppreſſion, treachery, ingratitude, but only eager deſires after ſuch and ſuch external goods; which, according to a very ancient obſervation, the moſt abandoned would chooſe to obtain by innocent means, if they were as eaſy and as effectual to their end: That even emulation and reſentment, by any one who will conſider what theſe paſſions are in nature, will be found nothing to the purpoſe of this objection: And that the principles and paſſions in the mind of man, which are diſtinct both from ſelf love and benevolence, *primarily and moſt directly lead to right behaviour, and only ſecondarily and more remotely to what is evil.*" Biſhop Butler's Sermons, p. 19, 20.

"There can be no doubt," continues this great philoſopher and divine, "that ſeveral propenſions or inſtincts, ſeveral principles in the heart of man, carry him to ſociety, and to contribute to the happineſs of it, in a ſenſe and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to evil. *Theſe principles, propenſions or inſtincts, which lead him to do good, are approved of by a certain faculty within, quite diſtinct from theſe propenſions themſelves.* p. 28.

"Every bias, inſtinct, propenſion within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: Add to theſe the ſuperior faculty whoſe office it is to adjuſt, manage, and preſide over them, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as, in civil government, the conſtitution is broken in upon and violated

from evil, and have become perſonal tranſgreſſors by perſonal acts of diſobedience, by not obeying the

by power and ſtrength prevailing over authority; ſo the conſtitution of man is broken in upon, and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that, which is, in its nature, ſupreme over them all. Thus when it is ſaid by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not ſo contrary to human nature as injuſtice; by this, to be ſure, is not meant, that the averſion to the former in mankind is leſs ſtrong and prevalent than their averſion to the latter; but that the former is only contrary to our nature conſidered in a partial view, and which takes in only the loweſt part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas *the latter is contrary to our nature, conſidered in a higher ſenſe; as a ſyſtem and conſtitution, contrary to the whole economy of man.* And, from all theſe things put together, nothing can be more evident than, that, excluſive of revelation, mankind cannot be conſidered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as paſſion, humour, wilfulneſs, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in: But that *from his make, conſtitution, or nature, he is in the ſtricteſt and moſt proper ſenſe a law to himſelf. He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honeſtly attend to it.*

The inquiries which have been made by men of leiſure after ſome general rule, the conformity to or diſagreement from which ſhould denominate our actions good or evil, are, in many reſpects, of great ſervice: Yet *let any plain, honeſt man, before he engages in any courſe of action, aſk himſelf, is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the leaſt doubt but this queſtion would be anſwered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almoſt any fair man, in almoſt any circumſtance.* Neither do there appear any caſes which look like

ſuggeſtions of conſcience, and by offending againſt what Sir Matthew Hale and Biſhop Butler call the

exceptions to this, but thoſe of ſuperſtition and partiality to ourſelves. Superſtition may, perhaps, be ſomewhat of an exception; but partiality to ourſelves is not, this being itſelf diſhoneſty. For man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right part for him to act, which he would ſee to be hard, unjuſt, oppreſſive in another; this is plain vice, and can proceed only from great unfairneſs of mind.

" But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himſelf, yet it may be aſked, what obligations are we under to attend to, and follow it? I anſwer; it has been proved, that man by his nature is a law to himſelf, without the particular diſtinct conſideration of the poſitive ſanctions of that law, the rewards and puniſhments which, from the light of reaſon, we have ground to believe are annexed to it. The queſtion then carries its own anſwer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature. That your conſcience approves of, and atteſts to, ſuch a courſe of action, is itſelf alone an obligation. Conſcience does not only offer itſelf to ſhew us the way we ſhould walk in, but it likewiſe carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide, the guide aſſigned us by the author of our nature. It, therefore, belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty, to walk in that path and follow this guide, without looking about to ſee whether we may not poſſibly forſake them with impunity." p. 45, to 49.

Theſe ſentiments, both of Sir Matthew Hale and of Biſhop Butler, are very adverſe to thoſe of Mr. W. and not very agreeable to the doctrine of the ninth article, which ſays, that " *man is, of his own nature, inclined to evil.*" But, according to the repreſentation of Biſhop Butler, man is, of his own nature, inclined to good, *and the practice of morality is moſt conformable to the principles and frame of his conſtitution.*

law of our nature, we die not ſubject to wrath and damnation; but with the ſame image of God en-

The prevailing opinions about original ſin reſt principally on the authority of St. Auſtin; whoſe writings were, at the time of the reformation, more read and better underſtood than thoſe of the early Greek fathers, who give no countenance to the doctrine. Speaking on this ſubject, Jeremy Taylor ſays, "There is nothing which, *from ſo ſlight grounds*, hath got ſo great, and till of late, ſo unqueſtioned footing in the perſuaſions of men. *Origen* ſaid enough to be miſtaken in the queſtion. Ἡ ἀρα τῶ Ἀδὰμ κοινὴ πάντων ἐστι· και τα κατα της γυναικὸς, ἐκ ἔστι καθ' ἡς ὲ λεγεται. *Adam*'s curſe is common to all; and there is not a woman on earth to whom may not be ſaid thoſe things which were ſpoken to this woman (Eve). Him St. Ambroſe did miſtake, and followed the error about explicating the nature of original ſin, and ſet it ſomething forward. But *St. Auſtin* gave it complement and authority by his fierce diſputing againſt the *Pelagians*, whom he would overthrow by all means. And if ſuch a weak principle as his ſaying, could make an error ſpread over ſo many churches, for ſo many ages, we may eaſily imagine, that ſo many greater cauſes, as I before reckoned, might infect whole nations, and conſequently mankind, without crucifying our patriarch or firſt parent, and declaiming againſt him (poor man) as the author of all our evil. Truth is, WE INTEND BY LAYING LOAD UPON HIM TO EXCUSE OURSELVES; AND WHICH IS WORSE, TO ENTERTAIN OUR SINS INFALLIBLY; AND NEVER TO PART WITH THEM, UPON PRETENCE THAT THEY ARE NATURAL AND IRRESISTIBLE." Taylor's Practice of Repentance, p. 423, 424.

Whitby, as famed for his honeſty as his erudition, and who, like Jeremy Taylor, Clarke, and other great theologians, thought it no deviation from truth and no violation of his oath to deviate from the doctrine of the articles, when they

graven upon our ſouls, with which we came into the world.

deviated from the doctrine of ſcripture, aſſailed the unſcriptural hypotheſis of hereditary depravity, and other fictions of Calviniſtic ſuperſtition, with weapons which the Calviniſts of his day could not encounter, and which the Calviniſts of our times will find it impoſſible to repel.

In the beginning of the preface to his Five Points, Whitby ſays, "They who have known my education may remember, that I was bred up ſeven years in the univerſity under men of the *Calviniſtical* perſuaſion; and ſo could hear no other doctrine, or receive no other inſtructions from the men of thoſe times, and therefore had once firmly entertained all their doctrines. Now, that which firſt moved me to ſearch into the foundation of theſe doctrines (*viz. the imputation of Adam's ſin to all his poſterity*), was the ſtrange conſequences of it: this made me ſearch the more exactly into that matter, and by reading *Joſua Placæus*, with the anſwer to him, and others on that ſubject, I SOON FOUND CAUSE TO JUDGE THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN IT."

I am ſurpriſed, and not more ſurpriſed than concerned, that Miſs Hannah More, in her very ſenſible, lively, and highly poliſhed work on education, ſhould have allotted a chapter to the defence of the innate corruption of human nature: a doctrine which is, I truſt, fully proved in theſe pages to be contrary both to ſcripture and to reaſon; and which, as Jeremy Taylor, the flower of Engliſh theologians, has declared, *is diſavowed by all antiquity prior to the times of St. Auſtin*; in whom it found a champion, who had zeal without diſcretion, and knowledge without judgment. That St. Auſtin ſhould have entertained ſuch unworthy notions of human nature, I the leſs wonder, when I conſider the atrocious ſlanders which he fabricated againſt the *more amiable ſex*. "De carbonibus," ſays the

18. Man did not originally poſſeſs any thing like an *ingenerate habit of righteouſneſs*; but he poſſeſſed at the beginning, as he has done in all ages and generations ſince, certain tendencies to good, implanted in his nature; and which he is required to invigorate by cultivation. He brings into the world certain

ungallant Father, whoſe huge folios ſupport the hereditary depravity of the world, "ignis ſcintillæ proſiliunt, de ferro rubigo nutritur, morbos aſpides ſibilant, et *mulier fundit concupiſcentiæ peſtilentiam; in riſum aliquando diſſolvitur; nunc blanditias exhibet; et, quod eſt venenoſius ſuper cuncta, pſallere delectatur aut cantare; cujus cantu tolerabilius eſt audire baſiliſcum ſibilantem.*"—Aug. in lib. de ſing. cleric. In another place he ſays, "*Mulier nec docere poteſt, nec teſtis eſſe, nec fidem dicere, nec judicare.*" Many, many are the ladies of the preſent day, who have afforded a moſt ſatisfactory refutation of theſe calumnies; and have ſhewn that they are able both to inſtruct and to delight to teach the pureſt morality to others; and to ſet the brighteſt examples of it themſelves. Nor can I believe, that if the modeſt Father could be again brought on earth to hear ſome of our Engliſh, and Scotch, and Iriſh ladies warbling their ſweeteſt notes, he would any more compare the harmonies of the fair creation to the venom of the aſp, or the hiſſing of the baſiliſk. The Fathers, in general, ſeem to have had no very favourable opinion of womankind. Jerom gives this auſtere, unſocial, and unnatural advice: "Hoſpitiolum tuum aut raro aut nunquam mulierum pedes terant; omnes puellas aut virgines Chriſti aut, æqualiter, ignora aut æqualiter dilige. *Vide, ne ſub eodem tecto, manſeris.*" Hier. in Epiſt. ad Nepot. Chryſoſtom on the beheading of John the Baptiſt, calls woman *a conſummate miſchief; and the ſharpeſt weapon in the Devil's armoury!!!*

powers, as thoſe of reaſon and the moral ſenſe, which are neceſſary to him as a moral agent, accountable for his actions; he poſſeſſes the power of diſcerning good from evil, and of chooſing between them; and on the right uſe of theſe powers, much of his preſent and all his future happineſs depends. If he prudently exerciſe and carefully improve theſe ſalutary faculties of his nature, he doeth good; if he miſapply them, he doeth evil. If he do good, he continueth in favour with God; if he do evil, he falls, as Adam fell, under his diſpleaſure.

19. Our ſtate of trial, at preſent, ſeems more difficult than that of Adam in paradiſe. He had only one temptation to reſiſt and one precept to obey; but a thouſand temptations are every where ſpread around us; which ever way we turn, it requires vigilance to eſcape a ſnare; and our duties, inſtead of being limited to the obſervance of a ſingle precept, embrace a multiplicity of important obligations.

20. Our ſphere of moral agency is wider and more extended than that of Adam. We expoſe, as it were, a broader ſurface to the influence of temptation; the obedience required at our hands ſuppoſes the ſubjection of the will, and the conformity of the conduct to a variety of injunctions; and in the circumſtances in which we are placed, it requires vigorous reſolution not to do amiſs. It requires a ſenſe of duty, not momentary, but permanent; it demands

unwearied labour, and unceasing vigilance. It may easily be conceived how we, who are placed in circumstances more difficult than those in which our first parents were placed, should be frequently overcome by temptation, and yield to sin, without having recourse to the imputation of Adam's unrigteousness to his posterity, or to the pernicious notion that our actual transgressions are the fruits of an hereditary depravity.

21. That no principle of moral corruption was infused into the nature of man after the fall, and that no irresistible bias to moral evil was impressed on the human will, we are taught by the sentence of condemnation which was passed on our first parents; in which we do not perceive, that the Lord took from man the power of discerning between good and evil, or making a free choice between them; and certainly this part of the sentence, which would have constituted the most grievous part of the punishment, would not have been passed over in silence if it had been inflicted.

22. The whole of the punishment which Adam suffered, and in which his posterity are involved, was an expulsion from paradise; an exposure to bodily toil and misery, and a dissolution into the dust from which he was taken. Adam being deprived of paradise could not leave it as an inheritance to his posterity, any more than, in common life, a parent can

tranſmit to his children the patrimony which he has waſted by his extravagance. The ſentence paſſed on Adam, *though certainly a puniſhment on him who had offended*, appears to have been rather a diſpenſation of mercy to, than an infliction of revenge upon, his innocent poſterity. It placed them in a ſtate of diſcipline, more ſevere indeed, but, at the ſame time, more favourable to their improvement. The ſhortneſs of this preſent life carries our hopes to another; the frequent ſpectacle of mortality in all around us checks the extravagance of pride, and moderates the intemperance of mirth; while the many afflictions and cares with which life is ſtrewed, tend to ſoften the heart, and to teach us to ſhew kindneſs to others by the want of it ourſelves. Moral improvement is greatly accelerated by ſuffering; it ſobers the thoughts; it exalts, it purifies, and, in ſome meaſure, ſanctifies the affections.

23. The eaſe which Adam enjoyed was not ſo genial to the growth of habits of obedience to the divine will, as the more arduous ſtate of probation, to which we are born; for Eve appears to have yielded to a temptation which many of her fair and amiable deſcendants would now combat with ſucceſs; and Adam complied with the wiſhes of his partner with more facility than ſome of his children would comply with the guilty wiſhes of the woman they moſt love.

24. As far, therefore, as I am competent to judge,

from a ſerious inveſtigation of the queſtion, it appears to me, that the moral ſtate of man, as he comes from the womb, is, at leaſt, *not worſe than it was originally*; for moral improvement is proportioned to the ſtrength with which we can combat, and the ſucceſs with which we can conquer temptation. But the power of reſiſting temptation was certainly not more inherently poſſeſſed, or more vigorouſly exerted, by our firſt parents, than it has been by their lateſt deſcendants. The ſtate of moral diſcipline in which man is at preſent placed, and particularly in thoſe countries which are acquainted with the revelation of Jeſus, ſeems, in a high degree, favourable to his progreſs in moral obedience and true holineſs. Have we not, therefore, good reaſon to conclude, that man is born at preſent, as he was created at the beginning, a being accountable for his actions, endued with a faculty to diſcern good from evil, and capable of regulating his conduct by its deciſions; that the fall did not impreſs on the will a bias to depravity; but placed man in a ſtate of diſcipline, in which ſuffering is nicely accommodated to the perfectioning of his nature; in which he has more temptations to combat, and more difficulties to ſurmount; but where temptations vanquiſhed, and difficulties overcome, will be found eminently to contribute to his improvement in righteouſneſs?

25. If it be aſſerted, as it may with truth be aſſerted, that, by the tranſgreſſion of Adam, his poſ-

terity became *liable* to ſin; it muſt, at the ſame time, be remembered *that Adam himſelf was made liable to ſin; or he would not have ſinned*; and, *as far as he was the firſt ſinner*, he may be truly ſaid to have brought ſin into the world. We are all born as Adam was created, *liable* to ſin; but *there is a very great difference between the being born* LIABLE *to ſin, and the being born ſinners, depraved to the very core, obnoxious to the divine wrath, and doomed to eternal perdition* WITHOUT ANY PERSONAL ACT OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

26. The great difference between the natural ſtate and privileges of Adam and of his deſcendants, is this; that Adam was made capable of happineſs and immortality on certain conditions, *without even a temporary extinction, or ſuſpenſion of life*; but, at preſent, man is born to trouble; and the grave is placed before him as a neceſſary paſſage to an endleſs life. Man became ſubject to death by Adam's fall; and, therefore, many die almoſt as ſoon as they are born: and more before they are capable of diſcerning good from evil; and, conſequently, before their hearts can be imbued with guilt; *for it is nothing but the taint of actual perſonal guilt, that cauſes us to forfeit the love, or to incur the wrath of God, and to loſe the impreſs of his image on our ſouls.*

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH,

Speculative and practical, philoſophical, theological and moral.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

1. FAITH is an aſſent of the mind to the truth of any propoſition. Of this aſſent, there are various degrees: from that conviction which is produced by actual certainty, to that which reſts only on ſome faint and diſtant probability. Of the truth of thoſe things which are within the cognizance of the ſenſes, the conviction is firm and undoubting. There are, likewiſe, many truths which are capable of actual demonſtration, or of which the reality may be made ſo palpable to our perceptions, that we can no more refuſe our aſſent to them, than we can to the truth of our own exiſtence. Of this kind, are thoſe truths which are called mathematical; and of which, when the terms

are underſtood, and the ſeveral propoſitions from which they reſult are clearly and perſpicuouſly explained, and, as it were, brought home to the underſtanding, the belief amounts to certainty.

2. No one who rightly underſtands the meaning of the terms, can doubt that two and two make four. Our aſſent, therefore, to the truth of this propoſition, that two and two make four, is firm and immoveable. It is a certainty which excludes doubt. There are other propoſitions of which the evidence is not ſo clear and concluſive; and to which the aſſent that we yield is not of ſo fixed and unchangeable a nature. It does not exclude doubt, or riſe up to certainty. Many of the truths, which are the objects of our aſſent, and the grounds of our practice in common life, are of this deſcription: they are not capable of actual demonſtration; their reality cannot be rendered ſo palpable to the ſenſes as to produce that conviction of the mind which may be denominated actual certainty. They are the reſult of many probabilities, which amount to what may be called *moral* certainty; a certainty not like that which ariſes from mathematical proof, but which is ſuited to a rational nature; and ſufficient both to convince the mind and to influence the conduct.

3. In the autumn or in the ſpring we bury the ſeed in the earth, in order that it may produce a harveſt in the ſummer; but that the one will be followed by

the other, is not an actual or a mathematical, but only a moral certainty. At the time in which we ſow the ſeed, we cannot demonſtrate the reality of the future harveſt; we cannot bring it before our eyes, or make it palpable to our ſenſes. All the grain that is ſown may periſh in the earth; it may be deſtroyed by inſects, or nipped by blights; waſted by too much rain, or withered by too much ſunſhine. But, from the obſervations and deductions of many years paſt, the connexion between ſeed time and harveſt is rendered, as it were, inſeparable in our minds; and we commit the grain to the boſom of the earth, under almoſt as ſtrong a conviction that it will take root downwards and bear fruit upwards, as if, at the time of ſowing, we ſaw it waving over the fields in the fulneſs of its beauty and the maturity of its ſtrength.

4. When we adopt any plan of conduct that has a relation to the future, when we engage in any exertions that have a reference to ſome diſtant advantage, when we embark in any ſpeculation that requires ſome ſacrifices of a preſent, and a certain, for a great probable, but uncertain, intereſt, that conviction of the mind which induces us to adopt this conduct, or to engage in theſe meaſures, cannot amount to an actual, though it may to a rational and moral certainty of ſucceſs. It may be the reſult of accumulated probabilities, to which it would be unreaſonable not to aſſent; and on which it would be

unwiſe not to act. In the moſt intereſting ſcenes, and the moſt important undertakings of our lives, we are often contented to act on evidence, which is very far removed from certainty; and, from the expectation of events of which the iſſue cannot be known or the reality aſcertained.

5. Belief may, generally, be conſidered as of two kinds; that which is an actual, and that which is a moral certainty; that which depends on reaſons, which amount to a demonſtrative proof; and that which reſts on thoſe which are only the calculations of probability. When many probabilities are accumulated in favour of any truth, when they are ſo numerous as greatly to exceed the probabilities in favour of a contrary ſuppoſition, they amount to what may be termed a moral certainty; and which, though it do not exclude every particle of doubt, affords a juſt claim to aſſent and a right principle of action.

6. The truth of revelation is not a demonſtrative but a moral certainty; a certainty ariſing from probabilities; to which no probabilities of a contrary tendency and an equal weight can be oppoſed. Any ſober and reaſonable man, who ſhould fairly and impartially examine the different degrees of credit that are due to theſe two queſtions, *whether the Chriſtian revelation be true or falſe*, will find ſo many arguments in ſupport of the former, and ſo very ſuperior, both in number and in weight, to any that can be

brought to countenance the latter, that he will, even after the closeſt compariſon, and the minuteſt inquiry, aſſent to the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and confide in the reality of the Chriſtian miracles.

7. Faith, therefore, in the divine authority of the Chriſtian religion, is an aſſent to a truth that is *highly probable*; ſo probable as to be morally certain. The truth of revelation is not a mathematical problem, of which we can demonſtrate the certainty, or make its truth palpable to the ſenſes. It is an hiſtorical fact; of which the truth or the falſehood muſt be determined by the weight of evidence.

8. Revelation is a record of facts, which took place in Judea about eighteen centuries ago; and on the truth and reality of theſe facts depends the truth of the doctrines which they were intended to eſtabliſh. If the miracles which are related in the goſpels be fictions, then the whole ſyſtem is a fiction. If Jeſus did not riſe from the dead, then the doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, which is grounded on that event, is nothing better than a viſion of the night. Then our faith is vain, and our hope vain. Now the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead is not an object of ſenſe; nor can the fact be made viſible to the eye, nor palpable to the touch. We cannot, like Thomas, ſatisfy our doubts by ſeeing the print of the nails in his hands, nor the mark of the ſpear in his ſide; but, nevertheleſs, though the actual truth

of the reſurrection is not a mathematical certainty, nor a ſelf-evident propoſition; though our faith cannot be, like that of the eye-witneſſes of the fact, a ſenſation which forces conviction on the mind, and excludes every doubt from the heart, yet the fact itſelf was ſo well atteſted at the time, and the teſtimony was ſo ſtrong and ſo conſiſtent, and delivered and maintained under ſuch diſcouraging circumſtances, and has been tranſmitted to us with ſo little alteration, that the reality of the miracle itſelf is a moral certainty; to which it is unreaſonable not to aſſent, and on which it is highly imprudent and perilous not to act. For the probabilities in favour of the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead, and, conſequently, in favour of a future life, are ſo much ſtronger than any probabilities which the genius of man can adduce to ſupport the contrary, that not to believe a fact, of which the evidence is ſo clear and convincing, and not diligently to ſeek to obtain that intereſt of which it demonſtrates the reality, would be called a folly, approaching to madneſs, in the ordinary concerns of life.

9. When, indeed, we poſſeſs ſuch an accumulation of probabilities, amounting to a ſatisfactory proof of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, it ſeems as unwiſe and as unſafe not to regulate our preſent life with a view to a future, not to lay up a treaſure of good works here, in order to promote our happineſs hereafter, as it would be not to ſow the earth in

autumn, that we may reap in ſummer. The probabilities in favour of this propoſition, that *our preſent life is relative to a future*, are as convincing, as they are in ſupport of this more familiar truth—that ſeed time is preparatory to harveſt.—In our worldly concerns, we often act as if ſome future, but diſtant intereſt, at which we aim, were preſent to us; we do not regard the uncertainties that may interpoſe between the day before us and the year to come, when the chances of attaining the object of our wiſhes are greater than thoſe of their being fruſtrated. In endeavouring to attain that happineſs which faith propoſes as the end of our labours, we are not to be diſcouraged by any intermediate obſtacles; or to ſuffer doubts, ariſing from the circumſtances in which we are placed, to undermine our conviction, and to ſubvert our hopes. We ſhould remember, that our faith in revelation is an aſſent, not to what is a mathematical, but a moral certainty; that it is a truſt in the truth of facts, which are ſupported by highly credible teſtimony; that it relates to an intereſt which is not ſeen, but hoped for; and of which the reality is evinced by probabilities, ſufficient to work conviction in the minds of beings endued with a power of inquiry and a freedom of choice; with reaſon to inveſtigate what is true, and with liberty to conform to what is reaſonable.

10. When men violate their duty, they cannot be impreſſed with a juſt ſenſe of its importance or have

right notions of the good associated with it; for all men are governed by their interest; and where there is a just sense of the importance of religious obedience, there holiness will be, in some measure, identified with self-interest; for it will then be perceived, that a greater interest is connected with the observance of our duty than with the breach of it. A strong sense of duty will always be blended with a strong persuasion of the interest depending on its practice. If men act, as all reasonable men will do, from comparisons of good, and calculations of interest, then the practice of religious duty will always be found greatly to exceed the commission of sin in interest and advantage.

11. The truth of revelation is not so certain as not to admit of doubt; but the probabilities in favour of its reality are so numerous, and so greatly exceed the probabilities in favour of the contrary, that every man would be esteemed guilty of an imprudence approaching to insanity, who, on any common occasion, would not acknowledge a truth so plain, or act on evidence so convincing. When a merchant sends out a ship on a distant voyage, he compares the probable advantages that will accrue from it, with those which he might derive from sending the same ship on a voyage nearer home; but if the chances of success greatly outweigh, in his mind, the chances of failure; if the probabilities of an eventual loss are considerably less than those of an eventual gain, he

will ſubmit, like a wiſe and prudent man, to be governed by the fair calculations of intereſt, and concluſions of probability.

12. Where the hope of advantage is ſtronger than the fear of loſs, the latter, though it may, in ſome degree, affect the ſenſations, will not alter the conduct. The merchant who ſends out his ſhips on dangerous ventures to remote and unfrequented ſhores, where they may be daſhed on the rocks, or ſwallowed up in the waves, acts all the while on reaſonable probabilities; which cauſe him to deſpiſe uncertainties, and to *truſt to the future*. In the commoneſt concerns in the every-day affairs of life, men are continually truſting to contingencies, and ſpeculating on uncertainty; and yet the ſame conduct, which is thought reaſonable in common life, is often thought unreaſonable in religious conduct. Religion points, it is true, to a diſtant intereſt; and as it is not within the cognizance of any of our ſenſes, it is uncertain. But if its reality be *highly probable*, it is unwiſe not to regulate the conduct by the evidence.

13. Religion is as a voyage which we are deſired to make, in order to obtain an intereſt which exceeds calculation, and to which no preſent intereſt in the world can bear any compariſon. It is, indeed, a voyage to eternity; a voyage in which much ſelf-denial is to be practiſed, and our unruly appetites to be moderated; and moſt men prefer a voyage nearer

home, where ſenſual pleaſures may be more laviſhly enjoyed; and in which fewer ſacrifices are required. But this is the great and awful conſideration: *Is not the good which religion promiſes to the righteous, greater than that which any pleaſures in this life can afford to the ſinner?* None can deny the magnitude of religious intereſt; yet, *as it is uncertain, people flatter themſelves that it may be an illuſion.* But whether the intereſt may not *poſſibly* be an illuſion, is not what we ought to conſider; but whether it be not probable, and in what degree probable, and if it be probable only in a moderate degree, ſtill the intereſt is ſo vaſt as to make that moderate degree of probability deſerve the attention of every ſerious man; and much more will it be found to deſerve attention when reaſon ſhows us, that the intereſt which revelation has unfolded is, in a high degree, probable, ſo probable as if not to preclude doubt, to ſatisfy the inquiſitive, and aſtoniſh the profound.

14. In matters of religious faith, a certain degree of doubt cannot be avoided*. As the human mind

* Hooker ſays, "we have leſs certainty concerning things believed, than concerning ſenſible or naturally perceived. Of theſe who doth doubt at any time? *Of them, at ſome time, who doubteth not?* I will not here allege the ſundry confeſſions of the perfecteſt that have lived upon earth concerning *their great imperfections in this way*; which if I did, I ſhould dwell upon *a matter ſufficiently known by every faithful man that doth know himſelf.*" Hooker's Works, ed. Ox. 1793, vol. iii. p. 523.

is conſtituted, and in the circumſtances in which we are placed, ſome degree of doubt is neceſſary *as a*

After this quotation from Hooker, I cannot help remarking, that this great divine appears to have believed in what he ſomewhere calls the "foggy damp of original corruption," which he ſeems to have ſuppoſed ſpread over all our faculties; but of which little was ſhed upon his own. It was not a damp that chilled the growth of virtue in his heart, or that clouded the luſtre of his intellectual ſight. Had I not long ago, when only a beardleſs boy, adopted the principle of "nullius addictus," &c. I might have fallen down in diſmay, or have bent in paſſive humiliation before the coloſſal authority of Hooker. I might have declined the combat with his mighty genius as Paris retired at the approach of Menelaus. Ἂψ τ' ανεχωρησεν, ὦχρος τέ μιν ἑιλε παρειας. But, even if the queſtion of original corruption were to be decided by authority, I might certainly, without any derogation from the merit of Hooker, oppoſe to his deciſions the great theological reputation of Jeremy Taylor, who was by no means inferior to Hooker in vigour of intellect, in depth of erudition, or in richneſs of fancy. Jeremy Taylor, the firſt Engliſh divine of the eſtabliſhed Church with whoſe writings I am acquainted, that *openly oppoſed the doctrine of the ninth article*, ſays, that "*it is ſo far from being true, that man after his fall did not forfeit his natural power of election, that* IT SEEMS RATHER TO BE INCREASED. For as a man's knowledge grows, ſo his will becomes better attended and miniſtered unto. But after his fall his knowledge was more than before; he knew what nakedneſs was, and had experience of the difference of things; he perceived the evil of diſobedience and the divine anger; he knew fear and flight, new apprehenſions, and the trouble of a guilty conſcience: by all which and many other things HE GREW BETTER ABLE, AND INSTRUCTED WITH ARGUMENTS, TO OBEY GOD, AND TO REFUSE SIN FOR THE TIME TO COME. And it is every man's caſe; a repenting man

ſpecies of trial. If religion did not admit doubt, the mind would not be *active in believing:* faith would not be, in any degree, an operation of the underſtanding; nor would it be different in different individuals.

15. In order *to exerciſe the reaſon,* religious evidence was wiſely made an aggregate of many probabilities, each of which deſerves ſome conſideration; and to each of which different individuals may give different degrees of credit. Some will prefer the hiſtorical, ſome the prophetic, ſome the internal, ſome the external evidence; but the conviction of all will generally be found to reſt more on the aggregate of evidence, than on the individual force of any par-

is wiſer, and hath oftentimes more perfect hatred of ſin than the innocent; and is made more wary by his fall." Taylor's Practice of Repentance, ed. 1655, p. 419.

"Men," ſays Taylor, "ſometimes by *evil habits* and by chooſing vile things for a long time together, make it morally impoſſible to chooſe and to love that good in particular which is contrary to their *evil cuſtoms. Cuſtom is the devil that brings in new natures upon us; for nature is innocent in this particular.* Nulli nos vitio natura conciliat: nos illa integros ac liberos genuit (Senec. ep. 94). Nature does not engage us upon a vice. She made us intire; *ſhe made us free; but we make ourſelves priſoners and ſlaves by vicious habits,* or as St. Cyril (Catech. 9). expreſſes it ἐλθοντες αναμαρτητοι νυν εκ προαιρεσεως αμαρτανομεν. We came into the world without ſin, but now we ſin by choice, and by election bring a kind of neceſſity upon us. But this is not ſo in all men; and ſcarcely in any man in all inſtances." Taylor's Practice of Repentance, p. 421, 422.

ticular part; more on the accumulated probabilities, than *on any single probability*.

16. The degree of assent which different individuals give to the truth will vary according to the degree of understanding, the power of inquiry, the exercise of research, &c.; and the highest degree of assent will be that in which the persuasion of the truth approaches the nearest to that state of mind which is produced, not by the evidence of probability, but by that of certainty; not so much by the deductions of reason, as the demonstration of sense. But though religious belief may approach very near to the conviction of certainty, yet it will never be found entirely to reach it. The most sincere believers are subject to moments of distrust; the most righteous to emotions of despondency. True faith will, indeed, often make the *future*, as it were *present*; but there will be often other intervals, when clouds and darkness will rest upon it; when the apprehensions of uncertainty will steal into the mind and sadden the heart. Some degree of doubt will, therefore, in spite of all our endeavours to the contrary, be occasionally mingled with the reality of our faith. Like shadows thrown across our path, they will cast a gloom around us, and perplex and bewilder our way.

17. But though religious distrust will sometimes arise in the mind, *it is always to be resisted*. He who cherishes doubts is weak and unsettled in the faith;

as he who cavils at the infirmities of humanity is uſually wanting in love to mankind. To foſter doubts inſtead of checking their growth, oppoſing their admiſſion, and counteracting their malignity, is to give them an undue influence, and to incline to ſcepticiſm. A good and ſober-minded man will, indeed, maturely weigh every *reaſonable objection* to the truth; but he will always feel a ſtronger diſpoſition to embrace the good than the evil; to ſpread his heart open to the arguments for belief, rather than to give admiſſion to the perſuaſions of infidelity.

18. As the truth of revelation is not a matter of certainty, but only of probability, his faith is genuine whoſe conviction of the truth is much ſtronger than his diſtruſt; and the more the former ſentiment prevails, or the more conviction precludes doubt, the more will the practice of the life correſpond with the concluſions of the reaſon, and the perſuaſions of the heart. The leſs doubt of The Truth that there is in the mind, the greater will be the certainty of that reward which it promiſes, and the ſtronger the endeavour to obtain it. The more doubts gather round the mind and preſs upon the heart, to the greater diſtance will the intereſt of religion recede into futurity, and the more problematical it will ſeem; but the more that doubts vaniſh from the imagination and the leſs they trouble the affections, the nearer will the intereſt approach; till it comes, as it were, almoſt within the edge of the ſight, and the graſp of

the touch. Thus faith, in a meaſure, makes the future preſent, and operates on the conduct, in proportion to its ſtrength.

19. As faith increaſes, goodneſs muſt increaſe; but as faith grows feeble, righteouſneſs will decay. For the more lively faith is, the ſtronger will be the aſſurance of that eternal intereſt to which faith directs our attention; with which it ſtrives to animate our hopes and inflame our affections. And the more mindful people are of the intereſts of eternity, the leſs they muſt live for thoſe of time; for the intereſts of eternity, when beheld by the eye of faith, will ſwallow up thoſe of time. The two intereſts will bear no compariſon; and as far as man is governed in his conduct by reaſonable calculations of intereſt, ſo far the faithful will make the goſpel a rule of life; becauſe it will be the teſt of their good and the ſtandard of their happineſs.

20. Almoſt every man has a certain ſtandard of intereſt in his own mind to which he conforms, and by which he, for the moſt part, regulates his actions; and happy, thrice happy, is that man, the ſtandard of whoſe intereſt and the baſis of whoſe happineſs is *obedience to the revealed will of God**. All men are

* A man may, *perhaps*, have a ſtrong conviction of the truth of revealed religion, and, in his way through life, may have his

governed by a ſenſe of intereſt, and, perhaps, none more than he *who entertains a proper ſenſe of the intereſt which is connected with the duties of religion*; for, *that intereſt is the greateſt in degree, the pureſt in kind, and the longeſt in duration.* It exceeds every other intereſt in quantity, in quality, in intention of degree, and extenſion of time. Other intereſts are often at variance with a ſenſe of duty; and cannot be obtained without its violation. But religious intereſt and a ſenſe of duty are never at variance. They are indeed one and indiviſible; and he who has a juſt impreſſive ſenſe of his religious intereſt, will have accurate, juſt, and upright notions of every other intereſt. He will know and feel that he can have no intereſt diſtinct from the obligations of morality.

21. The diſtance at which our religious intereſt is placed does not diminiſh its magnitude, though it may leſſen its credibility. Diſtance does not really leſſen the ſize of an object, though it makes it appear leſs to the eye. It does not deſtroy its reality, or alter its proportions, it only alters its relations to us in point of ſpace, and our relations to it in reſpect to the capacity of apprehending it. The intereſt of

heart conſtantly and warmly affected with a ſenſe of his eternal intereſt; and yet, *owing to ſome perverſe and unſound notions of juſtification, or ſome miſtake about the conditions of ſalvation, this conviction may not have a proper influence on his conduct.*

eternity, too vaſt for our conceptions in our preſent, finite, imperfect ſtate, was wiſely made remote; that its proportions might, in ſome meaſure, be ſuited to our capacity, and accommodated to our ſituation. Beholding it only at a diſtance, it is but as a ſparkling ſtar; to which if we could approach nearer, its magnitude would appal our ſenſes. To behold, in its natural ſize and its exact proportions, the vaſt intereſt which religion promiſes to the righteous, our faculties muſt be changed; our ſenſes made more vigorous; this corruptible muſt put on incorruption; and this mortal immortality.

22. Were the truth of revealed religion a matter of demonſtrative certainty, and the reward connected with obedience to its laws brought within the ſphere of our viſion, its brightneſs would be too ſtrong for our ſight. It would, likewiſe, be deſtructive of a ſtate of moral probation. Men's motives would all incline one way; and a bias would be laid on the will too ſtrong to be counteracted. But the wiſdom of the Almighthy (thank the Lord, oh my ſoul! thank the Lord for all his goodneſs!) appears, in his having ſo arranged the evidences of revelation, as to make faith a matter of choice rather than of neceſſity; and in having caſt juſt ſo much obſcurity about the reality of the intereſt, as is fitted to leave it in that ſtate of doubtful light which does not dazzle the eye, nor put an end to that probationary ſtate in which

divine wiſdom has placed us here; and which would be probationary no longer, if the affections were more biaſſed or the will more enſlaved; if it were not left to our unconſtrained choice, either to embrace or to reject the truth of Chriſtianity.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH.

PART II.

1. THAT doctrine of faith which the Fanatics are in general so loud to proclaim, and so eager to defend, is a shameless calumny on the credibility of revelation, and the rational powers of man. They represent faith as the immediate gift of God; a miraculous infusion poured into the soul without the consent of the will. They ascribe it to a power, superseding the necessity of instruction, and the use of inquiry.

2. That faith is the gift of God, no sober Christian will deny; but then it is no more the *miraculous* gift of God, than any other part of knowledge. If God give us the faculty to acquire any thing, he never interferes * to supersede its exercise, or to give us the benefit without that exertion on which he made it

* Except on very extraordinary occasions, and for very special purposes indeed.

dependant. God has given us faculties to calculate the revolutions of the planets, and to meaſure the diameter of the earth; but the poſſeſſion of ſuch knowledge is always poſterior to and dependant on the exertion of the power. The Almighty does not infuſe into the mind of man, either aſtronomical, mathematical, or any other kind of knowledge; but he gives the capacity to obtain it; and the poſſeſſion is the conſequence of intellectual application.

3. It is God who gives us the bread which we eat; but then, becauſe this is true, who ever imagined, that bread was not the product of human induſtry? Though it be a ſelf-evident truth, that God gives us not the bread which periſhes, without much previous labour and toil, yet, in ſpite of this glaring analogy, the Fanatics aſſert, that He gives us the better bread which endureth unto everlaſting life, without any perſonal endeavours to obtain it; that he infuſes it into our ſouls, whether we labour for it with diligence, or croſs our arms in idleneſs.

4. Theſe notions ſuppoſe, that God has communicated a revelation to mankind, of which no man can diſcover the truth; for if man, by the right exerciſe of his reaſon, can diſcover the truth of revelation, why ſhould God make faith independent of its exerciſe*?

* If Chriſtianity be ſupported by ſufficient evidence, nothing more can be wanting, on the part of man, to attain a reaſonable

Thus the Fanatics entirely invalidate the uſe of reaſon in matters of religious opinion.

5. If faith be, according to the fanciful notions of the Fanatics, a miraculous infuſion, our belief is not a matter of choice; and, then, with what juſtice can we be called to account for not believing? If religious belief be independent on the conſent of the will and the exerciſe of the reaſon, then certainly, with reſpect to the morality of faith, the believer can prefer no ſtronger claim to the divine favour, than the infidel. The believer being acted upon by a power under whoſe influence the will is paſſive and the reaſon dumb, *cannot help believing*; and the infidel not enjoying the ſame arbitrary intervention of a miracle, *cannot help not believing*.

conviction of its truth, than a ſober examination of the evidence which ſupports it. The evidence by which Chriſtianity gained its firſt footing in the world was that of miracles. To theſe miracles Jeſus of Nazareth appealed as the ſtrongeſt proofs of his commiſſion to declare the will of God to mankind. If theſe miracles were matters of fact, and if the accounts of them, which have been tranſmitted to us, be genuine and authentic, which I ſee no reaſon to diſbelieve, then, why ſhould faith in revelation be a miraculous infuſion? If God wrought miracles at firſt to confirm the teſtimony, why ſhould he ſtill be obliged to work other miracles on the mind of every individual to make it credited? This would be to ſuperſede the neceſſity, or to deny the authenticity of the firſt miracles; for, if they be authentic, they are credible; and if credible, they will produce belief, if their truth be rationally inveſtigated.

6. But the Fanatics found their notions of faith, as they do their other tenets, on that rotten and crumbling pillar of their theology, the innate depravity of man. Did, indeed, man iſſue from the womb, as they pretend, a maſs of moral putrefaction, with his heart ulcerated with guilt, and his mind darkened with prejudice, he would, certainly, want capacity to diſcover, and honeſty to confeſs the truth. He would not be able to comprehend the plaineſt propoſition in morals or religion. A man born blind might as eaſily form juſt and accurate ideas of the nature and properties of light, as a man born radically corrupt, and irreſiſtibly propelled, by the bias of his nature, to the commiſſion of iniquity, could form of the nature and tendencies of moral obligation. No man could have a taſte of what is ſweet if God had ſo organiſed his palate that he could taſte nothing but what was ſour; and, in the ſame manner, no man could acquire a reliſh for virtue, if the Creator had made him phyſically ravenous of vice.

7. How contrary is this doctrine of the Fanatics to the doctrine of Chriſt, which tells us *to ſearch the ſcriptures?* to inveſtigate the matter of belief; and which, in order to ſtimulate our capacity to do good, tells us, that he *who doeth the will of God*, ſhall *know of the truth whether it be of God.* God ſeems to have made a belief in the Chriſtian revelation dependant on the right application of the reaſon and the conſcience. If we will examine the evidence without

any beam of prejudice obſtructing the ſight of the mind, or any ſinful luſt reigning in the heart, the light is too clear not to be ſeen; and the doctrine too pure not to be acknowledged as divine.

8. Many of the errors which are uſually entertained on the doctrine of faith * ſeem to originate in the miſtake, or the perverſion of the term, which

* Faith lays the foundation of our juſtification. Juſtification in ſcripture means, for the moſt part, an admiſſion into covenant with God. As the Chriſtian covenant ſtipulates certain privileges to be conferred and certain benefits to be granted on the part of God, it requires certain conditions to be performed on the part of man; and we muſt ſincerely believe the former, before we can earneſtly ſet about the performance of the latter. As the conditions which the new covenant impoſes on man require great ſelf-denial, and many things diſagreeable to fleſh and blood, *faith is neceſſary to ſtimulate our exertions, to elevate our hopes, and to purify our hearts. In this ſenſe, faith is the only cauſe of our juſtification*; *or it is the only condition of admiſſion into covenant with God.* But though faith juſtifies, it does not, of itſelf, make us righteous; though it initiates us into covenant with God, it does not make us partakers of its privileges or its benefits, without the performance of the conditions to which thoſe privileges and benefits are appended. The performance of the conditions is an object of our choice; and faith, when it is ſincere and lively, will, neceſſarily, operate in favour of their performance. It will give a bias to the will in favour of moral good; and will *not* permit that φρονημα σαρκος, that ſpirit of ſenſuality which is planted in us, *in order to aſcertain our moral obedience,* to ſubjugate the reaſon, and to reduce us under the ſlavery of ſin.

has various ſignifications; the confuſion or the ignorance of which has cauſed many diſſenſions in the Chriſtian world, and contributed only to perplex thoſe who, without a critical knowledge of the language of ſcripture, have attempted to explain the doctrines of Chriſtianity. Ignorant people ſuppoſe the word *faith* to have only one particular and ſpecific ſignification, which they apply promiſcuouſly to every paſſage in which the word occurs. This is, in a more eſpecial manner, the practice of the hardy champions of Fanaticiſm, who transfer to the term faith, in whatever part of ſcripture it may be mentioned, a conſtruction ſuited to their own illiberal prejudices, and calculated to favour their groſs and wicked perverſion of the Chriſtian religion. That we may not be impoſed on by that ſenſeleſs jargon, which viſionaries and Fanatics, which the ſuperſtitious and the artful utter about *faith*, let us examine ſome of the principal ſignifications in which the word is uſed by the ſacred writers.

9. Sometimes the word *faith* is employed to ſignify the whole Chriſtian doctrine, which is an object of faith. Thus when St. Paul ſays, " by whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip for obedience to the *faith* among all nations for his name." Rom. i. 5. " He which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the *faith* which once he deſtroyed." Gal. i. 23. " Before *faith* came, we were kept under the law." Gal. iii. 23. " After that *faith* is come, we

are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter." Gal. iii. 25. "Nouriſhed up in the words of *faith*," &c. 1 Tim. iv. 6. "A great company of the prieſts were obedient to the *faith*." Acts, vi. 7. "(Felix) heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt." Acts, xxiv. 24.—In all theſe paſſages, to which many more might be added, the word *faith* is employed to repreſent the whole Chriſtian doctrine, which is propoſed for our belief. In one comprehenſive term, it includes the tenets of Chriſtianity that are neceſſary to be believed, and the duties that are neceſſary to be practiſed.

10. Sometimes *faith* is taken, generally, for any ſtrong perſuaſion of the mind, whether originating in a divine revelation, or produced by the force of argument; as in the paſſages which follow: "He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief, but was ſtrong in *faith*." Rom. iv. 20. "Haſt thou *faith?* have it to thyſelf before God." Rom. xiv. 22. "Without *faith* it is impoſſible to pleaſe him; for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is." Heb. xi. 6.—In theſe places faith denotes nothing more than a *ſincere perſuaſion* of a particular truth.

11. In other places, *faith* is uſed to ſignify ſimply *veracity* or *truth* which deſerves aſſent; and as oppoſed to falſehood which deſerves none. "Shall their unbelief make the *faith* (truth) of God without effect." Rom. iii. 3. "The fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs,

faith, meekneſs, temperance." Gal. v. 22, 23. In this laſt paſſage, *faith*, which is mentioned among the other virtues, of which the ſpirit, or the word of God, rightly underſtood, and diligently practiſed, is productive, evidently ſignifies veracity, or an inviolable adherence to *truth* in our words, our promiſes, in our dealings and intercourſe with each other. Hence, by the bye, we learn, that a *lying tongue* is incompatible with the gifts of the ſpirit; and that thoſe who make ſuch bold pretences to the poſſeſſion of thoſe gifts, lay claim to what they cannot poſſeſs, whenever falſehood is practiſed by their lips, or guile is cheriſhed in their hearts.

12. Faith is, occaſionally, taken for thoſe things which are revealed by God, but are inviſible to our perceptions. In this ſenſe "*faith* is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen." Heb. xi. 1.

13. Sometimes *faith* is put for a *ſimple and lifeleſs aſſent* to things which are not ſeen; as to theſe propoſitions,—that there is a God, that he made the world, &c. &c. Such a faith is characteriſtic of that of devils, and is often mentioned by St. James in the ſecond chapter of his epiſtle. "What doth it profit though a man ſay, he hath *faith* and have not works, can *faith* ſave him?" James, ii. 14. In this paſſage *faith* is uſed for a *barren and dead aſſent* to the truth of the Chriſtian religion; without the fruits of that

real goodneſs of heart and life which cannot be counterfeited; and without which *faith* is not ſaving. The word is uſed in this ſenſe in ſeveral other places in this chapter of St. James. "Faith without works is dead, being alone." "Thou believeſt that there is one God, thou doeſt well; the devils alſo believe and tremble; but know, oh vain man, that *faith* without works is dead." The apoſtle afterwards declares, that "by works a man is juſtified, and not by *faith* only." In theſe paſſages St. James uſes the word to denote a vain, a dead and fruitleſs, as oppoſed to a living, a *vigorous and practical conviction of the truth*; and it is highly neceſſary that we ſhould attend to this diſtinction, and, if poſſible, aſcertain the preciſe ſignification of the word in theſe days, *when ſo many ſtrange doctrines are broached about the nature of faith*; and when the ignorant and the credulous are toſſed about by the machinations of religious impoſtors on a ſea of errors. The apoſtle James affectionately and earneſtly conjured the Chriſtians of his time to remember that ſomething more than a bare outward profeſſion of the faith was eſſential to ſalvation; and that faith without works was as dead as a body deprived of the principle of life.

14. Sometimes *faith* is uſed to ſignify *truſt* in the divine promiſes; and in the recompenſe reſerved for the righteous; and, in this ſenſe, the word is repeatedly employed in the eleventh chapter of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, which contains an animated recom-

mendation of *this ſpecies of faith*; illuſtrated by examples, and remarkable for the warmth of its piety, and the ſtrength of its eloquence.

15. Few are the people among the ſcattered myriads of mankind who have not ſome glimmering and indefinite notions of God, as the reward of thoſe that diligently ſeek him (ſee Heb. xi. 6). A belief in a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments ſeems to conſtitute one of thoſe great objects of faith about which all men are agreed; a truth which the wiſe and the good, in all ages and nations, have concurred to inculcate; and which, indeed, is congenial with the univerſal expectations of the human race. The knowledge of this truth may have been, at firſt, communicated by revelation; but *a certain foreboding of the event ſeems naturally to originate from that ſtate of things in which we are placed*; and where the often apparently confuſed and fortuituous diſpenſations of good and evil, of pain and pleaſure, of ſuffering and enjoyment, lead the mind of man to look for a future life; in which theſe irregularities will be corrected, and theſe diſorders vaniſh; when the ſinner and the righteous will be recompenſed according to their works.

16. St. Paul inſinuates in the firſt chapter to the Romans, that the Heathen might, by the right application of their reaſon, have framed juſt notions of moral obligation and of the diſtinctions between vice

and virtue; that they might have obtained ſome wholeſome information about the being of a firſt cauſe and a moral governor of the world, by the light of nature and the ſtudy of his perfections, as they are manifeſted in the works of his creation. And the apoſtle informs us that the Heathen, by neglecting the right uſe of their natural faculties, had incurred the divine diſpleaſure, and were without excuſe. But let us hear St. Paul himſelf: "That," ſays he, "which may be known of God is manifeſt in them (the Heathen); for God hath ſhown it unto them; for *the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made*; *even his eternal power and Godhead*; ſo that they are without excuſe; becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations; and their fooliſh heart was darkened." Rom i 19—21. Hence we learn, on the authority of St. Paul, that the Heathen, by the right application of their reaſon, might have diſcovered the being of a God; and, *conſequently the knowledge of their duty*; for a right ſenſe of the being of a God, of his power and goodneſs, cannot exiſt in the mind without a concomitant ſenſe of our dependance upon him for all that we poſſeſs; and of our duty to give him thanks for all that we enjoy.

17. But the Heathen world, though they were capable of knowing God and of aſcertaining his being

and perfections, yet gave him not the glory that was due to him as the maker of the world. Neither offering him the incenſe of their praiſe, nor the tribute of their gratitude, they paid leſs homage to the eternal Creator than to the periſhable creature. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beaſts and creeping things. Hence, their underſtanding became darkened, *from not being properly applied*; their diſtinctions of right and wrong became confuſed; and their affections, devoted only to the pleaſures of this vain world, became corrupt. They were ſunk in idolatry and wickedneſs; ſlaves to the vanity of their minds and the luſts of their hearts.

18. God never left himſelf without witneſs in the world, even among thoſe nations to whom he never made known his will by a direct revelation. The great witneſs of the being of a God, and of his moral perfections, exiſts in the earth and the heavens; in the reaſon and the conſcience of man. The reaſon of man can hardly be called into action without diſcerning palpable traces of an inviſible Creator in the viſible creation. And the conſcience of man, ſo nicely ſenſible of the diſtinctions of right and wrong, ſo jealous, as it were, of preſerving in our hearts a juſt ſenſe of moral obligation, urging us to retain its laws in our minds, and to practiſe them in our lives, ſecretly imbuing our ſenſations with pleaſure when

we do good, and with anguiſh when we do evil, proves, *that he who made us is a lover of moral excellence, by planting ſo powerful an advocate for its authority and its practice in our hearts.*

19. Our nature has, originally, a bias to moral good, in preference to moral evil; and when the choice is offered to the will, reaſon when it is not darkened, and conſcience when it is not depraved, will always prefer virtue to vice, with as little heſitation as we prefer ſweet to bitter, pleaſure to pain, and happineſs to miſery. But the misfortune is, that inſtead of repreſſing and moderating our animal appetites and our ſenſual deſires, *we ſuffer them to grow rank and luxuriant, to ſtifle the conſcience, and impair the reaſon.* Then our fooliſh hearts become darkened; then we become the ſport of wayward luſts and unclean imaginations. Then we put good for evil, and evil for good; then we think righteouſneſs our bane and ſin our advantage.

20. This was the miſerable condition of the Heathen world with reſpect to the knowledge of God, and the practice of their duty; a condition to which they were reduced by the neglect or the abuſe of thoſe powers which God had given them to employ in the inveſtigation of his perfections, and in the practice of righteouſneſs. Though the Heathen had ſome perception of a ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and, conſequently, of the importance of virtue

and the intereſt which they had in being virtuous; and though the knowledge of theſe weighty truths was never *entirely* obliterated among them, yet *their belief in them was ſo faint that it had no influence on their lives.*

21. In order to ſupply the defects of natural reaſon, and to give undeniable proof of the moral government of the world; to awaken the dormant attention of mankind to a right ſenſe of their greateſt intereſt, to diſpel the clouds of ſuperſtition, and to aboliſh thoſe impoſtures which men in all ages have been too prone too practiſe under the name of religion, the Almighty has, at ſeveral times, interpoſed in a more viſible and palpable manner, to declare himſelf the maker of all things, and *the only object of human adoration.*

22. Theſe revelations of the Deity were, at firſt, partial or excluſive; made to particular perſons, or confined to particular nations; but were all intended to pave the way for the miraculous appearance of Chriſt Jeſus, who was ſent to manifeſt his will to all mankind; and to *publiſh a religion ſuited to the wants and capacities of every people under heaven.*

23. In the beginning, God ſhewed himſelf as the maker of the world, and the father of mankind, as the lover of thoſe that do good, and an avenger of thoſe that do evil. In the interval between the fall and the deluge, God ſeems more than once to have

manifeſted himſelf to his creatures. After the deluge, the Lord appeared unto Abraham, deſiring him to forſake his kindred and his father's houſe, and to ſettle in a land in which he was a ſtranger; under an aſſurance, that it ſhould, at ſome future period, belong to his poſterity; and that, in the courſe of time, the whole world ſhould be bleſſed in the perſon of one of his offspring. The faith of Abraham which, on this occaſion, was counted to him for righteouſneſs, was an *unſhaken truſt in the promiſes of God*, PRODUCING A WILLING OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS.

24. We next read of the great Maker of the world appearing under the partial name of the God of Iſrael; and we behold him interpoſing with a mighty hand, and a ſtretched-out arm to reſcue the deſcendants of the favoured patriarch from the oppreſſion of the Egyptians. God, afterwards, choſe Moſes as the ſpecial inſtrument of his providence and the meſſenger of his will. By him, he entered into a covenant with the Iſraelites; at the ſame time enacting ſome laws, which were to have a perpetual, and publiſhing others which were to have only a temporary exiſtence. The former are limited to thoſe moral obligations whoſe truth and uſefulneſs are ſupported by the univerſal conſent and approbation of the world; and one tittle of whoſe importance will never paſs away; which find a protection, ſtrong as adamant, in the principles of reaſon and in the

common ſympathies of humanity. The ceremonial laws of the Moſaic diſpenſation were intended merely to preſerve unbroken the barrier between Jew and Gentile, till the coming of him who was to break down the wall of partition between them; and to teach that God is no reſpecter of perſons; but that *he regardeth every man who worketh righteouſneſs in all the nations of the earth.*

25. In each of the partial revelations which preceded the Chriſtian, the Almighty exhibited many ſigns of his love for his creatures; and gave ſome obſcure preſage of that glorious plan which he had formed for reconciling the world unto himſelf, in the perſon of his ſon, in whom he was well pleaſed. In the Moſaic law the great ſcheme of redemption was obſcurely inſinuated, rather than diſtinctly pourtrayed in types and figures, in the ſacrifices of the altar, and the atonements of the prieſt. The Redeemer was, indeed, ſeen through the rites of the Moſaic diſpenſation, as through a veil or a glaſs, darkly. They were like the cloud that covered the tabernacle; through which the eye could not penetrate; and which inſpired ſenſations of awe without exciting any lively perceptions of form and character.

26. The prophets who lived after the Moſaic diſpenſation, particularly Iſaiah, expreſsly foretold a Redeemer to Iſrael; but the mode of redemption was left involved in obſcurity and uncertainty; till in

the fulneſs of time Chriſt came manifeſted in the fleſh; the ſpotleſs ſun of righteouſneſs diſperſing the ſhadows of the law; clearing up the miſts of the viſion and the perplexities of the prophecy, and ſhedding the light of immortality over the darkneſs and miſery of the world.

27. Hence Jeſus, The Chriſt, The Meſſiah, foretold by the prophets as our Redeemer from the grave and the future judge of all mankind, is the principal object of Chriſtian faith. This is the moſt common acceptation and moſt important ſignification of the word *faith* in the ſcriptures of the new covenant; and which we cannot too often remember, or too carefully retain. Faith, in this ſenſe of the word, is neceſſary to ſalvation *. St. Paul ſays, " if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus," (that is, if thou ſhalt ſincerely aſſent to, and fearleſsly avow this truth, that Jeſus is the Meſſiah ſent to declare the will of God to mankind,) " and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved." Rom. x. 9. This belief muſt not only be confeſſed by the lips, but eſtabliſhed in the heart, ſo as to be productive of real goodneſs and righteouſneſs. Faith, thus underſtood, is the

* In thoſe countries which enjoy the light of revelation, or among thoſe whoſe unbelief is more owing to the hardneſs of their hearts, than to a defect in the means, or the opportunities of conviction.

principle of a new life in the ſoul; it exalts the thoughts, purifies the affections, and ſanctifies the conſcience.

28. " With the heart, " ſays St. Paul, " man believeth unto righteouſneſs," (Rom. x. 10.) that is, when the heart is really impreſſed with that faith which the goſpel requires, it will invariably manifeſt its inviſible exiſtence, by the outward fruits of truth, juſtice, and mercy. This faith is inſeparable from a right practical ſenſe of moral obligation; and thoſe who attempt to disjoin faith from a good conſcience, only make ſhipwreck of their ſouls. (See 1 Tim. i. 19.) *The end of faith is to make us careful to maintain good works* (Titus iii. 8.); to perſuade us that it is our greateſt intereſt to deny " ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world." (Titus ii. 12.) To give any other explanation of *ſaving faith* is to quit the word of God, and turn aſide from the wholeſome preaching of Chriſt and his apoſtles, to the " vain jangling;" to the " fooliſh queſtions and contentions" of ignorant viſionaries or intereſted impoſtors.

29. We are, likewiſe, particularly to remember that *true evangelical faith is always aſſociated with a beneficent diſpoſition*; a diſpoſition prone to ſympathiſe with the diſtreſſes, and, as far as we have opportunity, to relieve the wants of our fellow-creatures. For it is a concluſion, enforced by the precepts of our Sa-

viour, by the whole tenor of his life and the ſpirit of his doctrine, that *charity is the end of the commandment*; and that *no faith availeth but that which worketh by love*. (See Gal. v. 6.) And the term love does not ſignify any groſs or licentious ſenſations of affection, but the fire of vital charity warming our hearts, animating our lives, and ſhewing its heavenly influence in every part of the conduct of man, towards his brother man. This is true Chriſtian love; which is not ſhewed in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH.

PART III.

1 FAITH, in its moſt frequent acceptation in the Chriſtian ſcriptures means a conviction of this truth, that Jeſus is The Chriſt, the Son of God, and the Saviour of thoſe who regulate their lives by his laws. It contains a firm perſuaſion, that, if *we obey him*, we ſhall obtain remiſſion of ſins, and eternal life; and a vigorous reſolution to render him the obedience which he has commanded. This is that faith which may truly be called *ſaving*; and the ſcriptures by no means warrant the ſuppoſition that faith, conſidered in any other ſenſe, will conduce to our ſalvation.

2. That faith, therefore, which will form the ground-work of our juſtification before God, muſt be aſſociated with moral goodneſs; for one of the conſtituent parts of ſaving faith is a perſuaſion that Jeſus will be the Saviour of thoſe who regulate their

lives by his laws; and a right perſuaſion of this laſt truth, operating on the ſoul, will neceſſarily produce obedience, in the general acts and habits of the individual.

3. Thoſe laws of Chriſt, to which true faith tends to render us obedient, are not ceremonial but moral *. They are laws whoſe obligations are unchangeable, which were written on tables of ſtone and on the fleſhly tables of the heart before he came into the world; and of which he did not invalidate, but increaſe the importance, by eſtabliſhing their connection with the intereſt of eternity.

4. The laws of Chriſt, on our obedience to which our eternal welfare is at ſtake, inculcate nothing but a pure, a vigorous, and an habitual morality of conduct, without any of thoſe ſubtile refinements, thoſe qualifications and reſerves, in which ſophiſtry delights; and with which the vain genius of human philoſophy has too often perplexed the plaineſt truths, and invalidated the moſt forcible moral obligations.

* "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies. *Theſe are the things which defile a man*; but to eat with unwaſhen hands defileth not a man." Matt. x. 19, 20. Here we trace the right diſtinction between ceremonial and moral purity. All our Lord's ſayings, by keeping which we are required to manifeſt our love towards him, have a moral tendency; and his life was one continual ſunſhine of moral excellence.

They are not made dark and ambiguous by equivocations; they are clear, distinct, and comprehensive; not too obscure for the apprehension of the mind, nor too difficult for general practice. They tend to make truth, justice, and benevolence the universal rule of human action and the unchangeable standard of human interest.

5 When truth and justice and benevolence are made the maxims of conduct and the test of interest, we can experience little perplexity in any of those situations which might embarrass our choice, or be productive of crimes, if we adopted any other rule for the government of our actions, and estimated happiness by mere selfish calculations. Were the laws of Christ universally practised, treachery and falsehood, violence and wrong, cruelty and injustice would be banished from the world; in one word, morality would shine with unclouded lustre; for the will of God would be done on earth, as it *is* in heaven. Such are the happy tendencies, and such would be the beneficial operations of these precepts of Christ, to which it is one essential part of saving faith to adhere with inviolable affection and habitual fidelity.

6. It is obedience to Christ's laws which constitutes the moral goodness of a Christian. For the laws of Christ, of which he himself condensed the spirit and the practice into this one glorious and unrivalled

ſaying, " whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye alſo unto them," comprehend the whole circle of moral obligations. If, therefore, genuine faith do include, as I think the whole tenor of ſcripture proves, obedience to Chriſt as a lawgiver: and if his laws be moral laws, then moral goodneſs muſt be an inſeparable adjunct of ſaving faith; and *without which* it is but an empty breath of air.

7. The precepts of Chriſt differ, in a great meaſure, from thoſe of other lawgivers, in being rather poſitive than negative, in inculcating virtue rather than prohibiting vice; in enjoining more what is to be practiſed than what is to be avoided; in ſpeaking of duties more than of crimes; in commanding beneficence more than juſtice; and in deterring from evil by urging to good. Thus our Lord compreſſes into this one emphatic ſaying " thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf;" the whole of the moral law; and he who fulfils only this one precept, cannot be wanting in any duty, or guilty of any crime. For love worketh no ill to his neighbour; and, *therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.*

8. That beneficence which produces poſitive good muſt exclude poſitive evil; for the ſame principle cannot operate as an incentive to good and to evil. True benevolence, therefore, muſt prove deſtructive to falſehood and injuſtice, and every ſpecies of moral depravity. Hence we ſee why our Lord compreſſes

the whole ſubſtance of morality into one brief precept; "thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf:" and why he ſaid to his diſciples, towards the concluſion of his miniſtry, "by this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another." The love which Chriſt enjoined is *the perfection of morality*; morality cleanſed from the lees of ſelfiſhneſs, and refined into pure beneficence; that morality which conſiſts not only in an abhorrence of falſehood and injuſtice, but which animates the vigorous energies of active goodneſs; which not only indiſpoſes us to do wrong to others, but which diſpoſes us, as far as we have opportunity, to do good unto all men. This is that morality of which the practice is a neceſſary aſſociate of *ſaving* faith. Thus faith, whereever it takes ſuch a ſtrong poſſeſſion of the ſoul, as to be, in ſome meaſure, the ſubſtance of things not ſeen, will be *not a paſſive quality, but an active principle*; full of ſtrength and life; urging us not only not to work iniquity, but to bring forth the fruits of charity.

9. Many perſons confine the ſeat and habitation of faith, the bounds of its exiſtence, and the ſphere of its influence, to the ſenſations; within whoſe gaſeous atmoſphere they circumſcribe its power, and to whoſe inviſible operations they reſtrict its evidence. But the ſcriptures do not authorize, and reaſon diſclaims, any ſuch vain, changeful, and pernicious teſt of religious belief; for both reaſon and ſcripture prove, that the life is the only ſatisfactory evidence of its reality.

10. As far as faith is an inviſible and inward principle, confined to the impenetrable caverns of the mind or to the unſeen chambers of the heart, we cannot know that ſuch a principle even exiſts without diſcerning ſome teſtimony of its exiſtence in the outward conduct. A mere profeſſion of belief does not conſtitute belief, or make a man a Chriſtian, any more than a bare profeſſion of aſtronomical knowledge makes a man an aſtronomer; except ſo far as the profeſſion anſwers to the fact, and the fact to the profeſſion.

11. The profeſſion of a faith in the Chriſtian religion is a profeſſion of theſe truths—that Jeſus, the founder of the Chriſtian religion, is the Meſſiah foreſhewn to the Jews, and the Redeemer promiſed to all mankind; and that he will confer eternal life on thoſe who obey his laws. Genuine Chriſtian faith, therefore, implies a conviction of a future and eternal life; with a perſuaſion that its happineſs depends on the conformity of our conduct to the precepts of the goſpel. Now have we any reaſon to believe that any profeſſion of faith of this kind is true, where we ſee thoſe, who make it, giving no proof of its reality in their lives; where we ſee them acting, as if this life were the ſum of their being, the termination of their hopes and fears, and as if their preſent conduct had no relation to a ſtate beyond the grave?

12. When we ſee the profeſſion of religious faith

utterly at variance with the outward actions, when we behold it exerting no influence on the character or the conduct, not producing temperance, justice, and righteousness; not making the heart kind and the hand bountiful; can we believe, that the inward principle exists? A man is not to make his own sensations, however warm or rapturous they may be, a test of his believing in Christ; when Christ himself allowed no such test, but referred the evidence of faith to the conduct. Let us hear his own words, and let them sink into our souls: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Matt. vii. 17. 19.

13. If the blood be contaminated by any principle of disease or any matter of contagion, the effects soon appear in the waste of the strength, the depression of the mind, or the ulcerations of the flesh. Where the body glows with the animating flame of vitality and health, there the limbs are vigorous, alert, active; the flesh is firm, and the spirits gay. If a principle of moral purity be fixed in the thoughts, if truth, and justice, and humanity be enthroned in the affections, their inward reality will be visible in their outward operations. If moral corruption have seized the mind, and spread its baleful putrescence over the con-

ſcience, the effects will correſpond with the cauſe. The conduct will be baſe, polluted with injuſtce, with cruelty, or luſt. The outward actions of a man are the beſt mirror through which the ſtate of his thoughts and his heart can be ſeen. "Out of the heart," ſaid our Lord, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theſts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies." Matt. xv. 19. The outward conduct diſtinctly pourtrays the inward workings of the ſoul. It ſhews, if I may ſo expreſs it, the true complexion of the heart, and marks the ſtuff of which the conſcience is made.

14. Whenever the principle of genuine Chriſtian faith is alive, warm, and vigorous in the heart, it will diſplay its wholſeſome energies in the moral character of the man. There will not be occaſion for an audible confeſſion of the lips or any viſible inſcription on the forehead, to ſhow that faith animates the breaſt. *True faith is its own evidence.* It wants no emblematic tokens nor factitious proofs. It manifeſts its ſpiritual ſtrength, and, if I may ſo term it, its bodily exiſtence by ſigns beyond the reach of hypocriſy or art; and which bring conviction home to the mind of the ſpectator. Its fruits are the fruits of holineſs. Its actions are ſtamped with the ſacred impreſs of truth and juſtice and that vital warm beneficence which cannot be counterfeited; and whoſe teſtimony the whole world cannot gainſay nor reſiſt.

15. He who really believes in the truth of the Chriſtian religion will not live for this ſhort life; he will not purſue the periſhable things of this world with greedy impatience or intemperate deſire. His faith will be "the ſubſtance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not ſeen." Neglecting the ſordid concerns of time, his thoughts will be exalted to the higheſt heavens, and his affections rapt in the boſom of eternity.

16. True faith, as far as it is the faith of a rational being, muſt be compounded of the aſſent of the mind and the perſuaſion of the heart. It ſuppoſes the underſtanding, from the inveſtigation of the evidences of religion, to be convinced of its truth; and the affections to be intereſted in the practice of its duties. Wherever the dictates of the reaſon are thus in uniſon with the impulſe of the ſenſations, and the ſenſations accord with the deciſions of the reaſon, there religious faith flouriſhes in its greateſt beauty and its utmoſt ſtrength.

17. It does ſometimes, and, perhaps, more often than is ſuſpected, happen, that ſpeculative belief is united, if I may ſo ſpeak, with practical infidelity; or, in other words, that the mind ſometimes aſſents to the truth of the Chriſtian religion, when no warm ſenſe of its duties touches the heart; and the conſcience is callous to its weighty obligations. As a ſpeculative belief in a God is by no means incompa-

tible with practical atheiſm *, ſo a rational conviction of the truth of revelation is ſometimes aſſociated

* The Atheiſm of the French, to which ſome have imputed all the exceſſes of the revolution, was engendered by the corruptions of popery; and conſequently, thoſe who aſcribe ſo wide a ſphere of agency to the firſt, ought not to forget the effects that originated in the laſt. When they declaim on the evil of the progeny, they ſhould not paſs in ſilence over the malignity of the parent. In inveſtigating the cauſes of thoſe great diſorders which always accompany the revolutions of great ſtates, when an ancient government is overthrown; when inſtitutions, aſſociated with the affections of ſome and the intereſts of others, are ſubverted; when the prejudices and paſſions of men are engaged, as it were, in a furious warfare; when new opinions are forced into a violent concuſſion with the old; when the firſt, full of youthful vigour, are labouring for dominion, and the laſt are ſtruggling with the dying energies of ſelf-preſervation; we muſt beware of imputing thoſe diſorders which muſt neceſſarily ariſe in ſuch a complicated ſtate of things, to any one particular and excluſive cauſe. Atheiſm or irreligion had certainly a very extenſive influence in producing thoſe accumulated miſeries, thoſe acts of proſcription, of injuſtice, and cruelty, which ſtain the pages of the revolution: but Atheiſm itſelf was not equal to the production of ſuch a maſs of calamity. Atheiſm met with a juncture of circumſtances highly favourable to the exploſion of its diſaſtrous principles; but the principles themſelves would have been much circumſcribed in their effects, if a variety of other cauſes, all blending their miſchievous influence, had not aſſiſted their operation; had not increaſed their ſtrength, and diffuſed their rancour. Atheiſm is certainly a very powerful cauſe of calamity; but we muſt not impoſe on Atheiſm a weight of effect greater than it can produce. The practical evils of atheiſm are, generally, reſtrained by the direct intereſt which men have, and always will have, in re-

with glaring impiety. A belief in the being of a God is not neceſſarily or uniformly productive of

ſtraining them. Whatever men may think of the ſpeculative principle, they muſt, if they have a ſpark of common ſenſe, know its practical tendency as adverſe to the intereſt of the individual as it is to that of the community. Atheiſm can never exert any very general or extenſive influence, except in the criſis of revolutions; when ſo many other cauſes conſpire to render it actively pernicious, and increaſe its will to deſtroy by arming it with the power of deſtruction.

The atheiſm of the French owed its origin to the corrupt ſtate of Chriſtianity in France before the revolution; and, perhaps, many of the evils, which we aſcribe to atheiſm, would, with more juſtice, be imputed to their primary cauſe; that is, the pollutions with which popiſh ſuperſtition had adulterated the Chriſtian doctrine. Men of leiſure, of a highly ſpeculative turn of mind, and a morbid temperature of body, are ſometimes Atheiſts; but the poiſon can never be diffuſed through the bulk of mankind. The former may not always be able to prevent the intruſion of anxious doubts reſpecting the firſt principle of religion; the latter do not theorize on the ſubject; and when their actions are contrary to the principles which they profeſs, they do not proceed ſo much from the want of religious belief in the mind, as from the want of a religious ſpirit in the heart. *There are few ſpeculative, but many practical Atheiſts*; there are few who really diſbelieve in the being of a God; *but there are many, very many, in all countries who live without any fear of God before their eyes.* The mob of Paris, by whoſe hands moſt of the ſanguinary deeds of the revolution were perpetrated, were not properly ſo much Atheiſts as Fanatics; and as far as they were Atheiſts, their Atheiſm was certainly the effect of that corrupt and polluted antichriſtian ſuperſtition in which they had been educated. The diſtance between extremes, though it ſeem long, is in fact ſhort. The change in the mind from one to

that ſanctifying ſenſe of his perfections, that admiration of his wiſdom, and that love of his goodneſs,

the other is often rapid and inſtantaneous. *From believing too much, men ſoon come to believe too little.*

Superſtition always, ſilently, favours the growth of infidelity; and, after a certain period, always ultimately produces it. Hence governments ſhould beware of ordering the miniſters of an eſtabliſhed church to bewilder the minds of the ignorant with uncertain doctrines, and to preach abſurd or pernicious myſteries more than practical godlineſs.

That Atheiſm renders the ſentiments ferocious and the heart ſavage I can readily admit; but I believe it will be found that religion, *degenerated into Fanaticiſm*, is an enemy as deſtructive to tenderneſs of feeling as the moſt ſtubborn Atheiſm. The Atheiſt, who really believes not in a God, is not reſtrained in the career of his crimes or the exceſs of his luſts by apprehenſions of a future judgment; but he is liable to ſome reſtraint from the inviſible operation of thoſe ſympathies which nature planted in the heart, and which Atheiſm itſelf cannot always eradicate. But Fanaticiſm extinguiſhes the benevolent affections, and it calls in the ſuppoſed ſanctions of religion to countenance their extinction, and to encourage their violation. When cruelty rages in the boſom of an Atheiſt, there is a total want of any religious influence to aſſuage its fury; but *when it rages in the boſom of a Fanatic, the influence of religion, inſtead of repreſſing its force, only increaſes its ferocity.* The Atheiſt may be cruel from the violence of paſſion; but the Fanatic is more ſo from the ſedateneſs of principle.

The Fanatic often perpetrates atrocities the moſt revolting, in order to do God ſervice; for, from a ſtrange hallucination of ideas, which turn the blood into gall and the heart into ſtone, Fanaticiſm makes the love of God compatible with the moſt unrelenting barbarity. The Atheiſt delights in cruſhing; the Fanatic in torturing his victims; he thinks every groan which

which engage the affections in his ſervice, and make obedience to his will the law of the heart; the ſtaid

they utter agreeable to God; and he lengthens out the lingering agony to the longeſt capacity of ſuffering. The Atheiſt braves the terrors of eternity; yet he does not always loſe the tenderneſs of a man: but the Fanatic gathers motives from eternity to juſtify the moſt atrocious violations of humanity.

The refinements of torture and the aggravations of woe, which were practiſed in the Inquiſition, give a ſtriking repreſentation of the force, with which religion, corrupted into ſuperſtition and Fanaticiſm, tends to ſtifle all the amiable ſympathies of the heart, and to ſubſtitute in their room the moſt ſavage cruelty and the moſt implacable ferocity. The Atheiſts who, in September 1792, wantonly ſported with the lives of their fellow-citizens, appear not to rank lower in the ſcale of humanity, than the Fanatics who ſhed the blood of the innocent in the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew.

Our Lord makes religion to conſiſt in the love of God and the love of man. What ever kind of prepoſterous love Fanaticiſm may bear to God, it certainly cheriſhes very little regard for its fellow-creatures; for it is aſſociated with hate, bitter and implacable to all who have not ſwallowed, or who will not ſwallow the poiſon of its corruptions. The Fanatic ſuppoſes that God delights in ſuperſtitious forms, and takes pleaſure in the miſery of his creatures. He fondly flatters his own heart that the divine favour is excluſively appended to only one particular form of worſhip, and that every other incites the divine abhorrence. The Fanatic is, therefore, inſtigated by the moſt powerful motives, motives drawn from the intereſts of eternity, to exerciſe the luſt of cruelty on all who think not as he thinks; whoſe devotion is not manifeſted by the ſame proſtrations, or whoſe adoration is not aſſociated with the ſame forms. He feels no reſtraint from the kindly influence of the ſocial principle, urging him to be mindful of the happi-

criterion of intereſt; and the perennial fountain of pleaſure and of happineſs.

neſs of his ſpecies; for the force of that principle is annihilated by the inviſible demon that works within his breaſt, chilling the warmth of his affections, and infuſing a deadly rancour into his ſenſations.

Fanaticiſm perplexes and confounds the diſtinctions of right and wrong; it makes right to be wrong, and wrong to be right: and, under its influence, religious belief which ought to be, and which, in a well-educated mind, always is the ſtrongeſt ſtay to right, gives the moſt powerful impulſe to wrong. The Fanatic either imagines that he is exempted from the weighty matters of moral obligation, or that God will permit their violation for the ſake of ſome trifling penance or ſome unſocial auſterity. He deems them matters of eaſy compenſation; and he, therefore, feels little compunction in their infraction. Thoſe who do not like to practiſe the great duties of truth and juſtice, are always prediſpoſed to imbibe the deluſions, and to embrace the demoniac principles of Fanaticiſm.

The Atheiſt who believes not in a future judgment, and ſeeks not the approbation of a ſuperior power, can have no juſt notions of moral obligation; he regards morality as a ſort of artificial contrivance, and truth and juſtice as mere matters of human convention; and he deems them obligatory no farther than as they promote his preſent views, or contribute to his perſonal gratification. But Fanaticiſm, while it relaxes all moral reſtraints, *often makes immorality a matter of conſcience.* It, therefore, often gives a greater encouragement and a ſtronger ſtimulus to the violation of truth, of juſtice, and humanity, than even the moſt obſtinate Atheiſm. The Fanatic ſtrips God of his reſplendent attribute of univerſal goodneſs, and makes him a partial and capricious being: and it may be doubted whether a belief in ſuch a being, as Fanaticiſm ſuppoſes God to be, be not productive of as much miſchief as the non-belief in the

18. We have only to caſt our eyes around us to behold many who are by no means inſincere believers

exiſtence of any God at all. The Atheiſt has no ſtandard of moral excellence; the Fanatic has a falſe one. The principles of the Atheiſt prevent his moral improvement; thoſe of the Fanatic promote his moral deterioration. The love of God, the only genuine principle of practical religion, elevates the heart towards heaven; it wafts the affections to the throne of mercy in the perfume of prayer, from which they deſcend again upon the earth, freſh with the bloom, and warm with the glow of univerſal charity. But of this principle of the love of God, whoſe ſpirit is ſo divine, and whoſe operations are ſo beneficent, the Atheiſt is as deſtitute as the Fanatic, and the Fanatic as the Atheiſt.

The heart of the Atheiſt is cold and ſavage; inſenſible to the diſtreſſes of thoſe around him, as beings with whom he has only a tranſient and accidental connexion here, and with whom he is to hold no intercourſe hereafter. The heart of the Fanatic is not cold with apathy, but hot with hate; not ſo much inſenſible to the diſtreſſes of others, as rejoicing at their infliction, when they are the diſtreſſes of thoſe who are not of his own perſuaſion. He looks on all mankind, not only not as brethren, but as people whom he has a commiſſion from heaven to exterminate, and whom he perſecutes without mercy whenever he has the power. The Fanatic puts the victims of his rage to every torture which he can contrive in this world, *and then breathes fervent wiſhes to heaven for their eternal damnation in the next!*

The Atheiſt perſecutes, perhaps tortures, his victims; and then ſends them to the grave as to a place of eternal ſleep. The Atheiſt is a brute, who, when his paſſions are excited, rends and lacerates his fellow-men like fellow brutes; the Fanatic aggravates his cruelty by religious mockery, and ſings hallelujahs while the unfortunate objects of his malice are

in the being of a God, yet living, as it were, without God in the world; and many might be obſerved who have themſelves a reaſonable conviction that revelation is no fiction nor impoſture, that the miracles recorded in the goſpels were actually performed, and even ſome might be noticed who have laboured to impart conviction to others, by the ſtrongeſt reaſoning and the moſt ſtriking arguments, but who, notwithſtanding, by the whole tenor of their lives, by their intemperance in the purſuit of animal pleaſure, their eagerneſs in the race of temporal diſtinction, by their ambition of praiſe and their luſt of gain, by the brittleneſs of their friendſhips and the rancour of their enmities, ſeem to acknowledge that that Jeſus, whoſe religion they profeſs, never lived; that he never preached temperance, humility, meekneſs, beneficence, forgiveneſs of injuries; that he never roſe from the dead, and that this world terminates alike the joys and ſorrows, the hopes and fears of man. On the other hand, we do meet with many perſons, par-

waſting in the flames. Of the butchery which has been perpetrated, and the deſolation which has been produced both by Fanatics and by Atheiſts, hiſtory will furniſh many a melancholy recital; and if it be difficult to determine on which ſide the guilt preponderates, it ſhould teach governments to labour to prevent theſe hell-born fiends from ſpreading their venom among the people; *and this can only be done by compelling the miniſters of the eſtabliſhment to teach* NOTHING BUT THAT PURE MORALITY, WHICH CHRIST TAUGHT, WITHOUT ANY CANT OR ANY MYSTERY.

ticularly thoſe who are placed low in the vale of poverty, who have neither had leiſure nor capacity to examine the evidences of revealed religion; who have not what may be called a rational conviction of its truth, and who are unable to render to others a reaſonable account of the hope that is in them, but yet whoſe lives are an ornament to the religion which they profeſs, whoſe actions manifeſt its fruits, and whoſe affections kindle with its holy flame.

19. But as it muſt be confeſſed that, where the mind is convinced without the heart being perſuaded, faith is dead, becauſe barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the truth; ſo, on the other hand, we muſt acknowledge that where the affections are engaged in the practice of the duties, without the underſtanding being exerciſed in the examination or acquainted with the evidences of revealed religion, faith reſts on an unſafe and perilous foundation, eaſily undermined by the ſubtleties of ſophiſtry, and ſubverted by the ſhock of argument. He who knows not the ſtrong pillars of evidence on which the religion of Jeſus reſts, who is not able to give him who aſketh a reaſonable account of the hope that is in him, will not long remain unmoved by the reaſoning of the infidel or the raillery of the ſcoffer. The ignorant man almoſt always receives his ſtrongeſt impreſſion from the laſt ſpeaker; and is liable to be whirled about, here and there, by every eddy of argument and every breath of folly.

20. Where a rational conviction of the truth is wanting, faith is not eaſily fixed; it fluctuates with every new opinion, and changes with every wind of doctrine. Hence ignorant people are always the eaſy prey of viſionaries or Fanatics; whoſe abſurdities they have not judgment enough to ſee, and whoſe crafty machinations they have not ſagacity to penetrate. Hence they are ſometimes perſuaded, on the ſlighteſt grounds, and the weakeſt reaſons, to forſake a pure, and plain, and rational worſhip, for one that is polluted with ſuperſtition; to leave what is ſimple for what is myſterious; to relinquiſh truth for error; and to prefer darkneſs to light. Hence, in the preſent age, we have ſeen multitudes of the ignorant and the credulous led aſtray, from the plain paths of common ſenſe, by itinerant impoſtors; forſaking the ſimple, the dignified, and the well-digeſted prayers of the Church of England, for the confuſed and crude abortions, the whining cant, and wild extravagance of extemporaneous devotion; abandoning the ſimple morality of Chriſt for unintelligible doctrines, which have no foundation whatever in the words of ſcripture, critically underſtood, and judiciouſly explained.

21. Where the mind is not furniſhed with true ſcriptural knowledge, folly will often triumph over wiſdom; and the ſuffrages of the illiterate crowd will often run ſtronger in favour of thoſe who inflame their feelings, than in favour of thoſe who ſpeak

plainly, but gently to their affections; of thoſe who addreſs the imagination, than of thoſe who endeavour to convince by ſtrength of argument.

22. The religious faith, as I have ſaid, of a rational being, ought to conſiſt of the aſſent of the mind incorporated with the perſuaſion of the heart. This is that faith which is leaſt liable to change or decay; and on whoſe ſaving efficacy the greateſt dependance may be placed. For it is that faith which God who has given us a faculty to diſcern truth from error, and who has ſo diſpoſed the evidence of revelation as not to ſuperſede, but to encourage its exerciſe, requires at our hands. It is a faith, in the formation of which the mind concurs with the affections, and in whoſe operations reaſon moderates and directs the energies of ſenſation. This alone is the character of that faith which is a reaſonable ſervice; which is moſt agreeable to the father of ſpirits, and to the genius of Chriſtianity.

23. In the formation and the operations of faith, the reaſon and the affections ſhould, as much as is poſſible, go hand in hand, and act in conjunction. Thus faith is preſerved from the extravagance of enthuſiaſm and the miſchievouſneſs of Fanaticiſm; from the frothineſs of deluſion and the barrenneſs of inaction. If reaſon lay the foundations of faith, the building cannot riſe into a fair and beautiful ſtructure without the aid of the affections; but if the affections

alone are employed in rearing it, the edifice, wanting the ſtrong pillars of reaſon, will hardly bear the beating of the ſtorm.

24. The affections give to faith its beauty and its uſefulneſs; beauty that delights the eye, and uſefulneſs that cheers the heart; but reaſon gives it ſtrength and ſolidity; ſtrength that no blaſt can ſhake, and ſolidity that is eternal. Reaſon, uniting its force with that of the affections, makes the preſence of religious belief delicious to the individual and its operations beneficial to humanity.

25. Without ſome degree of rational conviction, religious belief reſts, as it were, on a cloud of vapour; and it is ſubject to all the alternations and capriciouſneſs of prejudice in ſome caſes, and to its obſtinacy in others. We cannot give a rational aſſent to what we know not, any more than we can be ſaid rationally to prefer one thing to another without knowing or inveſtigating the right grounds of preference. Our belief in revealed truth, like our belief in any other truth of importance, *ſhould be rational that it may be firm.* It ſhould be the effect of the underſtanding that it may remain the ſubject of the will. From that to which we aſſent without knowing why, we are always liable to diſſent without knowing wherefore. We have ſeen this truth exemplified in many recent inſtances; and it is to this principally that the Fanatics owe the preſent magic of infatuation which they poſſeſs, and the

preſent harveſt of popular deluſion by which they are fed. As it is impoſſible to ſee clearly when the viſion is dim, or the nerve of ſight faint, or to hear diſtinctly where the organ of hearing is paralytic; ſo it is impoſſible to believe juſtly when the organ of conviction, which is the mind, is either incapable of acting, or has never been called into action.

26. The faith of thoſe, who have not leiſure to proſecute a diligent inquiry into the evidences of religion, muſt indeed always, in ſome degree, reſt on the authority of others. But, thanks be to God, that, in this enlightened period of this enlightened country, the faith even of the peaſant or the artiſan need not be a blind aſſent to they know not what, or they know not why. Their belief may be grounded on knowledge. Their minds may, without a wicked negligence on their own parts, be inſtructed in the evidences of Chriſtianity, ſufficiently to give a reaſonable account of the hope that is in them; to combat the arguments, and to penetrate the ſophiſtry of the gainſayer. In a country in which there are few Chriſtians who cannot read, in which there are few villages without ſchools for the inſtruction of the poor in the rudiments of learning, and none without a church for their improvement in righteouſneſs, few indeed muſt be the perſons who can complain, without injuſtice, that they are deprived of the means of religious information.

27. In these days many books have been published, and widely circulated, in which the evidences of revelation have been briefly, clearly, and forcibly explained. And though the poor may meet with none of these treatises, they may supply the defect by the study of the scriptures; by comparing the prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the Messiah with their completion in the New; in the person, the life, the sufferings, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They may diminish their doubts, and increase their conviction by the serious perusal of that wonderful prophecy, relative to the dispersion of the Jews, which occurs Deut. xxviii. and which they may behold fulfilled before their eyes. They may see its exact and almost literal accomplishment in the fate of that extraordinary people, who are scattered over the whole world, living among all the nations of the earth, but yet preserving the language, the manners, and the institutions of their ancestors; divided from each other by kingdoms, by seas and mountains, but maintaining a sort of national intercourse like an united people; denying the Christian scriptures, but bearing their concurrent testimony to the truth of those of the Old Testament; believing in the divine original of the law of Moses, in whose writings their present dispersion is threatened and described, and, from many hints in the law and the prophets, still expecting, with unshaken confidence, an end to their dispersion, and a restoration to the country of their fathers. And if the prophetic

proofs of the divine original of Chriſtianity ſhould be deemed vague, indefinite, and unſatisfactory, ſtill even thoſe of the meaneſt capacities, who are not wilfully remiſs or criminally indifferent in a matter of ſuch great moment, may obtain a rational aſſurance of the truth of revealed religion, by carefully peruſing only the Engliſh tranſlation of thoſe memoirs of the founder of Chriſtianity, which are contained in the writings of the four Evangeliſts, of whom at leaſt two were actual ſpectators of what they related, and the reſt drew their accounts from the information of thoſe who had been with Jeſus from the beginning; who were well acquainted with the doctrines which he preached, and the miracles which he wrought. In the narrative of theſe four independant witneſſes, in which there is every mark of honeſt truth and artleſs ſimplicity, let the unlearned inquirer conſider the perfect doctrine and the ſinleſs life of Jeſus; let him compare the profound wiſdom that is diſplayed in the one, with the patience, the gentleneſs, the beneficence that were viſible in the other; let him contraſt the ſublimity of his character with the lowlineſs of his condition; the ſplendour of his miracles with the humbleneſs of his deportment; the fear which he excited with the little power which he poſſeſſed; the popularity which he avoided, with that which, had he harboured any ambitious views, he might have acquired; let him conſider the total abſence of any thing like equivocation, duplicity, or impoſture in every word that he ſpoke; the prudence with which

he conducted himself in the most embarrassing circumstances; the sagacity of his answers to the most perplexing questions; the meekness with which he endured the most humiliating insults; the silence with which he abashed the scorner; the force and authority with which he rebuked the hypocrite; the tenderness and affection with which he instructed the simple; the concern which he shewed for the bodies and the souls of men; the readiness with which he relieved their wants, and the sympathy which he discovered for their sorrows; the love which he manifested for his friends, and the fervour with which he prayed for his enemies; the fortitude with which he suffered a most ignominious death, and the glory with which he rose to an endless life. These considerations are, I think, sufficient to prove, whether to those who are sunk in the vale of ignorance, or to those who have scaled the heights of learning, that Jesus was no impostor; but was what he declared himself to be,—a man sent from God to reveal the most weighty truths, and to instruct and animate the world in the way of righteousness.

28. But when the rich or the poor, the peasant or the philosopher have, by the investigation of the evidences of revealed religion, or by the study of the scriptures, attained to a reasonable conviction of the truth of Christianity, let them well consider that faith is vain without works; let them not endeavour to fix the truth of religion in the understanding without

kindling its ſpirit in the affections. Let them all remember, that an aſſent to the truth of religion ought to lead to living righteouſneſs; and let me more eſpecially admoniſh the philoſopher to conſider, that the ſubtle refinements, the profound deductions, the ſplendid ſyſtems, or the lofty ſpeculations of learning and of genius, are but vain and uſeleſs things, *unleſs they are aſſociated with that wiſdom which mends the heart, and maketh wiſe unto ſalvation.*

29. Faith, when taken in its ſtrict ſcriptural ſignification, *as comprehending, in one word, the aſſent of the mind and the perſuaſion of the heart, is neceſſarily and uniformly productive of righteouſneſs.* In this ſenſe the word *faith* means not only the ſeed, but the fruits of righteouſneſs; it repreſents the Chriſtian religion not only as approved by the mind, but principled in the heart, and manifeſted in the conduct. In this ſenſe the word *faith* is often applied in the ſcriptures, as including a belief in the truth of the miſſion of Jeſus, and the practice of his precepts. Faith, when it ſignifies *only the conviction of the mind*, is not uniformly and neceſſarily productive of righteouſneſs. The underſtanding may be acquainted with the evidences of religion, where the ſpirit of piety is not excited in the heart.

30. When we endeavour to impreſs the mind of an Atheiſt with a rational conviction of the being of

a God, we ſhould endeavour, at the ſame time, to animate the heart with ſuch a truſt in his moral government, and ſuch a lively ſenſe of his fatherly concern for the welfare of his creatures, as will certainly engender benevolence in the diſpoſition, and morality in the conduct. When we undertake to bring the evidences of Chriſtianity home to the underſtanding of a Deiſt, we ſhould, at the ſame time, endeavour to bring its duties home to his affections. We ſhould endeavour not only to make him believe that the founder of Chriſtianity was a perſon ſent from God to reveal his will, but ſhould earneſtly perſuade him to imitate the goodneſs of Chriſt, and to follow the example of his ſinleſs life. We ſhould aſſiduouſly fix the thoughts on this wholeſome concluſion, without which the glory of the Chriſtian religion withers and decays, that faith is vain if it be not fruitful in good works; and we ſhould employ every exertion to produce ſuch a juſt ſenſe of the happineſs connected with the *practice* of righteouſneſs, as may warm and intereſt the ſoul in its performance.

31. The great work of faith is but half-finiſhed where the mind is convinced without the heart being touched, or where the heart is touched without the mind being convinced. The faith of a being like man, highly intellectual and exquiſitively ſenſitive, ſhould be the united effect of reaſon and ſenſation. The reaſon ſhould be able to diſcern, and to defend

the truth of religion, and the ſenſations ſhould glow with the flame of piety. There ſhould be a vital principle of belief in the one, and a vital principle of action in the other.

32. The perfection of faith conſiſts in the conviction of the mind blended with the perſuaſion of the heart; or, in other words, in a rational acknowledgment of the truths to be believed with the habitual performance of the duties to be practiſed. The truths to be believed were intended to favour the growth and to promote the performance of the duties to be practiſed; and the one cannot be ſeparated from the other without doing violence to both. The truths to be believed are, *the reſurrection of the dead, a future life, and a day of judgment*, in order to multiply and ſtrengthen the motives to practical obedience; and unleſs, through the operation of the reaſon and the affections, theſe truths do deter from evil and animate to good, they are believed in vain.

33. It does too often happen that the truth of religion is acknowledged, and its evidences approved by the underſtanding, when its power is not practically evinced in the conduct. This melancholy oppoſition of the mind to the heart, and of the conduct to the judgment, generally takes place when the affections, which ought to be engaged on the ſide of religion, are devoted to leſs worthy objects; abſorbed in the cares of the world or the pleaſures

of ſenſe, which wean the heart from God and cauſe thoſe whoſe opinions are by no means tainted with the ſpeculative tenets of infidelity to hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and *to live as if they were really infidels.*

34. While we are diſcuſſing the nature and inculcating the neceſſity of faith, it will, I think, be worth our while to employ a little time in conſidering what are thoſe *eſſentials* of belief without a ſincere aſſent to which true Chriſtian faith cannot exiſt; and what are thoſe acceſſories of belief which may be adopted or rejected; which may be believed or diſbelieved, without increaſing the virtue of faith on the one hand, or diminiſhing it on the other.

35. The eſſential matters of religious faith appear to me to be theſe,—that there is a God; that he made the world by his power, and governs it by his providence; that the founder of the Chriſtian religion was the favoured Son of God, who was put to death by the Jews, and who roſe again from the dead. *Theſe are truths eſſential to be believed; and without an aſſent to which, faith is imperfect.* From theſe flow other indiſpenſable truths, which have a near relation to the former, and are the great incentives to practical goodneſs; and which are principally theſe,—that this life is a ſtate of trial; and that there is a ſtate of retribution after death, when all mankind will be judged according to their works, and

when the happineſs of individuals will be proportioned to their improvement in righteouſneſs in the life which now is. Theſe are the truths, both ſpeculative and practical, moſt neceſſary to be impreſſed upon the mind, and to be cheriſhed in the heart; and he, to whoſe conſcience they are ſacred, and to whoſe affections they are dear, cannot but be in the ſtrait path to eternal glory, though he may not ſubſcribe to other points of doctrine which are leſs clearly revealed or more ambiguouſly expreſſed; which are more dark and dubious, and have no neceſſary connexion with righteouſneſs. *To all thoſe Chriſtians, of all communions, who hold thoſe eſſentials of faith which I have enumerated,* (and what SINCERE Chriſtian of what communion is there who rejects them?) *we may and ought to give the right hand of fellowſhip, however much we may differ from them about ſome abſtruſe and myſterious matters of ſpeculation.*

36. Chriſtians are too prone to contend with each other about points not eſſential to ſalvation; and many of the religious diſputes among Chriſtians are mere diſputes about words. Some uſe the words *faith* and *grace* in one ſenſe, and others in a different; and then they fight about the word, when, perhaps, they are agreed about the doctrine. Few indeed are the Chriſtians, *except thoſe who deny the neceſſity of moral goodneſs, and think that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, or the unrighteouſneſs of Adam is made theirs by imputation,* who do not concur in opinion about

the eſſentials of religion. They all agree in the belief, that there is a God, that he is the moral governor of the world, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Meſſiah, the Son of God, that he was put to death, and roſe from the dead; that this life is a ſtate of trial, preparatory to another, in which every man will be recompenſed according to his works. Thoſe who cordially acquieſce in theſe tenets, *ought, in matters of leſs moment, to hold the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*; for theſe tenets are the main pillars of belief, on whoſe adamantine ſtrength *genuine Chriſtianity will for ever reſt*; defying the moſt furious attacks and the fierceſt ſtorms.

37. There are certain ſubordinate articles of faith, about which great heats have, at different periods, been fomented in the Church, which have occaſioned bitter diſſenſions and implacable animoſities; but of which the profeſſors of a religion, that breathes charity in every precept, would have done well to abandon the diſcuſſion, in order to provoke one another to love and to good works. It is not a little remarkable, that points of doctrine which tend not unto holineſs, and which cannot be important, becauſe they are not diſtinctly revealed, are uſually diſcuſſed as if they were of the laſt importance; as if the very exiſtence of religion depended on their ſupport; and as if, were they removed from the Chriſtian fabric, the foundations would give way, and the whole building fall to ruins.

38. In religion, men are too much governed by the force of imagination. Hence, they are so much captivated with the mysterious and the obscure. They are delighted with something vast and invisible, which they do not know and which cannot be known; but whose heights fancy exalts and whose dimensions it expands. What appears before their eyes, they think little and dwarfish; because it is not too vast for their perceptions. What is removed beyond the utmost stretch of the understanding, they prize beyond measure, because it is hid in darkness. Thus they think doctrines important in proportion as they are obscure. What is easy and simple they depreciate; what is difficult they extol; what is obvious they neglect; and where the wayfaring man would not err, they are lost in an endless maze. Little do they consider that those points of uncertain speculation, to which as much consequence is attached as if they alone divided the confines of heaven and of hell, cannot be of such great importance, *or they would not have been so ambiguously expressed; that God would not have left any tenets essential to salvation liable to such a strange diversity of opinions, that the most conscientious Christians have entertained sentiments the most opposite on their importance and their truth.* But, forgetting this plain inference, which common sense suggests and sound piety enforces, those Christians who love darkness better than light, and prefer one impulse of imagination to a thousand deductions of reason, labour to explore the labyrinths, or

to traverſe the clouds of myſtery, while they loſe ſight of truths which are as pure as they are plain, and which come home to the intereſts and the boſoms of all mankind. But there is, perhaps, to an ill-regulated mind and a vitiated taſte, a certain irreſiſtible attraction in the ſhapeleſs maſſes of abſurdity with which the myſtic theology abounds; as, on ſome occaſions, a certain degree of darkneſs ſeems to increaſe, to an immeaſurable bulk and ſtature, the vapours riſing from ſome ſpreading moor; making the landſcape vaniſh from the ſight, and perplexing the traveller on his way.

40. The Sceptic, who ſcoffs on religious ſubjects, who derides all revelation as an impoſture, who ſpeaks with contempt of its evidences and without reverence of its author, who indulges himſelf in fooliſh jeſting and impious blaſphemy on ſubjects of which every ſerious man who does not aſſent to the truth will confeſs the importance, is a wretch unworthy the ſociety of his ſpecies, and hardly deſerving the common offices of humanity. There is ſuch a vaſt accumulation of probabilities in favour of the truth of revealed religion as may well make the raſh pauſe, and the ſcorner dumb; and even if the evidences of Chriſtianity were not half ſo ſatisfactory as they are, ſtill the belief of it is ſo nearly connected with the deareſt intereſts of mankind, with their moſt refreſhing hopes and their ſweeteſt conſolations, that *no unbeliever, whoſe boſom glows with*

only one ſpark of tenderneſs for his fellow-creatures, would diſcuſs its truths with levity, or load its ſupporters with inſult. But a ſober and humble diſſent even from the truth of revelation, though it may excite our concern, ought not to provoke our rage. It ſhould rather awaken the feelings of compaſſion than the virulence of ſcorn; it ſhould rather produce gentleneſs of exhortation than intemperance of abuſe. On any topics, and particularly on the weighty matters of religion, it is not becoming to ſpeak unadviſedly with our lips. The unbelief of any man, as far as he employs no ſcurrility to revile, and no ſophiſtry to ſhake the belief of others, is ſubject to the cognizance of God alone*. As there is one who judgeth *we are not to paſs ſentence on the infidel before his time*; but are to leave him, though with

* "Omnes in ſeipſum armat, qui in alios, quos errare credit, armatur. Par omnium in omnes jus eſt. Qui ſibi jus tribuit coercendi alios, idem aliis in ſe ipſum idem jus ut concedat, neceſſe eſt. Nulli homini aut eccleſiæ judicium infallibile de erroribus aliorum delatum eſt. Quare ſi coercitiones ullæ admittuntur, quid erit Chriſtianiſmus aliud, quam gladiatorum in ſe invicem concurrentium arena, ac mutuâ inque vicem rediens incarceratio, relegatio et flagellatio? Hic itaque primus obex ponendus eſt, alioquin facile ulterius ad ſanguinem et cædem ibitur. Facilis ab una pœna ad aliam progreſſus eſt; et ubi ſemel horror pœnarum animo exemtus eſt, ſanguis etiam tandem vilis haberi incipit. Nec prætextus deſunt. Crudelitas dum ſibi indulget, facile mantellum reperit, quo ſe tegit." Vid. Epiſcop. op. tom. ii. Apol. Confeſſ. Remonſt. p. 240, 241.

trembling apprehenſion, to the great day of account, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be revealed.

41. The conſciouſneſs that men do not ſometimes notice what is placed before their eyes, and do not always comprehend truths that ſeem to others too plain to be miſtaken, ſhould check the riſing ebullitions of intolerance in the human breaſt; ſhould make us bear with the froward, and conduct ourſelves with gentleneſs toward thoſe who oppoſe themſelves.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

The Doctrine of Regeneration, rational, ſcriptural, and practical.

1. THE doctrine which principally engroſſes the conſideration of the Fanatics is that of regeneration; on which they are unſparing of their cant, and laviſh of their impoſture. It is the pillar of their hypocriſy, and the corner-ſtone of their ſuperſtition. When they attempt to explain this important article of the Chriſtian religion, they utter only a confuſed heap of words without meaning. Indeed words without meaning and ſounds, by which no certain ideas are conveyed, are the props of their fraud, and the engines of their extortion *.

* "If the trumpet," ſays the Apoſtle, "give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle." The trumpets which the Fanatics blow in our ſtreets and villages, in our churches and conventicles, are, indeed, very ſonorous; but that they utter any very *diſtinct* ſounds, I cannot take upon me to

2 The Fanatics ſuppoſe regeneration to be a change wrought in the ſoul in direct oppoſition to the will and the affections. According to their notions, the rational faculties of the creature are as little concerned in the production of the *new birth* as they are in that of our original formation in the womb. They feign that man is, by the conſtitution of his nature, ſo prone to evil, and ſo averſe to good, that his depravity is inherent and incurable. This depravity, they ſay, expoſes us, from the firſt moment of our exiſtence, to God's wrath and damnation. Thus they repreſent God as angry with us, for no other reaſon than becauſe we are born. But this is ſo groſs a perverſion of ſcripture and reaſon, that it hardly deſerves a confutation. God cannot be angry with us merely for being born; for we are born without our conſent, and have no choice given us either to be born or not, either to have or not to have exiſtence.

3. Our natural birth can be no tranſgreſſion, for there can be no criminality in any act whatever to which the will does not conſent. All ſin muſt ne-

declare; and their hearers ſeem, in general, no more edified by the noiſe, than by a dream ariſing from indigeſtion. St. Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 19.) prefers five words ſpoken WITH THE UNDERSTANDING to ten thouſand words ſpoken in an unknown language. Let the Fanatics abandon their ſenſeleſs jargon for plain common ſenſe.

ceſſarily be the violation of ſome known law, and the doing of ſomething which our conſcience or our reaſon tells ought not to be done; but as we cannot be the ſubjects of any legal obligation before we have exiſtence, and, moreover, as we can do neither right nor wrong, before we have any perception of right or wrong, it is clear that *we are not ſinners by birth*; and that we are not, and cannot be created in guilt or wickedneſs.

4. It is God who makes us. It is his power which faſhions us in the womb; and it is only by his permiſſion that we come into the world. As our exiſtence, therefore, is the gift of God, and our birth is the exertion of his will, we cannot ſuppoſe that he, who directs us to do good, would have given us a nature incapable of doing it; or that he would threaten us with puniſhment for working iniquity, if he had rendered our nature ſo addicted to ſin, that we could not help ſinning. God deſires us to work righteouſneſs; and he has given us a capacity to do it. He has not by an arbitrary decree made us ſinners, and then, by an act of tyranny, threatened to puniſh us for not obeying a law which he had previouſly made us incapable of obeying. But, if we came into the world, ſuch vile, debaſed, and corrupt creatures, as the Fanatics tell us, with ſo much depravity in our fleſh, and ſo much guilt clinging to our ſouls, ſin would be unavoidable on our parts. Sin would be our inſtinct, our nature; and it would be as natural

for us to commit all manner of crimes, as it is for a horſe to eat graſs. We ſhould have as ſtrong a bias to moral corruption, as we have to drink when we are dry, or to eat when we are hungry. But this would be to deſtroy the very nature of ſin; for ſin is an abuſe of our free will; and if the will were not free to chooſe either good or evil, we ſhould no longer be accountable for our actions. But God, evidently, ſuppoſes that we have a capacity either to keep his commandments, or to break them; for he would not otherwiſe have determined to judge us according to our works.

5. The ſuppoſition that we are born ſinners makes God the author of our ſin; for, as it is by his will that we are born, it muſt be his ſimple *fiat* that conſtituted us ſinners, if we came into the world in a ſtate of ſin. Thus this abſurd doctrine would throw the blame of all our tranſgreſſions on our good Creator. Let us beware of indulging ſuch horrid blaſphemy; let us beware of harbouring notions ſo totally oppoſite to the goodneſs of God. If God had made us ſinners, as he certainly would have made us if we were ſinners from the womb, he could not with any reaſonable ſhow of juſtice have propoſed to puniſh us for our ſins, or to judge us by our works *. For,

* The following text is frequently urged by the advocates of original corruption as deciſive in their favour: "Behold I was ſhapen in wickedneſs; and in ſin hath my mother conceived me." Pſalm li 5. "The words," ſays Jeremy Taylor, "are an Hebraiſm; and ſignify nothing but an aggranda-

would it not be not only rank injuſtice, but revolting cruelty in any parent, to puniſh a child for ac-

tion of his ſinfulneſs." "If David," continues this great Theologian, "had meant this of himſelf, and that in regard of original ſin, *this had been ſo far from being a penitential expreſſion, or a confeſſing of his ſin, that it had been a plain accuſation of God, and an excuſing of himſelf.* As if he had ſaid, "O Lord, I confeſs I have ſinned in this horrible murder and adultery, *but thou, O God, knoweſt how it comes to paſs, even by that fatal puniſhment which thou didſt, for the ſin of Adam, inflict on me and all mankind* 3000 *years before I was born, thereby making me to fall into ſo horrible corruption of nature, that, unleſs thou didſt irreſiſtibly force me from it, I cannot abſtain from any ſin, being moſt naturally inclined to all.*" Who would ſuppoſe David to make ſuch a confeſſion, or, in his ſorrow, to hope for pardon for upbraiding not his own folly, but the decrees of God?" See Practice of Repentance, 394, 396. John Taylor, of Norwich, makes many obſervations on this text, ſimilar to thoſe of his name-ſake the Biſhop of Down and Connor. He calls it "*an hyperbolical form of aggravating ſin*, whereby he (the Pſalmiſt) loadeth himſelf, and ſtrongly condemneth the impurity of his heart, and the looſe he had given to his own unlawful inclinations." See John Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of O. S. 4th edit. p. 137. On this expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, Grotius ſays, "Senſus eſt *Non nunc tantum, ſed et a pueritia mea ſæpius peccavi.* Eſt enim loquendi genus ὑπερβολικὸν (ſuperjectivum) ut oſtendit collatio." Job xxxi. 18. Pſalm xxii. 10, 11. lviii. 4. lxxi. 5, 6. Eſaiæ xlviii. 8. Vid. Grot. op. tom. 1. p. 231. The note of the great Le Clerc on this paſſage is well worth reading. I ſhall extract a part of it.—"Eam reſpicit ætatem, qua delinquere potuit, non cum primum formanetur in utero matris, quo tempore peccare requibat; omne enim peccatum, cum ſit violatio legis Divinæ, notam eam neceſſario ſtatuit; aut certe noſci potuiſſe a delinquente, nec niſi ejus culpâ ignotum; poſ-

tions of which he himſelf was the author; or for a mode of conduct which he had irreſiſtibly compelled him to purſue? And, yet, if we ſuppoſe that we are born ſinners, ſo diſpoſed to evil that we ruſh into moral corruption from neceſſity rather than

tulatque ut is rationis compos ſit, hoc eſt, norit quid agat, ab eoque etiam abſtineat, ſi velit, ſine quibus rebus, nemo reus haberi queat. Hæc, quæ rectâ ratione et uſu ſcripturæ nituntur, nunquam aliter intellecta fuiſſent; ſi ſemper chriſtiani ratiocinandi et interpretandi artibus æquè polluiſſent. *Sed temporibus, quitus hæ artes parum notæ, aut neglectæ erant, præ declamitandi et argutandi facultate, nota ſunt dogmata ſanæ rationi plane contraria, nec magis ſcripturæ conſentanea, ad quæ Scriptorum ſacrorum ab imperitis poſtea detorta ſunt. Et tamen nobis ea fæcula, quaſi norma veritatis, hodie proponuntur, eorumque commenta, inſtar religionis Chriſtianæ defenduntur!*" Vid. Cleric. Lib. Hagiog. fol. Amſtel. 1731. p. 314, 315. Another paſſage, on which much ſtreſs is laid by the patrons of this pernicious doctrine, is Job xiv. 4. "*Who can bring a* clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." John Taylor, in his maſterly book, ſays, that "this is a ſentence of the proverbial kind; and uſed to ſignify that *nothing can be more perfect than its original.* And, therefore, as it ſuits all caſes, muſt be underſtood according to the ſubject to which it is applied. *Here it evidently ſtands in relation to our mortality.* As if he had ſaid, Man is born of a woman. We ſpring from a mortal ſtock, *and therefore are frail mortals.*" Taylor, p. 142.

I muſt here ſtay to remark that, in this place, Job xiv. 4, the ſeventy read τις γαρ καθαρος εσται απο ρυπου; literally, who ſhall be clean from pollution? A man that has told a lie cannot, in reſpect to moral *purity*, be in the ſame ſtate as if he had always ſpoken truth; nor can he who has violated his integrity be as if he had been uniformly juſt.

from choice, we cannot help caſting the imputation of injuſtice and of cruelty upon God. But the ſcriptures, when rightly underſtood, and not perplexed and obſcured by thoſe who make God the author of ſin, and uſe the goſpel as a cover for their ungodly practices and pernicious doctrines,—the ſcriptures lead us to a very different concluſion. They expreſsly declare that man is born pure, upright, and innocent; ſo innocent that our Saviour repreſented righteous perſons under the emblem of little children. Nothing can be more harmleſs, and ſimple, and lovely than little children; and inſtead of being born depraved, guilty, and objects of God's indignation, they are created unvitiated and ſinleſs, and more eſpecially objects of the divine love and protection.

6. It is clear, then, from the authority of our Saviour, who could not lie, and who muſt have rightly underſtood the doctrine which he had received commiſſion from his father to preach, that little children are born innocent; and that conſequently the nature of man is not neceſſarily, and by an arbitrary appointment made vitiated or depraved. If little children were born, as the Fanatics aſſert, corrupt and ſinful creatures, objects of wrath, and ſubject to puniſhment, the unhappy parent might well mourn over his offspring*; ſome of whom are, perhaps,

* The Calviniſts will tell you that hell is full of little children not a ſpan long.

hardly put into the cradle before they are carried to the grave, or who do not arrive at years of diſcretion before they are covered with the darkneſs of death *. If guilt and wickedneſs were the inherent and eſſential properties of human nature, well might the parent lament the untimely deſtruction of his children, who would be carried into a place of torment, and born only to be eternally miſerable.

7. But as the doctrine of hereditary depravity is an unſcriptural fiction, and as the guilt of Adam is not tranſmitted to his poſterity, let no parent ſorrow, as one without hope, for his little innocents who are ſuddenly nipped by the blaſt of death; for the moment they expire, they are conveyed by angels into Abraham's boſom. They are only taken from the evil to come, and dying before they can diſtinguiſh right and wrong, they die without tranſgreſſion, and paſs from the realms of mortality into manſions of glory.

8. Before men can poſſibly deſerve puniſhment for ſin, they muſt be *perſonally* ſinners. They muſt have wilfully violated ſome divine law; for we cannot ſuppoſe that God would puniſh one man for the offences of another. God expreſsly declares that every man ſhall bear his own burthen; ſuffer

* If the doctrine of hereditary corruption were true, it would be a duty, paramount to all others, not to marry.

for his own ſins; and be recompenſed according to his own righteouſneſs. Before men can be ſubject to the puniſhment of human laws, they muſt have violated thoſe laws; and before they can become obnoxious to the puniſhment of the divine laws, they muſt have been guilty of actual tranſgreſſion. But how can infants offend againſt laws of whoſe obligations they cannot be ſenſible? No guilt can be imputed where there is no capacity of diſtinguiſhing good and evil, and of chooſing between them. But do any of us poſſeſs this capacity till we have been ſome years in the world, till reaſon begins to dawn, and conſcience to expand? Infants cannot, therefore, be born ſinners, nor ſubject to the divine diſpleaſure. Indeed the ſuppoſition is the abſurdeſt of all abſurdities, and can be entertained only by thoſe who are as ignorant of the ſcriptures as they are inſenſible to the divine perfections.

9. But if men are not born ſinners, how do they become ſo? The anſwer is eaſy. By neglected education, vicious example, and wilful infraction of the ſalutary dictates of reaſon and of conſcience. Sin is not an innate ſtate of the diſpoſition, but *an acquired habit*. Its growth is ſlow and gradual. Solomon, the wiſeſt of men, and whoſe reaſonings on human nature prove him to have been intimately acquainted with the human heart, has bequeathed this prudent exhortation to thoſe who have the care of the early years of man. Train up a child in

the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* The king of Iſrael would never have delivered this ſage counſel, if the nature of man were radically depraved and vicious; for it would be impoſſible, by the moſt judicious education or management, to make a child walk in the right way, in whoſe dipoſition the Author of nature had planted an irreſiſtible propenſity to go in the wrong. But God has imparted no ſuch bias to evil to the human will; he has left man free to chooſe either good or evil. Sin is, therefore, not a matter of neceſſity but of choice.

10. If ſuch be the nature of man, pure and incorrupt, free to chooſe either good or evil, but liable to temptation and capable of corruption, it is plain that MAN MUST BE A SINNER BEFORE HE IS A PENITENT; and that *no change is neceſſary to be wrought in the heart and diſpoſition of man, till habits of ſin are incorporated in his frame.* But, according to the doctrine of the Fanatics, that change of mind and affections which is called the *new birth*, is full as neceſſary to the ſalvation of an infant that is born in a ſtate of innocence as of an old man that is harden-

* "Si malos habitus anteverterimus, bonâ educatione, ad ſenectutem uſque, ſint excluſi, certè magna ex parte. Non ſequitur tamen hinc, ut male educati ſemper ſint nequam, aut bene educati boni: ſatis eſt hoc eſſe plerumque verum, aut certe ſæpius." Cleric. in Prov. xxii. 6.

ed in habits of ſin. If people came into the world a rotten maſs of corruption and depravity, their doctrine would be true; but as children are born innocent, and ſpecial objects of God's love and protection, no change can be neceſſary to be wrought in their minds and affections, their diſpoſitions and habits, till, by an abuſe of their free will and their rational faculties, they have tranſgreſſed the divine law, and become obnoxious to puniſhment. For if children be born innocent, *their diſpoſition is as pure as it can be, till it becomes tainted by depravity.*

11. The innocence of little children fits them for heaven; for our Lord has declared "*theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" This proves that no change is wanting in the human heart till it is vitiated with moral corruption; *for the great end of the new birth is to promote that wholeſome change in the habits, which makes the poſſeſſor meet for the kingdom of heaven.* Our Saviour tells his diſciples that unleſs they be converted, and become as little children, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Here he is ſo far from declaring human nature to be originally corrupt and vicious, that he ſuppoſes depravity not to be the effect of our nature but the growth of our habits; *and he makes true righteouſneſs to conſiſt in a return to that ſimplicity and innocence which we bring into the world,* and which we do not loſe till after ſome continuance in it; till a perverſe education, evil examples, and bad habits have corroded our

original purity, and given us an unnatural bias to iniquity.

12. But when we have loſt the purity, the ſimplicity, and innocence in which we were born, *then* a change in the mind and diſpoſition becomes neceſſary; *then we cannot be ſaved unleſs, in the language of our Lord we be converted, and become as little children:* that is, unleſs the heart be cleanſed from malice and from guile.

13. A man muſt be a ſinner before it is neceſſary for him to be a penitent. Repentance implies a ſtrong conviction of ſinfulneſs; but a man cannot repent of ſins which he never committed, and which conſequently can make no impreſſion upon his conſcience. Moral guilt muſt, therefore, be firſt contracted by ſome *actual, perſonal tranſgreſſions*, before we can be accounted ſinners in the ſight of God: and when perſonal diſobedience has made us ſinners, it is neceſſary that a change be wrought in our moral diſpoſition and habits, that we turn from ſin unto holineſs, and be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds.

14. Thus the doctrine of regeneration becomes clear and eaſy; for regeneration implies a reformation from bad habits unto good; a return from the paths of iniquity unto thoſe of righteouſneſs: it is, in fact, only another name for repentance confirmed; that repentance, which cauſeth not only ſorrow for

ſin, but produces newneſs of life. The change which a repentance, thus genuine and ſincere, neceſſarily occaſions in the mind and affections, is very aptly repreſented in ſcripture as a *new birth*. It is a change which cauſes the ſinner to be ſo different in his temper and conduct from what he was before, as to deſerve the name of *a new creature*. He is ameliorated in heart and mind; he loathes ſin; and he glows with zeal in the purſuit of righteouſneſs. The love of God, by degrees, becomes the ruling paſſion of his ſoul. He is warmed with a perſuaſion that ſin is his greateſt miſery, and goodneſs his greateſt advantage. Thus there is a total change in his moral qualities. The outward form of the man continues the ſame; but his inward diſpoſition is altered. This is called in ſcripture, *a renewing of the mind*. Thus, for inſtance, when a drunkard, who has long lived in habits of intemperance, beginning to ſee his error, and to apprehend his danger, ſummons up reſolution to forſake that ſin which ſo eaſily beſets him, and in whoſe ſnares he has been ſo long entangled: or, when a liar returns to the practice of truth; a thief to the paths of integrity; when a miſer conquers his love of money, and inſtead of being hard-hearted and ſelfiſh, becomes kind and charitable to his fellow-creatures; in theſe caſes, theſe different tranſgreſſors, by turning away from their ſins, their bad propenſities and habits, to habits, purſuits, and affections, more ſuitable to the Chriſtian character and the commands of the goſ-

pel, become *new creatures*. Their hearts are purged, and their thoughts purified; their inclinations improved, and the whole man ameliorated. *Such changes are abſolutely neceſſary in ſuch ſinners*; for he who dies hardened in habits of only a ſingle ſin, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

15. In the ſcripture, inveterate habits of ſin are called *the old man*, ſee Eph. iv. 22. which we are deſired to put off, and, in its ſtead, to put on the new man, or habits of righteouſneſs and true holineſs. While we live in habits of ſin, we are the ſervants of ſin; ſin is our maſter, and rules us at diſcretion: but when we forſake our ſins, and repent from our dead works, or thoſe works of ungodlineſs which will end in eternal miſery, we become, as it were, *new creatures*, created again in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which lead to glory and immortality.

16. The ſcriptures ſeem to intimate that there are ſome perſons who need no repentance. See Luke xv. 7. And our Saviour himſelf expreſsly declares, "I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance;" Luke v. 32. evidently ſuppoſing that all men are not polluted with the guilt of tranſgreſ-

ſion, and that there are ſome *who are not ſlaves to ſin*. Such perſons are uſually thoſe who are brought up under pious parents in habits of righteouſneſs, and paſs from the cradle to the grave without any flagrant or mortal ſin. They make the divine law the rule of their lives, the ſtandard of their conduct, and the meaſure of their intereſt and their happineſs. They live free from *all habitual offences*, from drunkenneſs, from uncleanneſs, from lying and injuſtice; and commit none of thoſe immoralities, on account of which men will be excluded from heaven. Now, as repentance implies a total change of heart and life, of the mind and affections, it is not required in thoſe whoſe lives are regulated by the rules of the goſpel, and in whoſe affections the love of God prevails. But, nevertheleſs, *even the righteous, of whom the ſcripture declares that they need no repentance, will be found occaſionally to offend*; but their tranſgreſſions will not be thoſe which indicate rooted depravity, but only human infirmity; and we may ſafely believe, that a good and merciful God will not lay to the charge of his creatures any trifling and venial treſpaſſes, which do not indicate ſo much the perverſeneſs of guilt, as the imperfections of humanity.

17. Though there may be ſome, who ſo ſeldom offend, or whoſe offences are ſo few and ſo venial, who are ſo entirely free from all habitual ſins, and from all flagrant vices, as to be ſaid, in ſcripture, to

need no repentance; yet the greater part of mankind are ſo imbruted in corruption, and ſo fallen from the uprightneſs of their nature, that, unleſs they are renewed by the power of repentance operating on the ſpirit of their minds, they cannot eſcape the wrath to come. Moſt men, from neglected education, vicious parents, and evil examples, are ſoon imbued with moral pollution. They depart from the innocence of their youth, and the integrity in which they were created. They begin the career of their unrighteouſneſs with ſingle ſins, which, by being often repeated, ſtrengthen into habits. Then guilt grows entwined around their hearts, and ſin reigns in their members. As their affections become depraved, their underſtanding becomes darkened. Their evil habits hold them in chains; they are a law in their members, whoſe force they find it hardly poſſible to controul; for nothing is ſo deſpotic as habit, and the ſcriptures repreſent it as almoſt invincible.

18. Habit is juſtly called a ſecond nature, and we are told by the higheſt authority, that it is as difficult for an Ethiopian to change his ſkin, or a leopard his ſpots, as for a tranſgreſſor to depart from the ſins which have become rooted in his heart and mind by long indulgence. But, woe to the habitual ſinner, if he die unregenerate, if no change take place in his habits before death hath made that change

impoſſible! Woe, I ſay, to the impenitent and hardened tranſgreſſor, for he will paſs into miſery and torment!

19. The change that is wrought in the mind and affections of the ſinner muſt not be fictitious, but real; not diſſembled, but ſincere. Let us therefore ſee how this change begins, and what are the ſigns of its having taken place.

20. The firſt beginning of any ſaving change in the breaſt of a ſinner is a ſorrow for ſin; a ſorrow pricking the conſcience, and troubling the ſoul. This ſorrow will always be aſſociated with a ſtrong conviction of having tranſgreſſed the law of God, and of deſerving puniſhment for our diſobedience. It is a ſorrow that, in its firſt commencement, is uſually excited more by the fears of hell than the hopes of heaven. It is a ſtronger ſenſe of the juſtice of an offended, than of the tender mercies of a reconciled and reconciling God. But as repentance begins to ſhew its fruits not only in the dereliction of habits of ſin, but in the performance of acts of righteouſneſs, the terrors of a troubled conſcience gradually ſubſide in peace of mind, and fear vaniſhes in joy of heart.

21. The law of God, as manifeſted in the goſpel of Chriſt, and which requires us to live ſoberly,

righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world*, was intended for our benefit. If we keep it, it will lead us to happineſs; if we violate it, to miſery. All ſin conſiſts in the tranſgreſſion of this law, which requires ſincere obedience; and a ſteady conviction of its juſtice, of our duty to obſerve it, and of the puniſhment that awaits the violation, can alone lay the foundation, and prepare the heart for the practice of repentance. For we cannot repent without knowing that we are ſinners, or being conſcious that we have ſomething to repent of. We are ſinners only ſo far, and no farther than we have diſobeyed the divine will, or acted contrary to the ſober dictates of our reaſon and our conſcience; only ſo far as we have treſpaſſed againſt the law inſcribed in the goſpel, or the law written on our hearts.

22. We cannot violate a ſingle precept in the law of that goſpel whoſe authority we acknowledge, or of that unwritten law of conſcience whoſe obligations we feel, without offending God; and when God is offended, nothing but repentance can reſtore us to his favour; *and we are aſſured that there will be joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth.*

23. No repentance can be acceptable to God, but that which works not only contrition of heart,

* The goſpel of Chriſt is nothing *more* than a rule of life. See Anti-Calviniſt, Second Edit. p. 25—28.

but newneſs of life. The conſcience muſt not only be racked with remorſe, but *a change muſt be produced in the practical habits, equivalent to a new creation.* To the regenerate man old things are paſſed away. He forſakes his former habits; his affections are fixed on new and better objects; he becomes leſs groſs and ſenſual; he learns to reſiſt, to combat, and to conquer the vicious propenſities of his animal nature; and the more the outward man decayeth, the more he is ſtrengthened with might in the inner man; his mind and affections are renewed day by day. As the great work of repentance proceeds, the mind becomes more ſtrongly impreſſed with a ſenſe of duty, and the affections more fervid and zealous in the practice When the affections are ſet on any thing, the practice is eaſy, becauſe it is pleaſant. When the heart is warmed with the genuine flame of holineſs, the practice becomes delightful; for it is aſſociated with a pleaſure that paſſeth knowledge.

24. He who is hardened in habits of iniquity, thinks righteouſneſs a foe to pleaſure and an enemy to happineſs; but little does he know of the pleaſantneſs that is to be found in her paths; and little can he imagine the joy of heart which ſhe ſupplies. But when the ſinner turns to God, he finds that he had formed a very miſtaken notion of the nature of religion and the power of piety. For he ſoon learns by experience, that the joy which flows from *per-*

ſeverance in goodneſs cannot be compared with the utmoſt pleaſure that can ſpring from habits of ungodlineſs; and that the conſolation to be derived from keeping the commandments of God is ſo great as not to bear any compariſon with that pleaſure which can in any circumſtances accrue from their violation.

25. The ſtrongeſt token of the *reality* of our converſion to God, and of the deſtruction of the power of ſin in our hearts, is conſtancy, and zeal, and delight in doing the will of God. For the righteous are perſuaded and convinced that their greateſt intereſt and happineſs conſiſt in the practice of righteouſneſs.

26 Obedience to the divine will, to the law of reaſon and of conſcience, and to thoſe rules of conduct which our Lord inculcated, muſt increaſe the ſum of our earthly enjoyments; and it has the promiſe of eternal glory. But, though obedience to the divine will be evidently our greateſt gain, yet men are too apt to imagine that it is their greateſt loſs. They place their affections on periſhable things; on the gratifications of animal deſire; and they forget that the carnal mind, or the mind, which, inſtead of governing, is governed by the appetites, is enmity againſt God.

27. Before men who have long gone aſtray in the

paths of unrighteouſneſs, whoſe hearts have been depraved, or whoſe minds have been darkened by long continuance in iniquity, can be brought to know that godlineſs is great gain, they muſt, in the language of the ſcripture, be *born again*. The diſpoſition of their minds muſt be regenerated, and a new ſpirit infuſed into their ſouls.

28. In ſome ſinners, the change which is wrought by the ſpirit of holineſs is more complete than in others. In ſome the word of God brings forth thirty fold, in others ſixty, in others ninety, in proportion to the ſincerity and honeſty of the heart to which it is communicated. And repentance has different degrees of fruitfulneſs. In ſome ſinners a more thorough and radical change of the mind and affections takes place than in others; but no ſinners can be ſaid to be eſtabliſhed in repentance, or to have had that change effected in their moral diſpoſition which ſhall ſave their ſouls, *in whom all habitual ſins are not forſaken*, and who do not abſtain from the commiſſion of thoſe tranſgreſſions, of which St. Paul declares, that he who commits them ſhall not enter into heaven.

29. Even the regenerate will indeed ſometimes offend, but their offences will be few, and will ſavour more of infirmity than of guilt. They will not treſpaſs in any matter which ſhews deliberate malice and wickedneſs, great obliquity of principle, of ſet-

tled corruption of heart. Trifling errors and venial imperfections may diſcolour the purity of their conduct, but which will diſappear in the charity that glows in their affections, in the truth that will characterize their promiſes, and the integrity that will be manifeſted in all their actions.

30. For thoſe little offences or caſual overſights which the regenerate may at times commit, they have a heavenly interceſſor conſtantly ſitting at the right hand of God; an interceſſor who has felt, and who can compaſſionate the wayward thoughts and the unſtable reſolutions of humanity; and for whoſe ſake the Father of Spirits will not be ſevere to mark the imperfections of the humble, or the frailties of the juſt.

31. In the goſpel of Chriſt ſinleſs perfection is not expected of us; but we are deſired *to endeavour to be perfect*; and the more we endeavour to attain perfection, the higher we ſhall riſe above our preſent ſtate of imperfection. Abſolute and unqualified perfection belongs to God alone, and every created being muſt be comparatively imperfect. But it is the duty and the intereſt of all created beings, endued with intelligence, to ſtrive to make continual advances in moral excellence. For this purpoſe man is endued with improveable faculties, and both his heart and his mind are ſuſceptible of amelioration. Chriſtianity not only calls on us to labour to be perfect, as

our Father which is in heaven is perfect, but, in order to aſſiſt our endeavours, and to animate our hopes, it has placed before us, in the life and character of Chriſt, a pattern of practical goodneſs, a goodneſs that cannot be exceeded by any, but which ought to be imitated by all. His example ſhould be the ſtandard of our conduct; and the more we put on his likeneſs, the nearer we ſhall approach to divine perfection; for, in him, the goodneſs and the perfections of God were incorporated in the human form.

32. The more our diſpoſition and habits, the benevolence of our affections, and the ſpirit of our minds, are conformed to the likeneſs of Chriſt, the more will the image of God be impreſſed upon our hearts. In the character of Chriſt there was nothing vicious, nothing imperfect. It is, indeed, not poſſible for the moſt upright among men ever to attain the degree of his righteouſneſs. In thoſe perſons, in whoſe habits the power of holineſs ſeems to preſide, there will ſtill adhere much imperfection. Though the general tenor of their lives may be pure and ſinleſs, though juſtice and charity may be the ruling principles of their conduct, yet many ſtains of corruption and depravity will ſully the beauty of their character. But though the moſt perfect among the ſons of men will retain ſome blots of imperfection, we ought not to contend with the leſs zeal to grow better and better every day of our lives. In

the great work of acquiring habits of goodneſs we ſhould never ſtand ſtill, but endeavour to advance from one degree of perfection to a higher.

33. The life of the Chriſtian ſhould manifeſt a great and unwearied, a continually increaſed and increaſing activity in doing good. This is to grow in grace; it is to increaſe in favour with God, *whoſe love and ſpiritual aſſiſtance will always be proportioned to our labours after real goodneſs.* One portion of grace rightly employed will produce another; and the quantity beſtowed will be increaſed in proportion as it is uſed.

34 Men are always very ſedulous and eager in improving their temporal condition; and happy would it be for them, if they were but as earneſt, as vigilant, as indefatigable in their endeavours to improve their moral condition, and to grow in ſtrength and conſtancy of obedience to the will of God. Their temporal deſires are vaſt and rapacious, but their ſpiritual ones are eaſily ſatisfied. They think that they can never accumulate too many of the gifts of fortune, but they feel no warm deſire to attain the perfect ſtature of the goodneſs of Chriſt.

35. We are too apt to meaſure our own worth by the ſtandard of our neighbours' imperfection. If we ſee many others more vicious or leſs upright than ourſelves, we rejoice in the ſuperiority. Our

ſelf-love makes us imagine ourſelves as good as we need to be; and the illuſion cauſes us to relax our endeavours to become better. The uncharitable compariſons, or the fallacious calculations of our own worth by the worthleſſneſs of our fellow-creatures, always leſſen the frequency, or palſy the vigour of perſonal exertion.

35. Thinking ourſelves ſafe, we take no precautions againſt danger. But Chriſtians, inſtead of appreciating their excellencies by the defects of others, ought to meaſure themſelves by no other ſtandard than that of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. When we adopt this ſtandard of compariſon, and this criterion of excellence, we ſhall find more occaſion for humility than for arrogance, for zeal than indifference, for diligence than inaction. If we contraſt our virtues with thoſe of Chriſt, we ſhall perceive the former to be light as air upon the balance. By frequently inſtituting this compariſon, and by examining how far our lives and conduct tally with his precepts, or accord with his example, we ſhall be able to aſcertain the degree of our obedience, the extent of our tranſgreſſion, and the meaſure of our danger; and at the ſame time, a ſenſe of inferiority will be felt on our minds, that will forcibly impel our exertions, and accelerate our progreſs in righteouſneſs.

36. The Chriſtian life is repreſented as a warfare

and a race; expreſſions which ſtrongly enforce this concluſion, that there is a neceſſity on our parts for the moſt ſtrenuous activity, for courage and conſtancy, for the glow of zeal and the thirſt of excellence, for vigilance on the one hand, and for perſeverance on the other. We are never to remit our exertions, but are continually to endeavour to exceed in thoſe genuine virtues which the goſpel requires as the conditions of ſalvation, and on which alone will be beſtowed an incorruptible crown of glory.

37. But the Fanatics imagine that a very ſmall ſhare of moral purity will ſuffice for their ſalvation. Alas! little do they know, that God requires purity in the inward parts; and little do they think that without real holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord! He who has long lived in habits of ſin, does not become righteous by an inſtantaneous converſion. The power of ſin is not conquered by one ſudden blow. Great preparation of the heart is neceſſary before it can be fit to enter into heaven. This life is a way intermediate to a better; but if we perſiſt in tranſgreſſion, we make it only a paſſage to a worſe. Inſtead of leading to glory and happineſs, it conducts the impenitent to deſtruction and miſery.

38. When habits of depravity have taken root in our affections, they cannot be removed without a long and painful ſtruggle againſt their dominion.

As they are formed by degrees, they can only be relinquiſhed by degrees. Sin is an obſtinate enemy, mighty in ſtrength, and fertile in ſtratagem. And in order to ſubdue his power, and ſhake off his dominion, we muſt not only exert our utmoſt natural energies, but muſt uſe thoſe means which are appointed in the goſpel, in order to obtain help from above. For this purpoſe we muſt gird on the whole armour of God, taking the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of ſalvation. Diſtruſting our own reſolutions, we ſhould earneſtly implore counſel from the Wiſe, and ſuccour from the Mighty.

39. By continually ſtruggling againſt the arbitrary ſway of ſin, and habitually ſupplicating the Father of all goodneſs for aſſiſtance, the penitent will, by degrees, be eſtabliſhed in the good work which he has undertaken. He will be renewed day by day in his mind and affections. The leſs corrupt and imperfect he becomes, the more he will ſtrive after incorruption and perfection. He will not remain ſtationary at any point of obedience which he may attain, but will conſider one degree of holineſs only as a ſtep to another; and the nearer he approaches the termination of his days, the more meet he will become for the communion of the juſt.

40. When we perceive the luſt of ſin becoming leſs unruly and irreſiſtible, when we find corruption

vaniſhing from our hearts, and purity, and modeſty, and delicacy, gaining the aſcendant in our thoughts, and benevolence lighting its hallowed flame in the affections, it is a certain and undeniable proof that our repentance is becoming effectual; that it is taking root in the mind, and bearing fruit in the ſoul. Let no man deceive himſelf, or attempt to deceive others by vain words: let him not imagine himſelf a *new creature*, or fit for heaven, *while any one ſin reigns in his members, enſlaving his reaſon and his conſcience.* Let every one who wiſhes ſoberly to calculate the chances of his ſafety, or to know the imminence of his danger, diligently compare his conduct by thoſe rules of life which were enforced by the holy Jeſus. If his actions are modelled by this ſtandard, or if, after making all fair allowances for human imperfection, they are found diametrically oppoſite to the ſpirit and precepts of the goſpel, if he find himſelf under the yoke of any one habitual tranſgreſſion, let him conſider that his danger is great, and his ſickneſs unto death.

41. Let no man think to ſave his ſoul by merely ſkinning over the wounds of conſcience; let him rather probe them to the bottom, and be ſatisfied with nothing ſhort of a perfect cure. The majority of people leave the work of their repentance half finiſhed. Some apprehenſion of their danger makes them anxious to amend their lives, but ſelf-love blinds them to the exceſs of their iniquity. They

flatter themſelves that they are not ſo bad as they really are; and they omit the proper meaſures to obtain a radical recovery. They, perhaps, perform ſome few acts of obedience to the divine will, but they violate it in more. They refrain from ſome individual or occaſional ſins, but they do not forſake the habit of ſinning. And thus they remain ſuſpended in a ſort of middle ſtate between impenitency and repentance; but, in the end, they become the ſervants of ſin, and the children of the devil.

42. If we wiſh in earneſt to ſubdue the power of ſin, we muſt not enter into any truce or compromiſe with ſo formidable an adverſary. We muſt not conclude, as it were, a treaty of partition with him, or think that there can be any ſort of ſaving coalition between iniquity and righteouſneſs; for God admits no half ſervice; he requires us to worſhip him with all our ſtrength, all our heart, and all our ſoul. We cannot ſerve God and the devil. If we cleave to the firſt, we muſt abhor the laſt. The ſervant of Satan muſt be truly changed in his diſpoſition, and thoroughly cleanſed in his affections, before God will receive him into favour; or bind his brow with the crown that is reſerved for the righteous.

43. Let me then finally conjure the readers of theſe pages, not to be deceived by that cant of religion which the fanatic, the ſuperſtitious, and the hypocrite, are endeavouring to diſſeminate among

mankind. Let me conjure them not to be led far and wide away from the light of truth to the darkneſs of error, from the path of ſafety to the brink of perdition, by that popular but ſenſeleſs jargon, which is brawled abroad loud as the wind, and hideous as the ſtorm. Believe not, O Chriſtian! that thou comeſt into the world with a heart indiſpoſed to good, and diſpoſed to evil, full of corruption and iniquity; but rather know that thou art born innocent and upright, and that it is only by perſonal acts of ſin, hardening into habits of ſin, that thou becomeſt a tranſgreſſor, ſubject to the wrath of God, and, without repentance, liable to damnation. Remember, that, like the firſt parent of the human race, thou art placed here in a ſtate of trial; and that thou wilt be happy or miſerable after death, in proportion to the habits of goodneſs or depravity which thou acquireſt in this mortal life. When thy heart and affections are eſtranged from the love of God, and when habits of unrighteouſneſs are incorporated in thy fleſh, when ſin becomes, as it were, a law in thy members, ſo that thy reaſon is ſubjugated by its influence, and thy ſenſe of right has become too impotent to prevent the practice of wrong; then let me beſeech thee to remember, that nothing but true and unfeigned repentance can ſave thy ſoul; and that no repentance can be ſincere or ſaving, that does not purify the mind and affections, that does not convince the mind of the neceſſity of obedience to the divine will, and intereſt the affections in its practice.

44. Religion, pure and undefiled, not ſpoiled by the wicked, nor perplexed by the ſubtle, conſiſts in loving God with all our mind and all our ſoul; and our neighbour as ourſelves. In whatever place, and among whatever people, whether in London or in Rome, in Paris or Jeruſalem, this doctrine is preached, there pure Chriſtianity is taught; but wherever any notions are maintained contrary to it, or ſubverſive of it, there the religion of Jeſus is corrupted, there its deſign is perverted, its precepts are reviled, and its ſpirit is unknown *.

* Inſtructions, like thoſe which I have here delivered, however adverſe they may be to the reigning taſte, and to that ſpirit of deluſion which ſeems to have ſeized the religious world, appear to me neceſſary at all times, in order to abaſh the preſumption of the wicked, and to increaſe the virtue of the juſt; but they ſeem more eſpecially neceſſary at this diſaſtrous period, when deceivers, who turn the truth of God into a lie, and make religion an inſtrument of miſchief, and an engine of corruption, are roaming among us, ſeeking whom they may devour, polluting the principles of the young, and troubling the happineſs of the old. Like the ſenſeleſs Phariſees of old, whoſe hypocriſy our Saviour ſo warmly rebuked, and againſt whoſe accumulated immoralities he denounced ſuch heavy judgments; they make a great parade about the mere forms and externals of religion, while they neglect its weightier obligations; and vainly think to atone by the exceſs of their ſuperſtition, and the ſplendour of their hypocriſy, for the habitual contempt of truth, of juſtice, and of mercy.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

The doctrine of Grace, ſcriptural, rational, and practical.

1. THE doctrine of grace has been abuſed by the wicked, perplexed by the ſubtle, and miſtaken by the credulous. Some have employed it as an engine of miſchief; and others have made it miniſter to the propagation of folly. I ſhall therefore, perhaps, be not wholly undeſerving the gratitude of the reaſonable part of the Chriſtian Church, if I endeavour to reſcue this wholeſome doctrine from the deluſions of viſionaries, and the artifices of impoſtors.

2. Moſt of the promiſes of grace which occur in the ſcriptures, are reſtrained to the apoſtolical age. At preſent, the operations of the Spirit, of whatever nature they may be, are certainly carried on in ſecret. They are neither viſible to the eye, nor palpable to the touch; and they neither ſuper-

ſede the exerciſe of the rational faculty, nor controul the freedom of the will.

3. The firſt Chriſtians could afford demonſtrative proof of *their* poſſeſſion of ſpiritual gifts by working miracles, by the powers of prophecy, by different kinds of languages, by the interpretation of languages. See 1 Cor. xii. 8—10. *Such* powers are evidently no longer beſtowed, however confidently the fanatics may lay claim to the poſſeſſion; and deceive the credulous by the boldneſs of their pretenſions.

4. The following expreſſions in St. Luke, though *more peculiarly applicable to the* Chriſtians of the apoſtolic age, have, probably, a relation to the faithful in all future ages. "I ſay unto you, aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. Now if a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if he ſhall aſk a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he give him a ſcorpion? If ye, therefore, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more ſhall your heavenly father give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him?" Luke xi. 9—13.

5. Theſe words ſhew the outward means by which the grace or favour of God is to be obtained, and which is repreſented as conſequent on prayer and ſtrenuous exertion on the part of man. "*Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.*" In the natural courſe of things, man is condemned to labour; he is to earn his bread by the ſweat of his brow; but the world is furniſhed with various powers and influences to invigorate his induſtry, and aſſiſt his toils.

6. There are various powers in nature which man, by the active force of his body or his mind, may in ſome meaſure controul, and render ſubſervient to the purpoſes of life. The earth is full of vegetable juices, but labour is required to elicit their beneficial properties, and to make them ſubſervient to the ſuſtenance of man. When man has carefully tilled and ſown the earth, he can do no more; then other powers, the ſun, the air, the dew, the rain, the meteor, and the ſtorm, all acting under the wiſe controul of a providential hand, combine their varied influences to ſuccour the varied operations of human art and human toil. In the moral world, it is highly probable, that many ſecondary influences are made to contribute, under the ſuperintending agency of the moral governor of the world, to the moral welfare of man; and that his moral endeavours are the conditions of obtaining their aſſiſtance.

7. The ſpirit of God is univerſal. We live and move and have our being, in the unſeen but infinite orbit of its power; and it is probable that its favourable influence on every ſentient and intelligent individual bears a certain fixed relation to the right uſe which he makes of thoſe faculties that are given him to profit withal, to the ſincerity of his devotion, the fervour of his charity, and the zeal of his obedience.

8. If man will exert his natural ſtrength, God will ſuccour his natural infirmities by ſtrength from above. If man will exert his moral powers, God will further the growth of moral goodneſs in his ſoul. In proportion as we labour to become fit for heaven, God will work the fitneſs within us. Reaſon leads us to this concluſion, and revelation ſanctions it; revelation teaches us that if we wiſh to reap ſpiritual things, we muſt ſow ſpiritual; that if we are ſincerely zealous to improve in righteouſneſs, we muſt firſt make a juſt uſe of our reaſon and our conſcience; and that then God will favour our progreſs, and invigorate our exertions.

9. When grace, or the favour of God, is ſhed upon us, we are not to conſider it as an apology for idleneſs, but an incentive to exertion. The more our power of doing good increaſes, the more we are ſenſible that the word of God is taking root in our ſouls, the *more we ſhould endeavour, and with the*

greater ſucceſs, we may endeavour to fulfil all righteouſneſs... This is to uſe the *manifeſtation of the ſpirit to profit withal, to walk in the ſpirit*, to be *worthy of the vocation whereto we are called*, and to prove that we are *the workmanſhip of God, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.*

10. Let us not imagine that grace, in the ſenſe in which I have explained it, is an imaginary thing, becauſe its ſpecific agency is not the object of any of our ſenſes. We know that there are many powers *whoſe mode of agency is inſcrutable*, but whoſe benefits are felt, and whoſe effects are ſeen. In the natural world, heat, light, electricity, and, perhaps, many other powers, whoſe preciſe nature we do not underſtand, and whoſe ſpecific agency we cannot diſcover, have a very ſenſible influence on the frame of man, and the fruits of the earth. In the moral world, it is probable, that there are various influences employed, peculiarly fitted to act on the moral powers of men, and *to give them ſtrength in proportion as they are fitted to receive it.* The moral government of God, in ſome meaſure, ſuppoſes the exertions of ſuch influence, for if God be a moral governor, he muſt prefer the righteous to the ſinner, and is it not highly probable, that he has arranged the moral order of things to favour moral, as he has arranged the natural order of things to favour phyſical induſtry?

11. The laws which regulate the moral world, are probably, as regular and uniform as thoſe which regulate the natural. In the natural world, effects follow their cauſes in a chain of connexion that is not, *except for moral purpoſes* *, permitted to be broken. In the moral world, the connexion between cauſe and effect is probably as cloſe and indiſſoluble. In the natural world, certain beneficial effects are the conſequence of certain actions; in the moral world, good or evil ſeem to follow in a determinate courſe, according to the previous conduct of the individual.

12. The labours of piety, and the exerciſes of devotion, do not change the general courſe of moral laws, any more than induſtry alters the uniform courſe of the laws of nature. But if, in the moral order of things, miſery be aſſociated with vice, and happineſs with virtue, he who avoids the firſt, neceſſarily attains the laſt; as the induſtrious derive benefit from the laws of the natural world, of which they would have been deprived, if they had perſevered in idleneſs. Thus it may be underſtood how devotion and prayer, by exciting us to conform our conduct to that moral order of things, according to which, the diſpenſations of good and evil are regulated, operate on our improvement in righteouſneſs and in happineſs. That portion of divine favour which prayer produces, is not miraculous or ſuper-

* As in the caſe of the Chriſtian miracles.

natural, the one is associated with the other in the moral order of things, as the fruitfulness of a field is generally proportioned to the cultivation bestowed upon it.

13. Devotion, when pure, fervent, and sincere, *naturally* produces grateful feelings, and impresses a strong sense of duty upon the conscience. But though devotion excite the most agreeable sensations, *these sensations ought not to be esteemed supernatural calls, or miraculous experiences*; for they proceed from natural causes, and are generated by the moral organization of man, as agreeable sensations, arising from nervous excitement, are connected with, and flow from, his physical constitution.

14. Prayer is a help to holiness; and when fervent and sincere, procures a refreshing supply of those wholesome moral energies, those spiritual gifts, which, by whatever name they may be expressed, are certainly ultimately derived from the Father of spirits; *not by any immediate and miraculous interposition of his power, but through the channel of that moral order of things, which he established, and the moral constitution of man, which he ordained.*

15. If men are negligent in their worldly concerns, they do not prosper; and the neglect of their moral welfare is attended with similar effects. The first produces poverty, the last vice; and, by the

conſtitution of the natural and the moral world, both are aſſociated with miſery and ruin.

16. Secondary means are neceſſary in the natural world, in order to derive advantage from the general courſe of the laws of nature; and ſecondary means are alſo neceſſary in the moral world, in order to profit by the moral economy of the univerſe. Prayer is among the principal of thoſe means which we are to employ for this purpoſe. "*Aſk, and ye ſhall receive.*" Prayer aſſiſts the right culture of the affections; it is a mean of fixing the love of God in our ſouls, of invigorating the moral principle within us, and of arming it againſt the deſtructive influence of temptation. Prayer cheers the heart when it is ſad, ſoftens it when it is hard, and purifies it when it is unclean. It fits it for the reception of grace, and makes it a temple meet for the Father of ſpirits to inhabit.

17. It is not the mere act or ceremony of devotion, which cauſes grace to be ſhed on the ſoul, but it is that devotion, which, by habitual exerciſes, increaſes our love of God, our truſt in his providence, and our ſenſe of his goodneſs, which makes us objects of his favour; which brings us, as it were, nearer to his regard; *and places us in different relations to him, than we could otherwiſe have been. It is, therefore, prayer generating moral improvement, which cauſes*

God to give us the good things which we aſk, becauſe we aſk them according to his will.

18. If theſe notions of grace be true, and they have the ſanction of reaſon and the warrant of ſcripture; then thoſe of the viſionaries and fanatics of the preſent day, muſt be falſe. They repreſent grace as a mere matter of ſenſation, they aſſert that ſenſation is the centre of its agency, that it is independent on the will, and that the affections are the utmoſt boundaries of its influence. They do not conſider *grace* as an energy to be procured by moral means, and to be applied to moral ends. Hence they think a ſtate of grace compatible with a ſtate of ſin *; for they conſider it not as a bleſſing given to good endeavours, according to any fixed laws of the moral governor of the world, but as ſome impulſe, independent on any moral endeavours to acquire it, or any moral fitneſs to receive it. Their grace is often vouchſafed to the vileſt of mankind, to thoſe who are hardened in long habits of unrighteouſneſs, and from whoſe conſcience the very ſenſe of moral obligation ſeems to have vaniſhed for want of being exerciſed. With them, *grace* is not the conſequent of devotion and alms, but is diſtributed with a capricious and partial hand, often withheld from the

* Treading in the ſteps of Calvin, they maintain that the favour of God is not loſt by the pollutions of the conſcience; *non auferre ſtatum gratiæ adulteria et homicidia.*

contrite, and often laviſhly accorded to the hypocrite.

19. If grace be, according to their ſyſtem, a free gift, independent on the exerciſe of the moral powers, and, in the attainment of which, no previous exertion is required, and no preparation neceſſary, then it is *an unconditional grant*; and in this caſe, why did our Lord teach us the means by which it might be obtained, and enjoin us to put them in practice? For, if God beſtow the influence of divine grace on man without any regard to his moral fitneſs, if he require the performance of no conditions previous to its infuſion, then men cannot juſtly be blamed for not endeavouring to obtain it, nor juſtly be condemned for not poſſeſſing it. But, if grace be a bleſſing on the earneſt and vigilant exertions of man to conform his conduct to the will of God, if it be accorded to the fervor of his prayers, and the liberality of his alms, then it is, like other bleſſings in the natural world, dependant on cauſes which it is our own fault if we do not put in motion. *In this caſe, grace operates by general laws*, and Chriſtians are juſtly accountable for not performing the conditions to which it is appended.

20. Grace is one of the glorious privileges which belong to that covenant into which we gain admiſſion by baptiſm and by faith. God ſhows man the means by which he may acquire ſo ineſtimable

a bleſſing; and, therefore, the perverſeneſs of man, rather than the goodneſs of God, muſt be accuſed, if the former neglect the right application of his faculties. *If any man*, ſaid our Lord, *love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* John xiv. 23. But the fanatics, in their doctrine of grace, entirely neglect the previous moral endeavour and the conſequent moral fitneſs; and, by omitting theſe important conſiderations, their ideas on the ſubject are dark, myſterious, and deſtructive. Inſtead of promoting goodneſs, they encourage ſin; they make the tranſgreſſor rejoice and the righteous deſpair.

21. As the fanatics do not conſider *grace* as the conſequent on moral qualities, ſo they do not regard the poſſeſſion as productive of them. With them, *grace* is rather a glowing temperature of the feelings, than an active ſtate of the rational and moral powers; rather agitating the paſſions within, than viſibly improving the conduct without. As they confine its agency within the volatile gas of the ſenſations, the tokens of its preſence vary with the phyſical temperament of the individual.

22. When moral qualities are regarded as a *teſt of grace*, it cannot be miſtaken; but if the warmth or ecſtaſies of ſenſation are made the ſigns of its poſſeſſion, we are ſoon loſt in the deluſions of pride, or perplexed by the tricks of impoſture. We ſet

the imagination to work, and that myſterious faculty, when operated on by ſo powerful a ſtimulus as that of religious intereſt on one ſide, and ſpiritual ambition on the other, produces the moſt ſurpriſing effects upon the feelings. When the fancy, perturbed with this delirium, cauſes any violent tranſport or tumult in the breaſt, the fanatics call it *an experience of grace*. But ſuch feelings, unleſs as far as their fruits are manifeſted in the integrity of the conduct, and in the purity and kindneſs of the heart, ſavour more of madneſs than of reaſon; of ſuperſtition, than of piety.

23. The power of ſpiritual pride is well known, and its deluſions are very common. The inward feelings of the fanatics are, for the moſt part, either the reſult of an overweening pride, or an irregular imagination, often operating in conjunction and often by themſelves. And as they refer the evidence of grace to the inviſible tribunal of their own ſenſations, the poſſeſſion may be readily counterfeited; and the ignorant, whoſe credulity makes them eaſy to be duped, do not as readily diſcover the deception.

24. Grace, of whatever nature it may be, is *an inviſible power*; but the exiſtence of an inviſible power can be aſcertained only by its viſible effects. No man in his ſober ſenſes, or who pretended to reaſon, would make the inviſibility of the wind the criterion of its exiſtence; or aſſert that it is, only becauſe it

is not seen. He would rather refer to its visible effects; he would show its agency in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath; in the motion of the clouds, and the agitation of the waters. But the fanatics, who despise every thing like plain common sense and sober reasoning, who think absurdity the test of truth, and darkness the proof of light, pretend to demonstrate the existence of grace, not by its *outward properties*, but by its *secret* and *unknown* operations. They make their feelings the centre and source, the beginning and the end of its agency. And these feelings, for aught any one knows, may be spurious or genuine, real or counterfeit.

25. Grace, being an invisible power, can be known only by its visible effects. Our Lord Jesus, who, no impostor himself, was an enemy to all imposture in others, never authorized us to conclude that our inward feelings were any proof whatever of the principle of righteousness abiding in us. He told us to judge of the qualities of the tree by its fruits; and I know of no other way in which the reality of grace can be ascertained; or any other sign, which can *safely* be trusted as the criterion of its possession.

26. That grace does *never* operate on the sensations as a vehicle of its agency or a medium of its power, cannot be precisely determined; but whether it do or do not thus operate, the former hypothesis

is only a harmleſs theory in theology, as long as we agree that thoſe ſenſations are not that teſtimony of its exiſtence in which we can rationally confide. What then are we to conſider as the evidences of grace? Certainly the only credible evidences are the poſſeſſion of thoſe moral qualities, whoſe effects are palpable, whoſe character is fixed, and whoſe impreſſions are laſting.

27. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Grace can be known only by the fruit which it produces; and what the fruits of the ſpirit are, St. Paul has diſtinctly told us. They are "love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faithfulneſs, meekneſs, temperance." Galat. v. 22, 23. Theſe words certainly characteriſe the *ordinary influence of the ſpirit, ſuch as is probably ſhed on ſincere Chriſtians in all ages*; and as oppoſed to thoſe *miraculous operations* of the ſpirit, which are detailed 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. and they well deſerve our attentive conſideration. They intimate that a pleaſurable ſtate of the affections, that kindneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, with juſtice and beneficence, are indications that grace is preſent and operative in the ſoul. A pleaſurable ſtate of the affections is included in the words "*love, joy, peace, meekneſs, gentleneſs*;" a ſtate of mind very adverſe to the uneaſy terrors and chilling apprehenſions of the ſuperſtitious, to the lowering brow of the fanatic, to the impetuoſity of the turbulent, and the rancour

of the malevolent. In "*goodneſs, faithfulneſs, temperance,*" we behold the energies of the ſpirit brought into action, contributing to the well-being and the happineſs of mankind. They increaſe all the innocent enjoyments of the individual, by keeping his ſenſations, his temper, and his paſſions, in a due and reaſonable ſubjection; and diſpoſing them to the production of particular and of general good. They infuſe life and activity into the benevolent affections, and keep our moral powers alert and vigorous for the practice of juſtice towards others, and of temperance in the government of ourſelves.

28. Such are the characteriſtic marks of the operations of the Holy Spirit, as they are deſcribed by St. Paul; and if theſe marks be genuine, thoſe of the fanatics muſt be counterfeit. The teſtimony of grace, to which the fanatics moſt confidently appeal, and the proofs on which they moſt implicitly rely, are, turbulence and fervour of ſenſation, a wildneſs of the imagination bordering on delirium, and of the paſſions approaching to frenzy; while the benevolent ſympathies are extinguiſhed by bigotry, or benumbed in apathy; and the moral powers, without animation or ſtrength, are imbruted in corruption.

29. It may not be improper here to contraſt the tokens of grace which are enumerated by the apoſtle, Gal. v. 22, 23, with thoſe which are diſplayed by the fanatics. For *love* they ſubſtitute a frozen

apathy, or ſavage hate; for *joy*, a weeping countenance *; for *peace*, ſedition and ſtrife; for long-ſuf-

* St. Paul ſays very emphatically, "Rejoice evermore." Theſſ. v. 16. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I ſay rejoice." Phil. iv. 4. A reliſh for innocent cheerfulneſs and a diſpoſition to harmleſs mirth are no uncertain indications that the benevolent principle is preſent and active in the heart; but a ſullen dejection of the ſpirits, and a cold averſion to ſocial joy, are very credible tokens that the malevolent principle has erected its ſtandard in the breaſt; and that the affections are imbued with its noxious influence. The fanatics, and particularly thoſe who belong to the ſect of the methodiſts, forget the injunction of our Lord, "*not to be of a ſad countenance*," nor to *diſfigure their faces*; which they do by twiſting them into all poſſible contortions of woe of which the muſcles are ſuſceptible. And like the heathen, they think to be heard for their *much ſpeaking*; they ſeem to imagine that they can never tell God enough; and, as if he were a corporeal idol, and a little inclined to deafneſs, they ſeldom fail to brawl out their petitions on the higheſt poſſible key. Their devotion is one continued monotonous *diapaſon*. Religion, pure and undefiled, is a cheerful ſervice, and nothing is ſo well fitted to produce cheerfulneſs. It ſpreads an artleſs ſmile of complacency upon the countenance; and it cauſes ſweet vibrations of joy in the heart. It naturally generates that peace with God which paſſeth all underſtanding; which is a ſource of the moſt refined and rational delight; which baniſhes impatience, bitterneſs, diſtruſt; and every emotion allied to malice and to miſery; and is a foretaſte of that reward which is reſerved for the juſt. The dejection of the great maſs of the fanatics proves that they either want the ſpirit of true religion, or that they are conſcious of not deſerving the poſſeſſion. Whoever is acquainted with the methodiſts, muſt have remarked their *long faces*; and perhaps they are not leſs remarkable for their *long*

fering, a fierce impatience of controul; a whining cant about perfecution when they are weak, and a

graces. As the Phariſees would not eat without firſt waſhing their hands. ſo the methodiſts will ſeldom eat, *except in private*, without *many* previous ejaculations of their hypocriſy. I once drank tea with two methodiſt parſons, and an evangelical clergyman, as much a methodiſt as the other two. Before we were permitted to regale on this eaſtern luxury, it was firſt neceſſary that a pious oration ſhould be made. The performance of this ceremony, having been firſt humbly declined by me, was turned over to the evangelical preacher; who, riſing from his ſeat, made no very brief addreſs; and accompanied it with ſuch a forlorn caſt of the eyes, and ſuch hideous contortions of the body, that I could hardly keep my countenance. One ſimple benediction, coming from the heart, is, in my opinion, more impreſſive, and more acceptable to the Father of Spirits, than a grace five minutes in length, with all the devout accompaniments of methodiſtic grimace. The intent of grace before meals is, to elevate the heart to God as the giver of all good things; and, after meals, the ſenſe of his goodneſs to us ſhould make us think of the wants of others. There is, in good biſhop Wilſon's works, a grace to be ſaid after meals, as near as I recollect, in the following words. "O God, who haſt provided for our wants, make us mindful of the wants of others, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake." This grace, though not very long, would ſeem prolix and affected in particular companies; for graces muſt, *in ſome degree*, be timed to perſons and places; but, of this prayer of the apoſtolic biſhop, I muſt ſay, that every good man will always feel the ſentiment in his heart, though he may not pronounce it with his lips; for it is the immediate, nay, almoſt the inſtinctive feeling of every grateful man, (and no ungrateful man can be a religious man), after having taſted the goodneſs of God. But the methodiſts, as far as I have had an opportunity of obſerving them, inſtead

ſanguinary ferocity when they are ſtrong *; for gentleneſs, the moſt ſupple adulation, veiling the moſt

of endeavouring, in their verboſe ſupplications, to ſtrengthen the impreſſions of thankfulneſs in the firſt place, and to excite the ſpirit of beneficence in the ſecond, uſually make long prayers for what they call ſpiritual things, when a good repaſt of animal food is ſet before them. But though they implore ſpiritual bleſſings with as much ſanctity as if their bodies were cut out of a cloud, inſtead of being carved out of the clay, they are not exceeded, even by Homer's heroes, in the carnivorous capacity. Every Chriſtian may, certainly, without any offence, eat and drink in moderation; but I abhor that hypocriſy, which, while it is *inwardly* as ravenous as a wolf, outwardly whines, and prays, and talks, as if a man could live on air, or as if a ſocial being were deſigned by the Almighty to be debarred from all ſocial pleaſures.

Gentle reader, after having ſaid ſo much on *graces*, let us leave the ſubject; leſt, from the buſy intruſion of ſome aſſociated ideas, thou or I ſhould begin to dream of hoſpitality which we cannot realize; and perturb our ſpirits with the recollection of happier days, which, like the ſwift waters, have paſſed away.

* Epiſcopius remarked the ſame diſpoſition in the fanatics of his time; while they were in the minority they were ſtrenuous advocates for freedom of worſhip and liberty of conſcience; they exclaimed againſt all reſtraint as a breach of charity, and an unauthorized uſurpation; but they no ſooner became the majority, than they practiſed an oppreſſion on others, greater than ever had been practiſed on themſelves. *Proſperity made them inſolent*; *the poſſeſſion of power intolerant*; *and* NOTHING BUT AN UNCONDITIONAL ACQUIESCENCE IN ALL THEIR DOGMAS COULD APPEASE THEIR CRUELTY. "*Tempori* (ſays Epiſcopius) *et ſcenæ ſervitis*. Hinc varia et diſſimilis eſt veſtra oratio. *Sub jugo gementes*, corporales omnes coercitiones

malicious guile; for *goodneſs*, a buſy deſire to do evil; for *faith*, injuſtice and deceit; for *meekneſs*, pride inſatiate lurking beneath the affected extravagance of humility; for *temperance*, a more than heathen exceſs in the gratification of their luſts. Such are ſome of the diſtinguiſhing features of factitious as oppoſed to real, of fanatic as contraſted with apoſtolic grace: features which are not exactly the ſame in every fanatic; which vary in degree with conſtitution and circumſtances; but, of which, with a few exceptions in favour of individuals, a general likeneſs will be found in the whole fraternity.

30. The fanatics ſeem to imagine that grace ſuperſedes the uſe of the moral powers of man, of his reaſon and his conſcience; and this miſtake cauſes them to neglect the culture of the one, and to deſpiſe the dictates of the other. Grace may indeed, and always does invigorate our natural power to do good;

damnatis *ut illicitas et a Chriſtiana caritate prorſus alienas; ubi jugo colla veſtra ſubduxiſtis, per fas et nefas, ibi, ſi tempora atque ingenia populi non ferant ſanguinaria conſilia, ſuppliciorum et pœnarum omnium jugum aliis imponitis, ſolo ſanguine excepto.* AT UBI, PRO VOTO RERUM POTIMINI ET POPULORUM RECTORUMQUE VOLUNTATES AD NUTUM VESTRUM HABETIS, IBI EXTREMA OMNIA TENTARE ET SANGUINEM HÆRETICORUM EFFUNDERE GLORIOSUM ZELUM DUCITIS; PLANE UT ALTERUTRUM NECESSE SIT FIERI, AUT MARTYRES VOS ESSE AUT FACERE. Recte Seneca "Multorum, quia imbecilla ſunt, latent vitia, non minus auſura, cum illis vires ſuæ placuerint." Vid. Epiſcop. op. tom. ii. Apol. pro Confeſſ. Remonſt. p. 241.

but it by no means lays ſuch a bias on the will as prevents us from doing evil. It ſtrengthens the natural capacity, but without annulling our moral reſponſibility; which it would do if it aboliſhed our capacity to diſobey. It increaſes the power to reſiſt temptation; but it does not hinder us from being tempted. It kindles a ſtronger thirſt after holineſs; but it does not cloſe up every avenue through which unrighteouſneſs may ſteal into our hearts. In fact, grace by no means alters our preſent ſtate of trial, though it inſpires us with fortitude to combat its dangers, and miniſters conſolation to its ſorrows. It accelerates our progreſs in goodneſs and happineſs, without ſuperſeding the voluntary powers of the individual.

31. That grace, inſtead of controuling the will, is ſubject to its ſway, is the undoubted doctrine of ſcripture. For even the *extraordinary gifts* of the holy Spirit, which were imparted to Chriſtians of the apoſtolic age, were ſubject to the will of the individual; or St. Paul would not otherwiſe have recommended their ſober uſe, or have reprehended their vain-glorious, idle, and oſtentatious exhibition. See 1 Cor. xii. xiv. And indeed our Lord intimates that many who had *propheſied**, *caſt out devils, and done many wonderful works, would yet be rejected at*

* The ſpirit of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets. 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

the laſt day, becauſe they had worked iniquity. See Matt. vii. 22, 23. Theſe had taſted the heavenly gift, but had made an improper uſe of it*.

32. If the *extraordinary gifts* of the holy Spirit were ſubject to the will, and liable to abuſe, we cannot ſuppoſe that the ordinary operations are independent of our volition. Grace, therefore, is a power vouchſafed to us in order to be improved by exerciſe, and ſtrengthened by uſe. To this purpoſe, St. Paul ſays, "*the manifeſtation of the ſpirit is given us to profit withal.*" All our phyſical faculties are made capable of improvement, and their improvement depends on their proper application. The various faculties of our bodies and our minds are capable of being invigorated by exerciſe. The analogies of nature, independent of the expreſs autho-

* A ſimilar remark is made on Matt. vii. 22, 23, by archbiſhop Newcome in his reviſed tranſlation of the New Covenant, printed at Dublin in 2 vols. 8vo. 1796, for J. Johnſon, London. I ſtrenuouſly recommend the peruſal of this excellent work, by the late learned primate of Armagh. Dr. Newcome has made many improvements, and corrected many defects in the old verſion; and he has followed the text of Grieſbach. The notes are very ſenſible and judicious; the ignorant will find them inſtructive, and the learned ſatisfactory. Gratitude will not ſuffer me to refrain from adding, that I owe the poſſeſſion of this work, and many other favours, to the kindneſs of a Nobleman who has few equals among the great, many inferiors among the learned, and no ſuperior among the good.

rity of ſcripture, leads us to conclude that grace is a poſſeſſion which we may either uſe or abuſe; and which, if it be not improved, will be withdrawn. It is not a candle that is to be hid under a buſhel, or a talent that is to be laid up in a napkin. It is to be vigorouſly exerciſed, and applied to thoſe *great moral ends, to which the Creator intended it to be ſubſervient.* St. Paul tells the Epheſians "to *grieve not the holy Spirit,*" Eph. iv. 30. the Theſſalonians "*not to quench the Spirit,*" Theſſ. v. 19. *and he enjoins Timothy to ſtir up the free gift of God.*" Hence it clearly appears that grace is to be uſed; and that it is ſubmitted to the government of our reaſonable faculties.

33. If it be aſked, how is grace to be uſed? we may reply that it is a moral power to be directed to moral ends; and that, inſtead of diſcharging us from a ſingle moral obligation, it is beſtowed that we may fulfil thoſe obligations with greater facility. It is ſhed on the ſoul, that we may make a continual progreſs in habits of juſtice, of mercy, and of truth. And the more we exerciſe, or, in the language of ſcripture, *ſtir up this divine gift of God,* the more will its energy be increaſed.

34. One meaſure of grace, rightly uſed, will bring us another. One temptation combated and vanquiſhed, brings ſtrength to reſiſt a ſtronger; till, by degrees, the habit is formed, and the fierceſt aſſaults

of the adverſary are derided. In the parable of the talents, which refers to ſpiritual as well as natural gifts, and *for the application of which God will certainly hereafter reckon with us*, it is plainly intimated that thoſe talents, which, by vigilance and induſtry, we *turn to a good account*, will produce other talents; while the neglect of them will occaſion our condemnation. To him who hath, to him ſhall be given; and from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath.

35. The fanatics will ſay that grace of itſelf, and without any co-operation of our will or natural faculties, enables us to perform our moral duties, and to become wiſe unto ſalvation. That this is not the caſe, we may learn from this, that ſome of the firſt Chriſtians, to whom the grace of God was vouchſafed in a far ſuperior degree than to Chriſtians of the preſent age, were not free from immorality. And the reaſon was, that they *abuſed the talent that was given them.* The manifeſtation of the ſpirit was given them to profit withal; but they did not profit by it; *becauſe their moral powers were not exerciſed in a way conformable to reaſon, and agreeable to the will of God.* Grace was vouchſafed to them in order to invigorate their natural capacity to diſcern good from evil; or their natural power to chooſe the one in preference to the other; but, by not duly exerting the faculty they poſſeſſed, they abuſed the divine gift which they had received. They ſowed to the

flesh instead of the spirit. They neglected the power that was in them. They yielded to the lusts which they should have combated and subdued; and they worked iniquity when they might have practised godliness.

36. That grace, without the free cooperation of those moral powers by which we discern good from evil, does not enable us to perform our moral obligations, we may learn from the constant, uniform, and energetic addresses of St. Paul, to those whom, though they possessed the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, he did not cease to exhort to do the will of God. He urges them *to put away lying, not to give place to the devil; to let no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouths; to put away all bitterness, wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; to be kind unto one another, tender-hearted:* all which exhortations would have been vain and superfluous, and indeed a reflection on God, if the gifts of his holy Spirit were as independent on the will, as the fanatics, and particularly those among them who pass under the name of Calvinists, maintain, and have long maintained. For, in this case, those who possessed these gifts would have performed these obligations, as if by a mechanical necessity, without any injunction from the apostle. But that the grace which was shed abroad even in this age did not operate by necessity, or work its effects by the subjugation of the will, is fully proved by his

earneſt intreaties to the Chriſtians then living, not to quench the ſpirit which they had received, but to uſe it to profit withal; and by the examples of thoſe, who, inſtead of thus uſing it, either hid the light, with which they had been favoured, under a buſhel, or abuſed it to their own deſtruction. Hence it is plain, that grace *alone* is not deſigned by God to deliver us from the power of temptation, or to prevent the intruſion of evil into our ſouls; and that our will muſt co-operate with the grace which is given; for if grace operated on the ſoul in any other way, it would take us out of a ſtate of moral reſponſibility for our conduct. It would put an end to that ſtate of trial and probation, in which the ſcripture univerſally ſuppoſes us to be placed; and from which, it will be found, that the influence of grace does not deliver us. God will judge us according to our works; but if God overruled our actions by any principle which we could not reſiſt, he would be the author of our actions; and then, how could it be affirmed by the apoſtle, that, *every man ſhall bear his own burden*; and that, *whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*. Gal. vi. 5. 7.

37. But ſome will go to ſuch lengths of blaſphemy, as to aſſert that grace is a ſpecial exemption from moral obligations. Perverting to the worſt of purpoſes, this declaration of the apoſtle, *that we are not under the law, but under grace*; they make the ignorant believe, that grace ſuperſedes the import-

ance, and annuls the neceſſity of practical obedience. They make grace a cloak for licentiouſneſs; to work all iniquity with greedineſs. They do not conſider that St. Paul is not here ſpeaking of the moral law, but of the ritual; which grace, or the goſpel, which is the grace of God, aboliſhed. The moral law exiſted in the will of God before the foundations of the earth were laid; and it will certainly continue till the heavens are rolled up like a ſcroll, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat.

38. He who is under grace, that is, whoſe life is a teſtimony to the truth, and whoſe conduct is a glorious manifeſtation of the power of righteouſneſs, is ſo far not under the moral law, as that he is not ſubject to its condemnation; for *againſt righteouſneſs there is no law*; but he is, and muſt for ever be under that law, ſo far as he is not exempted from its obligations. For, between being free from the condemnation of the moral law, and being releaſed from obedience to it, there is a wide difference. A man may be free from the penalties of injuſtice, but can never be privileged from the duties of juſtice; he may, by his good life and conduct, not be obnoxious to civil puniſhment; but he cannot, therefore, be exempted from the prohibition to ſteal or to ſlay.

39. Thoſe who are led by the ſpirit are not under the law, Gal. v. 18. and why? becauſe *they walk in the ſpirit*; becauſe *their faith worketh by love*;

and *they do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.* They are not guilty of "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like;" which are expressly excluded from the kingdom of God: but they show forth the *fruits* of the spirit, in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, truth, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law. Thus grace does not exonerate us from subjection to the law, from the terror which it inspires, and the penalties it denounces, only so far as it gives us strength to lead a more holy life, *and to do those things which no law condemns.*

40. But if, instead of using the grace that is given us to profit withal, we use it only for a cloak of licentiousness, and not as a help to our progress in goodness, then we fall from grace given; we lapse into sin; and the law, from whose rigorous sentence, grace, rightly used, would have delivered us, seals our condemnation. Grace is given us to sow to the spirit; that our hearts may yield the fruits of righteousness and true holiness, whose end is everlasting life; and to extirpate those vicious habits, and that moral corruption, whose consequence will be misery and torment.

41. The gospel, as opposed to the law, is a voice of glad tidings; a covenant of favour: the law, as

oppoſed to the goſpel, is a ſyſtem of implacable ſeverity; it denounces death on the tranſgreſſor, and without any promiſe of mercy to the penitent. But grace comes with healing in its wings; *not aboliſhing, but eſtabliſhing the law*; while it moderates its rigour and mitigates its penalties. Grace does not grant an exemption from any of the duties which the law requires; but, by helping our infirmities, it gives ſtrength for their performance; while, by more powerful motives, more awful ſanctions, and more intereſting perſuaſions, *it inſpires zeal to do thoſe things againſt which there is no law*. Under the law we are ſtrictly prohibited from doing evil; but, under grace, we are excited to do good; the law ordains juſtice; grace inſpires charity; which is the bond of perfectneſs. Coloſſ. iii. 14. The law inculcates duty from motives of fear; but grace from thoſe of love.

42. The law is inflexible; it demands unerring obedience; but grace is mild and flexible; it calls for repentance when we have done amiſs; and, though it do not demand perfection, *yet it will not accept imperfection without ſincerity*. Under the law the ſinner had no pledge of ſecurity in the day of vengeance; but, under grace, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins. Thus grace rather eſtabliſhes than annuls the obligations of the law, by affording us help to fulfil them; and by tempering juſtice with mercy when we offend. Under the

law, every ſin was utter deſtruction; but under grace charity "is made" to cover a multitude of ſins. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Under the law, the end of the commandment was unvarying obedience; but under grace, the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, a good conſcience, and faith unfeigned. 1 Tim. i. 5.

43. What then, in the language of St. Paul, ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! This cannot be; becauſe when we are admitted into covenant with God, by baptiſm and faith, we are ſuppoſed to be dead unto ſin; and how ſhall they, who are dead unto ſin, live any longer therein? For we cannot, in the ſcriptural ſenſe of the words, be dead unto ſin, without becoming the ſervants of righteouſneſs.

44. The influence of the holy Spirit, which is given to help our infirmities, is deſigned to mortify the deeds of the body; Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 16—25. and it is by this means alone, that "the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus makes us free from the law of ſin and death;" Rom. viii. 2. for there is "no condemnation to them who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit." Rom. viii. 1.

45. The genuine energy of the ſpirit, when ſhed on our hearts, infuſed into our affections, and vigorouſly exerciſed by the reaſon and the conſcience,

not only does not ſuperſede, but eſtabliſhes the neceſſity of moral righteouſneſs. For St. Paul uniformly ſuppoſes a ſtate of grace to be a ſtate in which the appetites and paſſions are kept in a due ſubjection; and in which thoſe qualities are acquired, which our Lord ſo uniformly diſplayed in his life, and ſo earneſtly inculcated in his doctrine. A ſtate of grace, therefore, when grace is rightly applied, muſt ALWAYS BE A PROGRESSIVE STATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; for the right and wiſe uſe of one portion of the divine favour brings another, and enables us to keep the moral law perfected by the ſovereign excellence of Chriſtian charity.

46. It muſt not, indeed, be ſuppoſed, but that thoſe who are under grace, will occaſionally violate the law. The moſt righteous will ſometimes offend. But the tranſgreſſions of thoſe, who are really in a ſtate of grace,—of grace not quenched but ſtirred up, will never be marked by any flagrant violation of the greater, or by any habitual deviation from the ſmaller commandments. In many things they may and will offend; on many occaſions mortal infirmity will be viſible in their conduct; but notwithſtanding their accidental lapſes, *the general tenor of their lives will prove, that they are, really, dead unto ſin, and alive unto righteouſneſs.*

47. It is not by ſome occaſional miſdoings that we are to paſs ſentence on any man. Habits of

righteouſneſs, like habits of ſin, are not ſo uniform as to admit of no tranſient variations. A drunkard may be accidentally ſober; and a ſober man may be accidentally drunk. But when we eſtimate the worth of the human character, we are not to form our calculations on the conduct of one ſingle day, but are to take the average of many days and years, and ſee what proportion a man's violation of his duty bears to its performance; his virtues to his vices; or his ſins to his righteouſneſs. In many things we offend all: it is the condition of our imperfect nature, placed in a ſtate of arduous trial, and conſtantly aſſailed by numberleſs temptations; but a few occaſional offences, a few venial and tranſient errors, will not countervail the merits of a life devoted unto righteouſneſs.

48. For the occaſional miſdoings of the righteous, the covenant of grace, leſs ſtern and unbending than that of the law, offers many means of reparation; for, demanding ſincere rather than ſinleſs obedience, it promiſes forgiveneſs to the contrite; and it ſets no limits to the diſpenſations of its mercy. It does not ſay that pardon can be obtained only ſeven times; it rather ſays ſeventy times ſeven. Did not the covenant of grace thus overflow with mercy, our hopes of ſalvation would be precarious indeed; for even of thoſe who have taſted the heavenly gift, how few ever lay down their heads at night without having ſome *little* ſins of omiſſion, if not of commiſſion, to

remember? But thoſe, whoſe faith is freſh, vivid, and active, and on whoſe ſouls grace has been ſhed, and not ſhed in vain, will no ſooner feel a conſciouſneſs of having offended, than remorſe, hearty and unfeigned, will expiate the offence. And though the righteous may fall into ſins of infirmity, they will eſcape the ſnare of thoſe tranſgreſſions which indicate malignity of diſpoſition, in which malice meditates deliberate revenge, or the conſcience is ſeared againſt the obligations of truth, of juſtice, and of charity.

49. We are expoſed on all ſides to ſo many temptations, that it is leſs to be wondered that the righteous ſhould ſometimes be vanquiſhed, than that they ſhould ſo often conquer. The only genuine criterion of righteouſneſs is a power to reſiſt temptation; and the greater and more numerous the temptations we reſiſt, the greater the degree of our obedience. The *increaſing power of conquering temptation, is a token that our faith is increaſing, and that we are growing in grace.*

50. Moſt ſins ſpring from ſome temptation aſſented to by the will; as moſt acts of real righteouſneſs ſpring from ſome temptation oppoſed and overcome by the will, aſſiſted by the favour of God. Temptations ſuggeſt motives of action oppoſite to righteouſneſs, and contrary to the will of God; and they place before us motives to do evil, in order to

counteract our inclination to do good. As, during our ſtay on earth, we are continually expoſed to their influence, our Lord enjoined us continually to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.

51. As our moral trial is made up of a variety of temptations from within and from without, acting on our ſenſes, our thoughts, and affections, produced by the objects around us, or excited by the force of imagination, it behoves us to be conſtantly aware of our danger, and to be on our guard againſt the enemy. It behoves us to beware of our danger, that we may not be ſurpriſed; that a ſenſe of duty may be always preſent to our conſcience; and that we may have grace to help in time of need.

52. Men are too apt to deſpiſe temptations; and conſequently, to put themſelves in their way, when they ought to get out of it; or to ſolicit their admiſſion when they ought to ſecure every avenue of the heart againſt their entrance. It is thus that they fall, by thinking themſelves ſafe; and that they are ſurpriſed, by taking no precaution againſt their danger. We ought conſtantly to remember, what we too conſtantly forget, and what none forget ſo much as thoſe who believe, or pretend to believe in the innate corruption of mankind, that we are here in a ſtate of probation, and on our trial for eternity.

53. He who had on the morrow to ſtand at the

bar of a human tribunal, would not neglect the means of his defence, and the proofs of his integrity. And while we are living, ready, every moment, to be called hence to anſwer for the talents committed to our truſt, ſhall we waſte the time in apathy and inaction? Shall we not guard againſt temptation; and do thoſe things, which, for Chriſt's ſake, will appear pleaſing in the ſight of God, when he ſummons us to judgment?

54. A ſtate of life, like ours, in which we are made accountable for our actions, muſt, neceſſarily, be a ſtate of temptation; a ſtate, in which different motives urge us to actions that have very different tendencies and effects. Without this conflict of motives and of intereſts in our hearts, there would be no morality in human actions; for without ſome inclinations to good as well as to evil, and to evil as well as to good, we could not be moral agents; and it is the right choice between good and evil, or the cheriſhing and exerciſing the inclination to one, and counteracting and reſiſting that to the other, in which the principle of moral rectitude reſides.

55. The perfection of moral rectitude conſiſts in ſo regulating our paſſions and purſuits in life, as to chooſe that which is moſt fitted to our own individual good, as we are ſentient and reaſonable beings; to the good of others, as we are ſocial beings;

and to the will of God, as we are religious beings. That, therefore, is morality, pure and undefiled, which teaches us to connect our own good with the good of others, and with the will of God. As we are ſentient beings, acceſſible to the varied influences of pleaſure and pain, and as the love of life, or the principle of ſelf-preſervation is cloſely incorporated in our frame, we cannot help making what we call *ſelf* a part in moſt of our conſiderations reſpecting the end and tendencies of our conduct. As we are ſocial beings, we poſſeſs various ſympathies which tend to diminiſh our ſelf-love, and to connect our intereſt with the intereſt of others: and as we are reaſonable beings, not governed merely by inſtinct, or the force of ſenſation, we are to prove that our own individual good is increaſed by being ſhared, and multiplied by being divided. And as we are religious beings, for man is ſo conſtituted that religion is an eſſential part of his nature, and the only ſolid groundwork on which he can reſt his happineſs; and particularly as we are beings, to whom the light of revelation has made known the duties of true religion, we cannot ſeparate the conſideration of the good which we do to others, or contribute to ſociety, from the will of God; for what his will decrees, muſt be our good; and what it forbids, our bane; both as we ſtand in relation to ourſelves, or as we form part of a large community.

56. As we cannot ſuppoſe that God would have

enjoined any thing contrary to our real intereſt, as we are ſentient and reaſonable, or ſocial and religious beings, it follows that pure morality conſiſts in doing his will, as that will has been made known to us, without ſtaying ſcrupulouſly to calculate how much ſuch obedience may conduce to our own immediate advantage, or to the advantage of others; becauſe, as God is infinitely wiſe and good, *he cannot have appointed laws for our conduct, of which the obſervance is not relative to our own good, and the good of others.*

57. Pure morality then conſiſts in doing God's will; but here is our miſery, that we are often powerfully tempted not to do it, and that various cauſes conſpire to make us violate it. Though a comprehenſive conſideration of the ſubject might prove obedience to the will of God to be our preſent intereſt identified with our future, yet, expoſed as we are, to the ſudden impulſes and violent agitations of luſt and paſſion, we cannot wait the reſult of ſuch calculations.

58. Luſts and paſſions are incorporated in the frame of man, as antagoniſts to his reaſon and his conſcience; that they may afford opportunity for reaſon to exerciſe its ſtrength, and for conſcience to ſtruggle againſt the enemy that oppoſes it. In the frame of man, ſenſation is often at variance with reaſon; and appetite with conſcience. Reaſon calls

for ſelf-denial; ſenſation demands ſelf-indulgence. Senſation regards merely the preſent; reaſon looks to the future. The one is the fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit; the other the ſpirit luſting againſt the fleſh; the one is the animal, the other the moral part of man; *and theſe two are, for wiſe reaſons, and in order to inſtruct man in the difficult art of ſelf-government, for which no room could otherwiſe have been afforded, made often contrary the one to the other.*

59. By reſiſting his paſſions, which call for *immediate* gratification, and controuling his ſenſual propenſities, man is trained up to habits of obedience, and fitted for a better ſtate, in which, ſenſe and luſt will have no ſway. The luſts and paſſions of men (the fleſh warring againſt the ſpirit) ſtir up their will againſt the will of God. Intended to be a ſubordinate part of our nature, and to find exerciſe for our moral powers, they often become, through the neglect of a reaſonable ſelf-government, the deſpots, to whoſe influence we yield, and under whoſe ſlavery we crouch. They keep the little ſtate of man in a perpetual commotion. If they are not governed, they ſoon govern. They fix in the very core of the heart the ſtandard of rebellion againſt heaven. A conſtant watchfulneſs is neceſſary to keep them in ſubjection. Our ſenſe of duty ſhould be always burning; it is the oil, which ſhould never be wanting in the lamp of conſcience; and it is that oil,

which we cannot borrow of others, but muſt provide for ourſelves.

60. A ſenſe of duty, ſuch as will enable us to quell the tumult of our luſts and paſſions, of our irregular deſires and our inordinate appetites, muſt not be only a cold faint belief that Chriſtianity is a true religion; a belief that will not baniſh one evil thought, or quench one unruly deſire, but it muſt be a conviction operating on the mind, and a perſuaſion warming the heart; whoſe united ſtrength will, in ſome meaſure, bring the future and the preſent into contact; that will identify the intereſt of eternity with that of time; and make the law of the Lord our ſtudy and delight, our glory and our happineſs. A ſenſe of duty, compounded of a conviction ſo rational, and a perſuaſion ſo affectionate, can alone diſſolve that ſorcery which the fleſh exerciſes over the conſcience, and arm the moral principle with ſtrength to combat the attacks and to moderate the rage of ſenſual deſire.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

The practice of Repentance plainly and affectionately recommended.

1. How little do we know ourſelves! how ſeldom do we meditate on the nature or the number of our ſins! We no ſooner tranſgreſs ſome law of God, than we ſeek excuſes to palliate the offence; and if conſcience upbraid us we call in ſophiſtry to ſooth the pang. Thus we practiſe the groſſeſt diſſimulation, even upon our own hearts.

2. Few are they who do not know their duty; few are they who cannot diſtinguiſh juſtice from injuſtice, truth from falſehood, humanity from cruelty. But, though we cannot plead want of knowledge, how ſeldom do we act on the knowledge we poſſeſs? Intent on the pleaſures of ſin, we blind our eyes to the danger of ſinning. We ruſh toward the brink of ruin, conſcious, but careleſs, whither we are going. O ſtrange infatuation!

3. Sin is, in the firſt place, a violation of the moral law. Chriſtians cannot pretend ignorance of that law, for it is not only imprinted on their conſciences, but is clearly, diſtinctly, and authoritatively made known to them by revelation; and, as our Saviour declared, though heaven and earth ſhall be diſſolved, not a tittle of it ſhall ever paſs away. The doctrine of Chriſt is the eternal wiſdom of the moral law, enforced with the higheſt ſanctions, and propoſed to our obedience on the pain of damnation. Whenever we ſin againſt any of the precepts of Chriſt, we ſin againſt the moral law; and we cannot treſpaſs againſt any part of the moral law, without offending againſt ſome expreſs and revealed rule of the goſpel. The moment, therefore, we have violated any one duty of truth, juſtice, and humanity, or any one ſaying of the perfect law of Chriſt, that moment we are polluted with guilt; and, without repentance, obnoxious to puniſhment. Then we have need of forgiveneſs; then we ought to exclaim with the publican in the parable, "Lord have mercy upon me a ſinner!"

4. We ought frequently to meditate on the good and perfect law of God, that we may know how oft we offend. We ought never to lay down our heads on our pillow at night, without reflecting on our tranſgreſſions in the day. We ought, every night, to try and examine our thoughts, words, and actions, that we may know how far they have been

regulated according to the rules of the goſpel. We ought to ſay to ourſelves, have I tranſgreſſed this day in thought, word, or deed? and what was the nature, and what were the circumſtances of my tranſgreſſion? Let us put theſe queſtions to our own hearts, that we may diſtinctly ſee what we have done amiſs. This practice would aid our piety, and haſten our improvement. It would teach us to be on our guard againſt ſin, and to know ourſelves. St. Paul ſays, "let not the ſun go down upon your wrath;" and, doubtleſs, we ſhall moſt effectually conſult our preſent, and provide for our future happineſs, if we do not ſuffer the night to end and the morning to dawn, while we have one ſin, unrepented of, hanging on our ſouls.

5. Men are prone to forget their tranſgreſſions; they ſin day after day without thinking of their ſins, or being aware of their danger; and they, perhaps, continue this practice for many years, till they have committed innumerable treſpaſſes, which they have forgotten, but which God will remember. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and diſcloſe to the trembling and impenitent culprit, the evil of all his days that are paſt! How much then does it behove us to repent while we know what we have to repent of; and not to poſtpone this moſt important duty, till our ſins have become more in number than the hairs of our heads, and our ini-

quities have accumulated till we know not their amount?

6. It is always dangerous, even in our worldly concerns, to run in arrears with time. It is always dangerous to put off till the morrow what ought to be done to day. Much more dangerous is it, in our ſpiritual affairs, to run in debt with time, and to defer the work of our ſalvation, which it is perilous in the extreme to begin late, and which can never be begun too ſoon. Let us not attempt to veil our danger under the cover of that ſelf impoſture, which cauſes us to miſtake the fictions of hope for a rock of ſafety! The impenitent ſinner can never be ſafe. He is always ſtanding on the brink of the gulph of perdition; and he may be plunged into it in a moment! In a moment he may paſs into that ſtate, where repentance will be impoſſible, and tears will be ſhed in vain.

7. Repentance, it is to be feared, is uſually begun too late! People tamper with their ſoul's everlaſting welfare. There are, perhaps, few perſons, however profligate, who do not flatter themſelves with ſome hope of improvement. They fix on ſome imaginary period, in which they reſolve to carry it into effect; but this period no ſooner arrives than it is found inconvenient, and *the great work* is deferred to ſome period ſtill more diſtant; and is thus ſucceſ-

ſively poſtponed from time to time, till life has ebbed away!

8. Some are ſo improvident of their future happineſs, as to imagine that it will be time enough to repent, when their hairs are grey with age, or ſome dangerous ſickneſs indicates their approaching diſſolution. But, alas! how vain and deceitful are theſe expectations! Few live to grow old, compared to the many who periſh in their prime. On a reaſonable calculation of the value of life, there is not, perhaps, more than one perſon in ten, who attains his ſeventieth year. Many are cut off in their infancy; ſome in the flower of youth; others in the vigour of manhood; and how many are there whoſe end is ſudden and unexpected? Theſe conſiderations ſhew the neceſſity of beginning our repentance to-day, while it is called to-day, and not putting it off to *the night, when no man can work.*

9. Repentance, begun late, is likely to be ineffectual. If we ſuffer habits of ſin to grow with our growth, and to ſtrengthen with our ſtrength, they will become, as it were, incorporated in our nature, and our exertions to eradicate them muſt be vain. We may, perhaps, imagine that the divine favour will aſſiſt us in this arduous undertaking; but we have no reaſon to expect that aſſiſtance. If we have led lives, entirely repugnant to our ſenſe of right and wrong, and to the laws of the religion we

profeſs; if we have ſlighted the words of eternal life in that period when we had health and ſtrength, and all our faculties were in their full vigour, can we think that God will be thus gracious when we repent becauſe we can ſin no longer? Let us not indulge ſuch treacherous expectations. I do not, indeed, ſay that a death-bed repentance was never ſincere, or never accepted; but this I ſay, that it is always unſafe, and ſeldom practicable. The ſcripture, by no means, encourages us in truſting to ſo precarious a ſtay. It tells us to be wiſe in time. It tells us to watch and pray; and ſuffer nothing to put us off our guard againſt the enemy of our ſouls.

10. Some ſinners aſſume a falſe confidence from the example of the thief upon the croſs, who was forgiven when in the agonies of death. But his example holds out little encouragement to Chriſtians at the preſent day. We are initiated into the church of Chriſt ſoon after we are born; and who among us can plead ignorance, unleſs it be a perverſe and wilful ignorance of the truth, and the duties of Chriſtianity? To us Chriſt is known; to us he is preached; to us the words of immortality are proclaimed; and it is our own fault if we have eyes, and ſee not; ears, and hear not; and do not make a wiſe and timely application of the knowledge we poſſeſs. The poor malefactor on the croſs had probably but one opportunity of knowing Jeſus, or at leaſt, of being convinced of his divine character; but he did not

ſuffer that opportunity to eſcape: he made an inſtant and ſaving uſe of it; his heart was pierced with contrition; he implored pardon; and obtained the pardon he implored *. But in what a different ſitua-

* As this paſſage in Luke xxiii. 39—43, is frequently miſunderſtood, and encourages many in truſting, more than they ought, to a death-bed repentance, I ſhall give the whole paſſage in Dr. Clarke's admirable paraphraſe. " One of the robbers alſo, that were crucified with him, being a man of a deſperate and incorrigible temper, not duly ſenſible of the greatneſs of his own crimes, nor conſidering the tokens which Jeſus gave, in his whole behaviour, of his being an innocent and holy perſon, ſaid to him, in a diſcontented and ſullen manner, *If you be the* MESSIAH, *why do you not reſcue yourſelf and us?* But the other, being of a meek and penitent diſpoſition, truly ſenſible of the greatneſs of his own crime, and of the juſtice of his puniſhment; and, obſerving at the ſame time, the extraordinary marks which appeared in this whole tranſaction, of Jeſus's being a very great and good man, ſo that he became fully convinced in his own mind that Jeſus was indeed the expected *Meſſiah*, he rebuked his companion, ſaying, How can you be ſo profane and impious, void of the fear of God, and ſo deſperately inſenſible of your own condition, as to inſult over a dying perſon, at the ſame time that you yourſelf are actually in the ſame condemnation? eſpecially, when what *we* ſuffer is only the juſt puniſhment of our crimes, and no more than we deſerve: but this man does not appear guilty of any fault at all. *Then directing himſelf to* Jeſus, *he ſaid*, Lord, I believe you to be the *Meſſiah*; and that, after all your ſufferings, God will exalt you to great glory and power; I beſeech you, when you come to be eſtabliſhed in your kingdom, remember me with thoughts of mercy and compaſſion. *Jeſus* replied; Verily, I tell you, this day thou ſhalt be with

tion are we from this criminal? How many opportunities have we of knowing Jesus; of attending to his instructions, and of keeping his sayings! but, how often do we slight these opportunities, and let them glide by us like the waters of the brook? Alas! this is the cause of our ruin. We are not wise in time; we despise the day before us, and let the the sun of life set before we think that it is going down.

11. If we wish to finish that repentance, which is not to be repented of, we must begin it early. Repentance, which implies a thorough conversion unto holiness, cannot be accomplished in an hour, or a day, or any short time. It is a work of years; and its operations are slow and gradual. As no man becomes profligate in an instant; so no one becomes righteous on a sudden. It is only by degrees, that

me in the state of happy souls departed." "'Tis probable," says Dr. Clarke, "from the admonition mentioned in verses 40, 41, that this robber had been brought to serious consideration and true repentance some time before he came to execution; and that having formerly heard of Christ, and comparing what he now saw with what he had before heard concerning him, he was convinced of his being the true *Messiah*. But, however that be, and whether he was a penitent before his coming to execution, or not; 'tis certain *his believing in Christ at this first opportunity, bears no similitude to the late repentance of Christians, who have believed and disobeyed him all their lives.*

the ſinner is hardened in unrighteouſneſs; and it is only by degrees that he becomes righteous. Habits of ſin, and propenſities to evil, cannot be ſubdued without a long and laborious conflict. They ſtruggle againſt ſubjection; and even when they *ſeem* extinguiſhed, they will ſometimes riſe, as it were, from their aſhes, and lead us captive at their pleaſure. Thus we ſee in what a fatal deluſion thoſe perſons are enſnared, who imagine that their converſion is ſudden and inſtantaneous; that they hear a divine call; that they feel a celeſtial impulſe; that they are ſinners one minute, and righteous the next; that this inſtant they are in danger, and the next in ſafety; that this moment they tremble on the verge of hell, and that the next they thrill with rapture in the hoſt of heaven. Such groſs impoſitions only ſerve to engender a falſe ſecurity, and to make thoſe who indulge them careleſs of their conduct, and utterly negligent of all the great obligations of morality.

12. The penitent is never entirely ſafe; he is always in danger of falling; and the tempter is ever watching an opportunity to entangle him again in the ſnares from which he has eſcaped. Thus, then, even the righteous have occaſion for abundant watchfulneſs; and much more occaſion have they, whoſe repentance is only begun, and not yet confirmed.

13. When the converſion of a ſinner firſt commences, there is a great inward ſtruggle between his

appetites, his paſſions, and his conſcience; till, by ſlow degrees, he learns to reſiſt temptations, and to replace evil habits by habits of goodneſs. But, if repentance be a work of time, if the converſion of the ſinner cannot, without the extraordinary grace of God, be completed in an inſtant, it is certainly a ſtrong reaſon, why none ought to put it off to a diſtant and uncertain period; and much leſs ought they to poſtpone it, till the ſand of life is almoſt run out. A death-bed repentance is not to be truſted to. It is madneſs in any man to hazard his ſalvation on ſo perilous and deſperate a venture.

14. And let us not forget, what too few remember, that repentance means not only ſorrow for ſin, but ſorrow producing newneſs of life. It means contrition generating moral improvement. It means a change from ſin unto holineſs; a recovery from the ſnares of the devil to the ſervice of the living God. That repentance is not ſincere or ſaving, where the heart and life are not changed. The repentance of the drunkard is not ſincere, unleſs it make him ſober; of the liar, unleſs it generate the love of truth; of the hard-hearted man, unleſs it inſpire humane affection; of the covetous, unleſs it extinguiſh the luſt of wealth; of the ambitious, unleſs it kindle the ſpirit of humility; of the fraudulent, unleſs it end in habits of plain-dealing; of the deceitful, unleſs it produce ſincerity.

15. If that repentance be vain, which bringeth not forth good fruits meet for repentance, we more forcibly ſee the extreme danger of delaying it till the cloſe of life, when health and ſtrength are gone, and the ſoul is troubled with the fears of death. At that period, when all the nobler faculties of our nature are diſordered, what reparation can we make for a whole life of ſin? At that period, how can we extirpate or reverſe thoſe habits and affections which we have cheriſhed from our earlieſt years?

16. As the repentance of a ſick man ſeldom laſts longer than the period of his ſickneſs; ſo we have too much reaſon to apprehend that the repentance of a dying man is ſeldom real and ſincere; and that, if his life were ſpared, his ſins would not ceaſe. He would again return to his old ways, and perſiſt in his former tranſgreſſions.

17. If we wiſh to make our repentance effectual, we ought not to truſt to the uncertainties of the future. We ought to begin the work of our ſalvation to-day, while it is called to-day; as none of us know how the day may end, or what the morrow may bring forth. The preſent, that ineſtimable preſent, by which we ſet ſo little ſtore, is the only ſafe and convenient ſeaſon for repentance. Let us then not wait till that ſeaſon be over! Let us not forget how ſhort and uncertain life is! Let us not

forget the difficulty of correcting evil habits, when they have been ſuffered to grow rank by indulgence, and to gather ſtrength by age. Let us not ſuffer one day after another to paſs by us, without reflecting ſeriouſly whither we are going, and how great will be our miſery if we periſh in our ſins!

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

Temptations; how to combat, and how to conquer.

1. LIFE is a ſtate of trial; and, conſequently, of temptation. In the circumſtances in which we are placed, we find motives to very oppoſite modes of conduct. Temptations chiefly operate by oppoſing the animal to the rational nature of man; they arm his appetites and paſſions againſt his conſcience. Addreſſing their perſuaſions to our groſs ſenſes, they aſſail us in that quarter in which we uſually make the leaſt reſiſtance. Under the form of ſome pre ſent good, or the attractions of ſome immediate pleaſure, they invite us to forego that conduct, which is followed by no remorſe, and that intereſt which is more real, though it may be more remote.

2. Reaſon and conſcience are the great antagoniſts, with which God has provided us, to combat temptation. Would we but carefully cultivate our

rational faculties, and our natural ſenſe of right and wrong, and which are ſo capable of improvement, no temptation would be able to bring us into ſubjection. The right exerciſe of our reaſon will always invigorate the feeling, and incline us to the practice of our duty. But if man, who poſſeſſes powers fitted to exerciſe, and capable of exerciſing a ſovereign ſway over his inferior appetites, will neglect their cultivation, or rebel againſt their government, he muſt neceſſarily become the ſlave of temptation, and fall into ſin and miſery.

3. When man does yield to the impulſes of temptation, he can, juſtly, blame no one but himſelf. God places us in circumſtances of temptation, in order to prove our obedience, and to exerciſe our reaſon and our conſcience; but he never permits the temptations which we meet with to be greater than our ſtrength, or able to overpower us without the conſent of our will. Did God place us in circumſtances of temptation greater than our power to reſiſt, or more than the right uſe of our reaſon and our conſcience could conquer, he would be the author of our ſins; and man would by no means deſerve to be accountable for his actions, or puniſhable for his offences. But the Father of ſpirits deals not ſo cruelly and unreaſonably with his creatures. He never ſuffers our temptations to be greater than our ſtrength; or, in ſcriptural language, he never tempts us above that we are able to bear. He does

not permit the perſuaſions to do wrong to be naturally ſtronger than the power to do right.

4. Motives to vice are continually offering themſelves to our minds, ſuggeſted by the objects around us, the circumſtances in which we are placed, or the often-ſhifting ſcene of our lives; but thoſe motives are never ſo powerful as that they cannot be reſiſted. If we ſuffer them to overcome us, it muſt be by our own free choice, and we are reſponſible for the delinquency. When God permits us to be tempted, he always makes, with the temptation, a way to eſcape; ſo that we can never accuſe him as the author of our miſconduct. He has given us arms, with which to reſiſt, and by which to ſubdue every temptation that may aſſail us, through the infirmities of the fleſh, or the circumſtances of our condition.

5. Though the bleſſed author of Chriſtianity ordered us to make this one of our daily ſupplications, "*lead us not into temptation*;" we ought not to conſtrue the petition as in the leaſt implying that God ever does, or ever will ſuffer any temptations to occur, which we are too weak to reſiſt, or too frail to overcome. Such a notion of God is downright blaſphemy; and it is contrary to every idea which we can form of his juſtice and his goodneſs. But, as we know that God, for wiſe and good purpoſes, hath deſignedly placed us in a ſtate of things which offer frequent occaſions of temptation, the peti-

tion "lead us not into temptation," muſt be ſuppoſed to contain a fervent ſupplication that, in all thoſe temptations in which his wiſdom places us, or permits us to be placed, he would give us intimations of our danger, and place the obligations of our duty ſo ſtrongly before our eyes, that we may be prevented from violating it, not only by the apprehenſions of fear, but by a vivid ſenſe of intereſt. And when we pray thus to diſcern our danger, and thus to know and feel that our duty is our intereſt, we take the moſt effectual method to impreſs the ſalutary perſuaſion on our hearts.

6. If we duly conſider the danger of ſin, with the great preſent, and the ineſtimable future intereſt, which is connected with the performance of our duty, the conſideration is ſurely enough to make us pauſe before we liſten to the ſuggeſtions of temptation, even when it offers itſelf under the moſt ſpecious and inſinuating appearance. Temptations generally operate by the lure of ſome preſent gratification; and it is thus, for the moſt part, that they prevail againſt us. Did they promiſe only ſome future and diſtant good or pleaſure, we might have due time to reflect on the danger of liſtening to them; conſideration might come to our aid; and we might preſerve our integrity. But, by offering ſome immediate advantage or enjoyment, they uſually take us, as it were, by ſurpriſe. They deny leiſure for reflection; they place themſelves within our

reach; we think, that if we ſuffer the opportunity to eſcape, it will no more return; and we inſtantly ſwallow the bait without thinking on its pernicious conſequences. Thus the young and the old are ſeduced into ſin. They ſee the preſent opportunity of ſome ſinful gratification before them, and they greedily ſeize it without ſtaying to reflect how illuſory it is, or how deſtructive it may prove. Thus thouſands are led into a thouſand exceſſes and crimes; exceſſes, which ſometimes cannot be repaired; and crimes, which penitence itſelf can hardly waſh away. Hence, do we not ſee the great wiſdom of Him who had duly conſidered the circumſtances of our preſent ſituation, and our many occaſions of falling, in directing us *to watch and pray, leſt we enter into temptation?* By watching againſt the deceitfulneſs of ſin, in prayer and ſupplication, we are kept conſtantly on our guard; and temptations cannot take us unawares. If they do attempt our conſcience, they find it a ſtrong hold, fortified againſt their irruption. They aſſail it when armed in the panoply of devotion, and prepared to make a vigorous reſiſtance.

7. When we are deſired in ſcripture to watch and pray *leſt we enter into temptations*, the injunction teaches us to be vigilant, and prepared againſt their ingreſs; to adopt prudent meaſures of precaution againſt their open force, or their ſecret wiles. We

are not ſupinely to give them admiſſion into our hearts, and then imagine that we can ſtop their progreſs, or prevent their victory. No, we are to ſhut the gates againſt them. It is too late to oppoſe an enemy when he is already paſt the walls. It is too late to watch againſt temptations when they have found an entrance into our breaſts. It is too late to pray againſt their enchantments, when they have poſted themſelves in our affections.

8. The advice of our Lord, "pray that ye enter not into temptation," is in exact conformity to that petition which he enjoined, "lead us not into temptation;" that is, he exhorts us to implore Him who reads our thoughts, and knoweth whereof we are made, to diſpoſe our hearts and minds to have ſuch a firm perſuaſion of our duty, that we may not *wilfully enter into temptation, or unwarily ſuffer temptation to enter into us.* By often uſing this petition, and fervently ſeeking help from God againſt the temptations of the world, we are kept conſtantly on our watch againſt their inroads. We are prepared to ſtruggle with them on their firſt approach, and to extinguiſh the ſpark before it kindle into a flame. As temptations are uſually buſy in working on the imagination, and captivating the will by the allurements of preſent pleaſure; prayer, by ſanctifying our hearts and invigorating our faith, enables us to diſcern that the pleaſures of ſin are fallacious as the

apples of Sodom *. Prayer animates and freſhens our hopes of immortality, while it renders us leſs ſenſible to the faſcination of ſenſual and ſhort-lived gratifications. It makes us ſee injuſtice, intemperance, and luſt, in all their real deformity and danger; while it clothes juſtice, temperance, and chaſtity, in all their native ſimplicity and lovelineſs; and ſhows them connected with laſting ſecurity and happineſs.

9. Though many temptations to which we are ſubject, evidently originate from thoſe circumſtances in which God has placed us, yet it is probable, that the principal part of them, and particularly thoſe, whoſe venom is moſt powerful, and whoſe bite moſt mortal, originate more immediately from ourſelves. St. James ſays, " every man is tempted when he is

* " It (the country of Sodom) was of old a moſt happy land, both for the fruits it bore, and the riches of its cities, although it be now all burnt up. It is related how, for the impiety of its inhabitants, it was burnt by lightning; in conſequence of which there are ſtill the remainders of that divine fire, and the traces, or ſhadows, of the five cities are ſtill to be ſeen, as well *as the aſhes growing in their fruits*; which fruits, if you pluck them with your hands, they diſſolve into ſmoke and aſhes. And thus, what is related of this land of Sodom, hath theſe marks of credibility, which our very ſight affords us." See Joſephus' Jewiſh war, B. IV. C. viii. § 4. I quote from Whiſton's tranſlation.

enſnared and allured by his own evil deſire *." Evil thoughts, whoſe preſence we invite, whoſe ſtay we ſolicit, and whoſe numbers we cheriſh, till they ſwarm into a legion of fiends, that ſhut up every avenue to the conſcience, ſeem the moſt formidable emiſſaries of temptation, and the principal cauſes of our falling. We think and ruminate on ſin till it loſes its deformity, or till its miſhapen uglineſs appears grace and beauty.

10. By indulging impure and unrighteous thoughts, though only for a ſhort time, they often become too ſtrong to be reſiſted. They attract one another till they gather into a hoſt, which the reaſon cannot diſperſe, nor the conſcience withſtand. Acting with a ſort of fatal ſorcery on the imagination, they magnify the pleaſures of ſin to a degree ſo intenſe, or give them a form ſo inviting, that *deſire becomes inflamed beyond the power of reſiſtance.*

11. By meditating on injuſtice or adultery, or any unlawful gratification, the fond hallucinations of pleaſure get ſuch a firm poſſeſſion of the paſſions, that they baniſh all concern about the danger, the ſhame, or the ſin. The imagination, intereſted in the picture of ſome ideal bliſs, palſies the exertions

* "By his animal part, to which his rational part can always be ſuperior." Newcome on James i. 14.

of the conſcience, and prevents all reflection on the conſequences. Any man may eaſily govern his appetites, who can maſter the ſenſual luxuriance of his imagination; but he who gives the reins to the voluptuouſneſs of fancy, will ſoon find himſelf oppreſſed by the more than iron bondage of his luſts. He who will vigilantly avoid all evil thoughts, and reſolutely oppoſe his ideas when they ſeem diſpoſed to ſlide into laſcivious combinations, may prevent every inordinate deſire, and triumph over every unhallowed paſſion.

12. To contend, therefore, with ſucceſs againſt temptation, we muſt learn to keep the fancy in ſubjection. Inſtead of wantonly cheriſhing one evil thought, we ought to ſtifle it at its birth, before its aſſociates, obeying its call, and haſtening to its aid, ſucceſſively combine into images of enjoyment, from which the attention cannot be withdrawn, and from whoſe ſpells the affections cannot be diſentangled. Thoſe who have acquired the habit of governing their thoughts, of cheriſhing the pure, and ſuppreſſing the unclean, will ſeldom be wanting in ſtrength to ſhut out temptation from their hearts. But as, notwithſtanding all our endeavours, ſome impure and unholy ideas, the evil progeny of paſt aſſociations, will at times croſs the mind, as if endeavouring to captivate the attention, recourſe muſt often be had to thoſe fervent intreaties which piety will ſuggeſt, and which the founder of Chriſtianity ſo ſtrongly

recommended. Thoſe who, with a pure and upright heart, aſk ſuccour of God, will never find it to fail. But when, notwithſtanding our firſt intreaties, we feel evil thoughts gaining ground on our attention and getting the maſtery over our will, we muſt not only pray, but be importunate in prayer. Our firſt ſupplications are often not granted, to try our faith, and, by increaſing our devotion, to make us better qualified to receive the favours we implore. Difficulties, in the way of the reſolute and the ſtrong, only increaſe their exertions to overcome them; and many occaſions there are, in which help refuſed to the righteous, will only add to the intenſity of deſire and the fervour of ſupplication. Our Lord did not, till after reiterated refuſals, grant the prayer of the Canaanitiſh woman *, that he might try the conſtancy

* See Matt. xv. 21—28. The behaviour of our Lord on this occaſion deſerves our attention; and it will in ſome meaſure ſerve to illuſtrate the manner in which God often tries our truſt in his goodneſs, and our patience in prayer. To the firſt requeſt of the unfortunate ſtranger, Jeſus *anſwered not a word*. And yet there ſeems to have been ſo much diſtreſs painted in the manner and the cries of the ſupplicant, as to have excited the compaſſion even of his diſciples, who interceded with their maſter to grant her requeſt, and ſend her home. But Jeſus, as if unmoved by the lamentation of the mother ſorrowing for her child, and by the interceſſion of his diſciples, replies ſternly, "I am not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael." The woman then came and did him obeiſance; oppreſſed with grief, ſhe fell at his feet, and, caſting up her eyes to his, endeavoured to intereſt his ſympathy; but,

of her faith, by the ardour of her importunity. To pray coldly and negligently, with languor and diſ-

" it is not right," ſaid Jeſus, " to take the children's meat and caſt it to dogs." Did this harſh refuſal provoke her ſcorn, or offend her pride? No; endeavouring to ſoften his ſeverity by her meekneſs, ſhe returns an anſwer which ſhews the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, and the lowlineſs of her heart. " Truth, Sir, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table." Jeſus could hold out no longer; he ſent the petitioner away happy in his commendation of her piety, and in the recovery of her daughter. The reiterated denials which the Canaanitiſh woman experienced from him, whom ſhe knew to be the teacher of truth, and the miniſter of compaſſion, only made her intreaties more intenſe inſtead of more remiſs; and rather invigorated hope than produced deſpair; till, at laſt, her faith and her piety ſo ſtrongly manifeſted her moral fitneſs to receive the favour ſhe implored, that it could no longer be denied. " Woman!" ſaid Jeſus, " great is thy faith; *be it unto thee as thou deſireſt.*" Prayer always tends to bring us what we aſk, when it increaſes our moral fitneſs to receive what we pray for. And hence the neceſſity of praying, and of praying with earneſt importunity. See Luke xi. 5—11. In order to avert many of thoſe phyſical evils which often make exiſtence ſo deplorable, and which ſeem the immediate viſitation of God, as ſome caſes of ſickneſs, and various misfortunes, loſſes, and caſualties, which providence pours from the vials of his wrath, *it ſeems firſt neceſſary to avoid thoſe moral evils, with which ſuch afflictions are aſſociated in the moral order of the world.* Perhaps few ſufferings are inflicted on us in the courſe of our lives, which we do not deſerve; and certainly none by which we might not profit, if we would uſe them well. When, then, we pray to be delivered from thoſe harms which may happen to the body, or impair our temporal happineſs, le us not fail to conſider that *the moſt efficacious method* of averting them, is

truſt, is to make ourſelves unfit to receive the favour we aſk, and, conſequently, to indiſpoſe God to

by eſchewing evil, and doing good. Righteouſneſs hath not only the promiſe of the life which is to come, but of that which now is. It is not, indeed, often allied to great wealth or diſtinguiſhed honours; (for ſuch things are a common ſource of corruption and miſery;) but it is ſeldom found connected with torment of body or anguiſh of heart. Goodneſs is the ſureſt way to happineſs; and as far as happineſs regards a pleaſurable ſtate of the heart and conſcience, and which, perhaps, conſtitutes the pureſt kind of earthly happineſs, it will, I think, be found always nicely apportioned to our moral qualifications. But, it might be ſaid, if no ſufferings be inflicted on us which we do not deſerve, and which have not, at the ſame time, a benevolent deſign, why ſhould we pray againſt them? The ſame objection might be made to the uſe of prayer in general; but we are to conſider that we do not pray, in the vain deſign of averting ills that have already happened, or which are intended to happen; for this would be to pray in order to alter the will, or fruſtrate the plans of providence; but we pray, in order that the thoughts of ſuffering, and the conſciouſneſs that God can inflict, and will inflict it, *where there is a moral neceſſity*, may be ſo ſtrongly impreſſed on our minds, that, *by acting ſo as not to deſerve the puniſhment, we may take the ſureſt way not to ſuffer it.* Thus prayer enables us to profit by the general operation of moral laws, as induſtry enables us to take advantage of the beneficial tendencies of the laws of the natural world. Hence there is, therefore, a great and unſpeakable advantage in earneſtly and habitually imploring a deliverance from bodily ſufferings and temporal calamities; becauſe though we do not thereby preſume to change the courſe of the moral ſyſtem, we give it a favourable direction, as far as it reſpects ourſelves; by altering, not its relations to us, but our relations to it; *not by turning it out of its courſe, but by putting ourſelves,*

grant it. To ſupplicate divine aſſiſtance, if I may ſo ſpeak, without the ſpirit of ſupplication animating our requeſts, and warming our hearts, is, inſtead of making prayer a protection to ourſelves, to render it an advantage to the enemy. Such reſiſtance will not avail againſt the ſtrength of temptation; but warm, ſincere, and earneſt and devout appeals to the throne of mercy, will baniſh thoſe impure imaginations which labour to enſnare us; and repulſe thoſe blaſts of corruption that ſeem ſent from hell on purpoſe to ſear and canker our virtuous ſenſibilities, and harden our hearts in unrighteouſneſs.

our own hearts and diſpoſitions, in that ſtate, which, being morally good, is, in the wiſe arrangements of that moral government under which we live, invariably connected with, and productive of temporal good, and preſent felicity. This appears to me the only truly philoſophical and ſcriptural mode of explaining the efficacy of prayer; and hence we may ſee how what is called a particular and perſonal, is compatible with a general providence.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

Causes of religious error and unbelief.

1. THE principal causes of religious error and unbelief, may be traced to the ignorance and prejudices of the mind, or the corruptions of the heart.

2. Our Lord, who was certainly a friend to the free exercise of the rational faculties, was well aware of the consequences, that would flow from their abuse. He accordingly admonished his disciples: "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Luke xi. 35.* Let not thy reason

* Σκοπει οὖν, μὴ τὸ φῶς, τὸ ἐν σοὶ, σκότος ἐστίν. Luke xi. 35. Grotius says, "Laudo eos qui vertunt, *considera an non lux tua tenebræ sint.* Many of the commentators have, as usual, perplexed this passage in their endeavours to find meanings that were never meant. Rosenmuller is brief and clear. "Sensus est," says the sober and judicious scholiast, "considera an non mens tua ignorantiæ et præjudiciorum vitio laboret." May I refer the reader to Dr. Clarke's paraphrase?

which was given thee as a ſtay to virtue and a guide to truth, become the means of bewildering thee in error, or of hardening thee in ſin! In another place, our Saviour compares the underſtanding to the eye; the organ of knowledge to the organ of ſight. "The lamp of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be clear, thy whole body will be enlightened. But if thine eye be dim, thy whole body will be in darkneſs. If, therefore, the light which is in thee be darkneſs, how great *muſt be* that darkneſs*!" Matt. vi. 22, 23. When the viſion is clear and vigorous we ſee our way diſtinctly; we behold objects as they are, in their true figure and proportions. When the underſtanding is in a ſound and healthy ſtate, neither warped by prejudices, dimmed by ſuperſtition, nor torpid through inaction, it readily diſtinguiſhes truth from error. It examines queſtions propoſed to its conſideration, with impartial ſeverity; it gives to oppoſing arguments their due force; and its deciſions

* I follow Dr. Newcome's tranſlation. In his ſupplement to Wolfius, Koecher ſays, on this paſſage, "Domini ſententia hæc eſt; lucerna corporis oculus exiſtit; quod ſi igitur oculus tuus ſanus et integer eſt, totum corpus tuum recte movetur ac regitur; ſin vero oculus tuus vitio laborat, totum corpus tuum motibus et actionibus rite perfungi nequit. Si, itaque, quod in te exiſtit lumen, nempe intellectus tuus, tenebris, id eſt, ignorantia et erroribus repletus eſt; quantæ hæ tenebræ mentis præ tenebris oculorum, quam perniciosæ erunt, quantum tibi damni afferent? Plus ſane quam oculus male conſtitutus." Koecher, Supplem. in Wolf. p. 156, 157.

are influenced only by the weight of evidence. But when the mind is under the misrule of prejudices, when superstition has clouded its horizon, or sloth has numbed its energies, it sees objects through a false medium; a medium which changes their colour and their form; and disturbs and confuses their relations. Then, things that are straight, appear crooked; that are light, become obscure; propositions that are plain, seem abstruse; conclusions that are just, irregular. And thus, when that power, by which God designed to shew us the true relations of things, to fix the limits of right and wrong, truth and error, becomes itself darkened, how great, in the language of our Saviour, must be that darkness! The understanding, oppressed under a cloud of prejudices, can no more discern the truth, than a blind man can behold the sun.

3. Some of our earliest notions are, often, of a religious cast. The curiosity of children is often remarked, and is very remarkable; it shows itself in an insatiable desire to learn the causes of the objects around them; and they are continually busy in putting questions to their parents and others, to obtain the information they desire. They ask, "whence this or that came, who made this thing or that." They are informed of one cause after another, till their inquiries end in God. They are told that God is the author of all things; that he made the sun, the moon, and the stars; that he causes the thunder,

the lightning, the wind, and the rain; that he is the great creator of every thing which they behold. Thus ſome kind of religious knowledge is often the firſt which children acquire; and if their parents, or thoſe who have the care of their childhood, are of a religious diſpoſition, they will naturally endeavour to furniſh them with other religious information, beſides that which their own caſual inquiries might ſupply.

4. It is certainly neceſſary that juſt notions of right and wrong ſhould be impreſſed on children from their earlieſt years; and it is equally neceſſary that thoſe notions ſhould be ſtrengthened and enforced by the ſanctions and perſuaſions of religion. Children ought not to be left without the ſtay of moral principle or religious belief, till they come to years of diſcretion, and are capable of abſtract reaſoning. They ought to be influenced by a ſenſe of moral duty, and a perſuaſion of religious truth, long before they can inveſtigate the grounds of the one, or the evidences of the other. But as much care as is poſſible, ſhould be taken, not to impart to them falſe and erroneous opinions; for, as religious notions are generally among the firſt impreſſions which are made on the mind, they are the moſt difficult to eradicate. They are often unalterable by the cleareſt deductions of reaſon, and defy the moſt vigorous exerciſe of the underſtanding. When, therefore, pernicious tenets on religious ſubjects have been

infuſed into the mind, and, as it were, identified with the phyſical organization of the brain, in the period of infancy, tenets ſubverſive of ſound morals, of juſt notions of right and wrong, of God and providence, it may readily be conceived, how deſtructive they muſt become in their conſequences, and how difficult in their cure.

5. Even many perſons of quick apprehenſion, penetrating ſagacity, and powerful intellect, often feel a trembling unwillingneſs to examine their religious creed, to ſift it to the bottom, to ſeparate falſe from right notions, to burn the chaff, and preſerve the wheat. Religion is connected with ſo vaſt and incalculable an intereſt, and is often aſſociated with ſuch overwhelming ſenſations of myſterious dread, that many, who are attracted to the inveſtigation by its importance, are yet withheld from purſuing it by its awfulneſs. The ſacredneſs of the theme makes them regard freedom of inquiry as a ſort of unlicenſed profanation; the pleaſurable tranquillity of their faith is, beſides, not undiſturbed by certain anxieties of ſkepticiſm; and their veneration for the truth, or their conſciouſneſs of its connexion with their happineſs, makes them loath to inquire, *leſt they ſhould inquire too far, or diſcover more than they would wiſh to know**. Thus, if they are inclined

* Many timid people want reſolution to caſt their eyes to that quarter which is expoſed to danger, or from which danger

one moment to put forth their hand and touch the ark of their creed, they draw it back the next with ſenſations of dread and uneaſineſs. Thus, many remain all their lives long, willing victims to the moſt deſtructive errors, for want of courage to embrace a more ſalutary ſyſtem. If religious notions operate thus on ſome who poſſeſs a conſciouſneſs that they are erroneous, and have power to detect their erroneouſneſs, how muſt they operate on others, who feel that they are infallible, and who deem it ſacrilege and blaſphemy to ſuppoſe themſelves, or to permit others to ſuppoſe, that they are in an error * ?

is expected; and thus fear makes them neglect the means of defence, while it deprives them of the pleaſure of ſecurity.

* Il n'y a rien d'excluſif, d'affirmatif, comme le préjugé; moins il raiſonne lui-même, et moins il permet le doute des autres. Tout a ſes yeux eſt évidence immédiate, parce que rien n'eſt déduction: il ſe manifeſte avec impetuoſité, parce que l'homme livré au préjugé, n'eſt point maître de ſon eſprit; il s'irrite de la réſiſtance, parce qu'il ſe lie ſouvent aux paſſions, et que le mouvement des paſſions croît en raiſon des obſtacles. Lorſque le préjugé ne naît pas de la paſſion, il devient bientot une paſſion, lui même. Car on ſe paſſionne pour une idée comme pour un intérêt. Une idée dominante devient un de nos beſoins. Son triomphe ſe lie à celui de notre amour-propre; ſouvent nous la perſonnaliſons en quelque ſorte, nous nous attachons a elle comme à un ami; les contradictions qu'elle éprouve ſemblent intéreſſer en ſa faveur la generoſité de notre caractére, du moins elles la font reſſortir plus vivement pour notre eſprit; elles rendent donc ſon action ſur l'imagination plus énergique. Que ſera-ce donc ſi la perſécution de l'au-

6. Hence it may be conceived how much prejudices on religious ſubjects, when they have taken a ſtrong hold on the conſcience, and a deep root in the affections, tend to obſcure the light, and to numb the exerciſe of the underſtanding. By the word prejudices, as I uſe it in this place, I mean ſolely, *falſe* and *erroneous* notions on religion, notions ſubverſive of genuine piety and morality, which caſt a thick darkneſs over the ſight of the mind, prevent it from ſeeing the cleareſt truths, and from being convinced by the ſtrongeſt arguments. There are ſome prejudices *, which were embraced from the perſuaſion, or adopted on the authority of others, which will bear the teſt of examination, and ſtand

torité peut ſe joindre a la contradiction du diſcours, ſi des ſentiments d'indépendance, ſi des perſpectives de gloire viennent ſe réunir à l'opinion que nous avons ſoutenue, et ſi on nous donne lieu de nous attacher à elle par les ſouffrances qu'elle nous coûte!" Degerando, des ſignes, &c. t. iii. p. 326, 327.

* Any notions adopted on the authority of others, without a rational inveſtigation of their truth or falſehood, may be denominated prejudices. Thus prejudices may be either good or bad, uſeful or miſchievous. There is, if I may uſe an harmleſs play upon the word, *too great a prejudice againſt prejudices.* Children ought to be nurtured in *good* and *wholeſome* prejudices; but, at the ſame time, as much care as is poſſible ſhould be taken to invigorate the rational faculty, and to render its exerciſe eaſy and delightful; that when they come to years of diſcretion, they may have the will and the capacity to analyſe the notions which they have taken up on truſt; *to examine all things, and to hold faſt that which is good.*

the ſcrutiny of intellect. But ſuch prejudices are not falſe and erroneous, but true, and juſt, and wholeſome: and too many *ſuch* prejudices cannot too ſoon be engraven on the memory, impreſſed upon the mind, or incorporated in the heart. By the prejudices, therefore, which I am condemning, I mean only thoſe tenets, which are falſe, abſurd, and pernicious; which will not endure the teſt of impartial inquiry; which would not have been embraced by the underſtanding in the maturity of its power; and which no matured judgment, not afraid of looking truth in the face, or irreſiſtibly prejudiced in favour of error, could poſſibly ſcrutinize without being convinced of their miſchief, their falſehood, or abſurdity.

7. The hiſtory of the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, clearly illuſtrates the nature, and forcibly demonſtrates the malignity of religious prejudices. *Their* prejudices, which had been tranſmitted from their anceſtors, and which were cheriſhed and ſtrengthened by the whole courſe of their education, ran, at the time of our Lord's birth, ſo ſtrong in favour of a temporal Meſſiah, a victorious chief, and a worldly potentate, that they rejected the pretenſions of Jeſus of Nazareth, without the leaſt examination; notwithſtanding the vaſt, the multiplied, and apparently irrefragable proofs, which he gave of the reality of his character, and the truth of his pretenſions. In the ſtrange infatuation of their

hearts, they ſeem to have loſt the right uſe of their ſenſes. They had eyes, and ſaw not; ears, and heard not; and their power of diſcrimination was paralyſed by the poiſon of their prepoſſeſſions. Great blindneſs of mind had happened unto Iſrael; and ſo obſtinate was it in kind, and ſo exceſſive in degree, that it rendered them inſenſible to the evidence of miracles, and the glorious manifeſtation of the power of God.

8. St. Paul himſelf, is a ſtriking inſtance of the ſtrength and the danger of religious prepoſſeſſions. By what ſtrange deluſions was he oppreſſed previous to his converſion! His prejudices in favour of the Phariſaic ordinances and ſuperſtitions, and againſt the ſimple doctrine of the goſpel, were ſo violent and ſo invincible, ſo full of rancour and acerbity, that though poſſeſſed of a vigorous mind, and no ſmall ſhare of penetration, he could not only not ſee the truth, but laboured to ſtop its progreſs by the deſtruction of its advocates. The obſcuring power of his prejudices is well repreſented by the ſcales that fell from his eyes at the period of his converſion. Prejudices are, indeed, ſcales that prevent the influx of the light of truth into the mind.

9. Let us not ſuppoſe that the deluſions of error and the obſtinacy of prejudice belong to the Jews and the Gentiles only; they are often found rank and full-blown even among Chriſtians alſo. Chriſ-

tians are, in general, too much bigoted to the notions of the ſect to which they belong. They are too prone to imagine that their peculiar notions are alone agreeable to God, alone conſonant to his nature, alone worthy of his acceptance. They ſuppoſe that none can be wrong who think as they think; and that none can be right who think otherwiſe. This prepoſſeſſion renders them ſtubborn in their belief, and intolerant in their practice. It makes them, like the Phariſees of old, friends to the few who will proceed to the ſame lengths of bigotry, and enemies to all the world beſides. People who are ſo violently prepoſſeſſed in favour of their own opinions, as to think their ſyſtem of theology alone juſt, their ordinances alone reaſonable, or their tenets alone true; cannot but think the ſyſtems, ordinances, and opinions of all others, erroneous. Hence, they vainly fancy their worſhip excluſively entitled to the divine regard; and they conſider the worſhip of others as great an abomination in God's eyes, as it is in their own. Hence, with ſuch perſons, intolerance is a principle of faith, and an eſſential ingredient in their religion. If they cannot convert, they think it juſt to perſecute; and with them a ſpirit of ferocity is ſubſtituted for the ſpirit of Chriſtian charity.

10. Let us not entertain ſo fond a conceit of the increaſe of genuine philanthropy, as to ſuppoſe that there is no wiſh remaining to employ perſecution in

the ſervice of religion. Clouded by innumerable deluſions, and hardened by the ſullen genius of fanaticiſm, many are ſtill living, and perhaps daily increaſing in ſtrength and numbers, who, like the Papiſts of old, would forget the feelings of humanity in the rage of their intolerance. Thinking their own tenets alone true and infallible, they cannot but feel it a duty paramount to all others to bring the whole world over to their communion; nor will any compunctious viſitings of conſcience prevent them from endeavouring to convince by force thoſe whom they cannot convince by argument. In the genuine perverſeneſs of bigotry, regarding only the imaginary goodneſs of the end, they would be reſtrained by no ſavageneſs in the means of bringing it to paſs.

11. The tendencies to ſuch diabolical intolerance, and the tendencies to it, from the ſuggeſtions of pride, or the imperceptible illuſions of ſelf-love, are more frequent and more ſtrong than we uſually imagine, might be, in a great degree, counteracted by the prudence of this conſideration; that while many points of faith and doctrine are dubious, *points of practice are always clear*; that conſequently, he who conſults the goſpel only as a rule of faith, may ſometimes err; but *that he who* conſcientiouſly *ſtudies it as a rule of life, can never go wrong.*

12. All modes of faith, though they may not be conſonant to each other, or agreeable to the deter-

minations of ſcripture, will, probably, be acceptable to God, if they do not encourage immorality of conduct; for, while ſome points of faith and doctrine ſeem too dark to be made clear, and too intricate to be unravelled *, the duties of morality are always ſo ſtrongly and plainly enforced, that *any faith, which is adverſe to moral obligation, muſt neceſſarily be contrary to the doctrine of Chriſt.* For Chriſt cannot contradict himſelf; *and as he has moſt ſtrenuouſly, and diſtinctly, and authoritatively, required the practice of moral duty, he cannot, at the ſame time, have commanded a belief deſtructive of it, or contrary to it.* Of two different modes of belief, therefore, that muſt be the beſt, becauſe the moſt agreeable to the general ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and the general injunctions of Chriſt, *which moſt encourages the growth of morality.*

13. If points of faith be left dubious, men may embrace different opinions reſpecting them, and yet not err in the ſight of God. That many points of faith are left dubious, appears from this, that while different churches adopt different creeds, learned and conſcientious members of the ſame church often differ in certain ſpeculative matters of belief. Some think that there are three perſons in the god-

* From primary deſign, or ſubſequent corruption?

head, others only one *; ſome think that grace is a *miraculous* infuſion, others think that what is called grace, is that divine bleſſing, which, in the moral order of things, and, according to fixed and eſtabliſhed laws, as conſtant and uniform as thoſe in the natural world, always attends on the operations of goodneſs. On theſe, and many other knotty queſtions in Chriſtian theology, individuals have differed, and may, and perhaps always will differ; but they cannot ſo eaſily differ about the duties of Chriſtian practice; becauſe thoſe duties are not obſcurely ex-

* I wiſh that Dr. Prieſtley, inſtead of laviſhing ſo much time and talents on a fruitleſs controverſy, had profited by the following remarks of Grotius. "Vix eſt ut cum de Deo loquimur, utamur vocibus, quæ omnes incommodas interpretationes effugiant. Scholæ Græcæ et Latinæ, poſt multas curioſas et audaces diſputationes, in verbis tandem convenerunt, in eorum explicatione ſæpe diſſident. Græci veteres quidam appellant τρόπους ὑπάρξεως (ſubſiſtendi modos) id quod Latini *Perſonas*. Cæterum commodiſſima ac minime intricata mihi videtur explicatio, quam eccleſia Græca, quæ erat Conſtantinopoli, tunc cum urbs ea caperetur, exhibuit Turcarum Sultano. Res ſecundæ delicatos faciunt, res adverſæ ſobrios. *Veruntamen vocibus theologicis, quæ conciliorum univerſalium auctoritate aut magno conſenſu eruditorum receptæ ſunt, reluctandum non eſt.* Non enim ita imprudenter fictæ ſunt, ut non commodam interpretationem recipiant, atque etiam a multis commode ſint explicatæ. QUIBUS SE ADDERE, AUT CERTE TACERE, MULTO EST SATIUS, QUAM OB RES SIBI NON MINUS QUAM ALIIS OBSCURAS, ET NIHIL AD EMENDATIONEM MORUM PERTINENTES TURBARE REM MAXIMAM PACEM ECCLESIÆ." Grot. op. tom. iii. p. 615.

preſſed, or of doubtful and equivocal conſtruction. They do not admit of a diverſity of opinions on their ſanctity or importance; and that faith, therefore, cannot be agreeable to the will of God, or conſiſtent with the goſpel of his Son, which generates a practice oppoſite to thoſe rules of life, which the author of chriſtianity both taught and practiſed; from *whoſe yoke no man is free, and whoſe obligations no man, whatever may be his ſpeculative belief, has a privilege to violate.* No man can be ſound in his faith who is unſound in his morals. This ſeems a clear, ſelf-evident, ſcriptural truth; and the preſent ſtate of the world, and the fooliſh diſputes and pernicious errors at preſent prevailing among Chriſtians, require it to be ſo univerſally known, that I with I had ſtrength of lungs to make it heard, and ſtrength of mind to make it underſtood from one end of the earth even unto the other.

14. All Chriſtians ſhould endeavour, as far as they have capacity and opportunity, to form their faith in the doctrines of Chriſtianity, according to the ſtandard of ſcripture; but they ſhould at the ſame time remember, that *it is leſs incumbent on them to penetrate with ſcrupulous care and buſy curioſity into the myſteries of faith, than to lead lives conformable to that law of holineſs which Chriſt eſtabliſhed; without which no man's faith can be pure; and with which God will accept any man's faith, though it may be*

filled with involuntary errors; errors arising from early prejudice, a limited capacity, or deficient information.

15. In matters of faith a man may err through ignorance, but, in matters of practice, no man can well err without *wilful* ignorance, an ignorance for which he is accountable, and for which no excuse will be accepted in that awful hour when every man shall receive according to his works. In matters of practice, a man knows his duty without much instruction. He wants not much learning to know that truth, justice, and temperance, are his duty; and, in this respect, the law, written on his conscience, enforces and confirms the law which is written in the gospel. No man, therefore, can well offend against the great and sacred duties of moral obligation, without doing violence to his own sense of right and wrong, as well as violating the precepts of Christian duty.

16. When any man has endeavoured, with a pure and upright heart, to form those notions of faith which are most agreeable to the genuine sense of scripture, he may securely trust, that, if his practice be conformable to the practical precepts of Christ, his faith will be accepted, *though it should happen to be erroneous.* No man can do more than exert his utmost strength to discover the truth; and if, after such exertion, his endeavours fail, God, who is just and merciful, will not, certainly, punish him for an

involuntary overſight, or an harmleſs error. God only knows the particular ſtrength of mind which is allotted to each individual; and he, certainly, requires no more than its vigorous application. When man has employed all the opportunities which his ſtation allows, and all the ſtrength which his capacity admits, in unfolding the obſcurity, or in ſeparating the perplexities of religious truth, he has done his utmoſt; and the Father of ſpirits does not demand any more to be done. To ſuppoſe that God will puniſh a man for forming a wrong judgment on matters of faith, after the moſt conſcientious endeavour to form a right, or for embracing any tenets that are falſe, after the moſt ſcrupulous ſearch for thoſe which are true, is to make God cruel and unjuſt. For God, as far as he is juſt and good, cannot certainly make any man accountable for talents which he never received, or opportunities which he never enjoyed. He, therefore, whoſe religious belief, however heterodox it may ſeem, is the reſult of a fair and honeſt and rational examination of the ſcriptures, need be under no alarm about the ſalvation of his ſoul: at the ſolemn day of reckoning he will hear this comfortable ſentence, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

17. Superſtition is another frequent ſource of religious error. It is one of the characteriſtic properties of ſuperſtition, to ſuppoſe that a ceremonial worſhip is more agreeable to God, than the worſhip

of the heart and life. Thus it aſcribes extraordinary virtues to ceremonial obſervances, and practiſes them to the neglect of the weightier matters of religion, juſtice, mercy, and truth. It demands and obſerves a ſcrupulous and inviolate exactneſs in little and unimportant matters, while it regards neither reaſon nor conſcience in matters of greater moment. It ſtrains at a gnat, and ſwallows a camel; it puts the means of religion for the end; it clings to the formalities of devotion, and ſets the ſanctity of moral obligation at defiance.

18. Our Lord was, certainly, no friend to religion degenerated into ſuperſtition, as any one may diſcover in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, which contains a moſt animated invective againſt the Phariſees. The exceſs of their ſuperſtition was manifeſted in a punctilious attention to minute and frivolous forms. It was ſeen and heard in the gaudy ſhow and the ſugared cant of external adoration. They made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments; they devoured widows' houſes, and for a pretence made long prayers; they fulfilled the ceremonial law; they made clean the outſide of the cup and of the platter, while, within, they were full of extortion and exceſs; they reſembled whited ſepulchres, beautiful outward, but within, full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanneſs; they affected a ſtudied repreſentation of righteouſneſs in the ſight of the world, but, in the ſight of

God, they were polluted with hypocriſy and iniquity. Such were the diſtinguiſhing features of Phariſaic ſuperſtition, and though ſome of them may be varied by lapſe of time, and the change of opinions and manners, they will be found to bear a general reſemblance to the character of ſuperſtition in all ages and nations.

19. If we examine the ſuperſtitions which are prevalent among Chriſtians, we ſhall find that they do not differ in any conſiderable degree, from the ſuperſtitions of the Phariſees in the time of our Lord. How many Chriſtians are fiercely zealous about forms and ceremonies, forms that are vain, and rights that are indifferent, while they are coldly negligent in matters of greater ſanctity and importance! How many Chriſtians ſet profeſſions of faith, and creeds, and ſyſtems, the mere ſhadows and colourings, above the practice of piety, pure and undefiled!

20. Falſe and irrational notions of God always pave the way for the introduction, and always afford materials for the ſtructure of ſuperſtition. If we ſuppoſe God a corporeal, a fallible, or partial being, which many ſeem to ſuppoſe by the vain mummery of their adoration, by the inſincerity of their homage, and the intolerance of their opinions, we can hardly help being ſuperſtitious. If God were a corporeal being, if he were made of fleſh and blood, if he had

any particular form, any appropriate outward perſonality, the artificial oblations of the ſuperſtitious might be pleaſing in his eyes, ſuited to his character, and agreeable to his nature. When we addreſs an earthly prince, we uſually approach him with the ſhow of great reſpect and reverence; the inward feelings may be concealed by the outward geſture, and the effuſions of flattery may be miſtaken for the homage of ſincerity. But as God has no corporeal ſhape, and ſeeth not as man ſeeth, he cannot be thus deceived; and the mere external forms of devotion will not recommend the worſhipper to his favour, except ſo far as they are unfeigned tokens of inward adoration. He cannot be deceived by the treacherous ſmile, the unfelt thankſgiving, and the mimic prayer. His eye penetrates the moſt ſecret receſſes of the human breaſt; he diſcerns the exact correſpondence between the heart and the countenance, the thoughts and the profeſſions; and his diſpleaſure cannot but be excited by the unmeaning oblations of a counterfeited piety.

21. As God is not a fallible, neither is he a partial being. He is ſubject to no ſudden changes of diſpoſition, no unreaſonable likings or diſlikes; no violent affections and antipathies. He is the univerſal father, and the name by which Chriſt himſelf taught us to addreſs God, "Our Father!" implies that, naturally, all mankind are placed in the ſame ſtate of relationſhip to him, and equally entitled to

his regard. As a good and wiſe parent will never make any invidious or unreaſonable diſtinctions between his children, but where he does ſhow any difference of love, will ſhow it moſt to thoſe who moſt excel in what is amiable; ſo we may be aſſured that God, who is the father of the univerſe, will ſhow no unreaſonable tokens of fondneſs to one, or of averſion to another. And if he do ſhew any preference in his regard, it will not certainly be ſhewn to thoſe who pay him only a formal worſhip; he will moſt prefer thoſe who moſt exceed in goodneſs. Of Chriſt, it is moſt emphatically ſaid in ſcripture, that he *went about doing good*; goodneſs was the cauſe of his coming, and the end for which he came into the world; goodneſs was the drift of his inſtructions, the deſign of his preaching, the motive of his miracles, the practice of his life; and thoſe accordingly, who make the neareſt approaches to this perfection of his character, will have many ſenſible tokens of the divine favour in this world, and will receive the fulneſs of their recompence at the reſurrection of the juſt.

22. Thoſe notions of God, which teach us that he is not a corporeal, a fallible, or partial being; that he delights not in forms and ceremonies, and that real vital goodneſs is the ſacrifice moſt agreeable to his nature, and moſt acceptable to his will, muſt tend to baniſh thoſe falſe, irrational, and miſchievous notions of religion, by which ſuperſtition

is engendered, which add malignity to its venom, and violence to its ferocity.

23. Immorality of conduct is another frequent cause of religious error and unbelief. The understanding is not always prevented more by its dulness or its prejudices from discerning the truth, than the heart is, by its corruptions, from embracing it. The conscience is often as seared as the mind is dark; and if a heart, hardened by vicious habits, be not the universal and inseparable, it is a common and often associated cause of infidelity*.

24. The mind may, at times, without any false bias given by the passions, be too dull to see the weight of evidence, or the force of those probabilities on which religious truth depends, and by which every sober and rational man will think it prudent to regulate his conduct. But it usually happens, that a man's unbelief is more to be imputed to his vices than to his capacity, and that he is prevented from believing and embracing the truth, rather from some perverseness in his temper, or some obliquity in his affections, than from the errors of his judgment, or the weakness of his understanding. A man's vices cannot fail of prepossessing him strongly against those truths by which those vices are con-

* Immorality is not always either the cause or the consequence of deism.

demned. No one is willing to attend to that monitor who upbraids him with his folly and his ſins; who ſternly commands him to abandon ſome ſenſual propenſity, or ſome imperious paſſion, which he feels an intereſt in retaining, or wants courage to renounce. The ſinner cannot readily bring himſelf to examine the evidences of that religion which threatens him with puniſhment, and which he could not believe true without changing that courſe of life which he may find productive of gain or pleaſure. He rather voluntarily ſhuts his eyes againſt the light, than opens them to behold it. The viciouſneſs of his heart prevents him from making a right uſe of the faculties of his mind. His affections, entangled in the ſnares of tranſgreſſion, impoſe upon his reaſon; and he finds an intereſt in inventing plauſible excuſes to conceal his danger, or to juſtify his unbelief. He is ever ready to liſten to any objections, however frivolous, which add to the number of his doubts, or increaſe the ſtubbornneſs of his infidelity.

25. Our Lord himſelf, evidently conſidered immorality of conduct as the malignant principle that generated and cheriſhed infidelity. "Every one," ſaith he, "that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved;" and as he thought badneſs of life paved the way to ſkepticiſm, ſo he thought that goodneſs had a natural tendency to produce faith in revelation. "*He that doeth truth* (righteouſneſs), *cometh to the*

light;" and he likewiſe gives to a proper ſenſe and practice of moral obligation, a full aſſurance of belief; for he ſays, if any man will do his will, that is, if any man will ſincerely deſire, and ſtrenuouſly endeavour to work righteouſneſs, he ſhall, on a due inquiry, know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. Theſe impreſſive declarations of the author of Chriſtianity, certainly indicate that thoſe, who perſiſt in diſbelieving the goſpel, ought rather to accuſe the unrighteouſneſs of their lives, than the inſufficiency of the evidence. Before, therefore, any man preſume to deny the truth of revelation, let him ſeriouſly examine whether ſome inordinate appetite, ſome tyranniſing ſin, or ſome unbridled luſt, do not give a falſe and undue bias to his opinions, clouding the clearneſs of his judgment, and perverting the rectitude of his underſtanding. Chriſtianity requires great purity and ſelf-denial; and, therefore, it is not much to be wondered, that it is ſo often rejected by thoſe who do not only not reſpect the duties it enjoins, but who burn with a vehement deſire to commit the ſins it forbids *. To a perſon whoſe eye is

* The hiſtory of the Jews ſhows the ſtrong tendency which great corruption of manners and profligacy of conduct have towards making men ſhut their eyes againſt the moſt plain and ſtriking truths. The Jews were not more blind of mind than they were hard of heart. Their prejudices reſpecting a temporal Meſſiah were one cauſe of their rejecting Chriſt; but, I think, that *a ſtronger and more powerful cauſe may be diſcovered in the enormity of their vices, and the extent of their cor-*

jaundiced, the colours of objects appear very different from what they are. To one whose moral sentiments are corrupted, and whose affections are depraved, the truths of revelation must appear of a less lovely aspect than they really are; he naturally feels indisposed to embrace a system which places terror and destruction before his eyes, and which, in his gayest moments, presents the fatal hand-writing on the wall, to the sight of his guilty conscience!

ruptions. Their pride, their avarice, and, perhaps, more than all, the libidinousness and vindictiveness of their hearts, in which, at the time of our Saviour, they seem to have exceeded the ferocity of the wildest savages, and to have surpassed the excesses of the most intemperate voluptuaries, and which were so opposite to the pure, the humble, the benevolent, the gentle and forgiving doctrines of the holy Jesus, made them loath a preacher, all whose sayings were deemed a reproach upon their conduct, and a libel on their crimes. The easy yoke of Christ seemed to them an intolerable bondage; because they could not forego their lusts and passions, and bring their hearts and lives in subjection to his doctrine. The same reasons which operated on the Jews to reject the mission of Christ, will, wherever they exist, operate on others of all succeeding ages, to deny the truth, and to spurn at the duties of the gospel.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

Evils of diſſenſion. Temperate ſuggeſtions. Eccleſiaſtical union. The juſt medium between indifference and intolerance in particular diverſities of opinion.

1. A LARGE portion of human miſery originates in the want of a peaceable diſpoſition. Hence, the ſword is unſheathed to make widows and orphans! Hence, the attention of mankind is diverted from the purſuits of induſtry, which diffuſe cheerfulneſs and plenty, to purſuits which occaſion nothing but famine and woe! Hence, the progreſs of civilization is ſuſpended, and the proſperity of nations is deſtroyed!

2. The few ſhort intervals of peace, which European policy allows to weary man, are ſeldom owing ſo much to an averſion to the principle of war, as to the want of reſources to carry it on. Pride, ambition, and revenge, the love of falſe glory, the jealouſies of power, and the luſts of domination, are not extinguiſhed; the flame is ſmothered for a ſea-

ſon, but the next guſt of fortune blows it into another blaze. Thus the peace that ſubſiſts between nations, and particularly nations between whom jealouſy is occaſioned by proximity of ſituation, and war is prompted by the facility with which it may be waged, is ſeldom any thing more than a ſhort ceſſation of hoſtilities. It is rather an exhauſtion of ſtrength, than an extinction of paſſion; rather too great feebleneſs to hold the ſword, than a cordial deſire to place and to keep it in the ſcabbard. Thus the peace of ſtates, not originating in a peaceable diſpoſition, nor in a religious dread of the guilt and atrocities of war, but being occaſioned only by ſome temporary advantages, or ſome momentary convenience, is violated when they ceaſe; and the banners of blood are again unfurled as ſoon as ſome ſiniſter policy can generate or ſeize new pretexts for deſtruction. This perpetually-recurring ſtate of ſavage butchery and incalculable woe cannot be expected to have an end, till a ſincere indiſpoſition to ſtriſe ſhall be more prevalent in the world, and obedience to the peaceful precepts of Chriſtianity ſhall become the imperial guide of human conduct and human intereſt.

3. The love of peace always promotes an union of affections, and often of opinions. An union of opinions on all ſubjects, particularly on doubtful queſtions, on which different opinions may reaſonably be entertained, is impoſſible. The topics on

which men moſt frequently differ, and which engender the moſt bitter animoſities, are political and religious. When political opinions are connected with temporal emolument, or are ſpecial objects of public patronage, it is eaſy to conceive why thoſe who profeſs them, defend them with zeal, and why thoſe who oppoſe them, oppoſe them with violence. In this caſe, the advocates of the different opinions muſt, in ſome meaſure, regard each other as perſonal enemies, and their affections are kept divided by the diviſion of their intereſts. In this conflict of opinions, truth is ſeldom either the only object that is ſought*, or the only end that is purſued. For, on all occaſions, in which no ſecret intereſt biaſſes the parties to any particular concluſions, the male-

* The following remarks of one of the lateſt, the moſt ſober and moſt judicious of the French metaphyſicians, are deſerving of attention, and are applicable to a very large portion of thoſe diſputes on which men waſte their talents and their time. "*La decouverte de la vérité a été plutôt encore le fruit que l'occaſion des diſputes des hommes*; la vérité eſt auſſi lente à ſe montrer, que l'erreur eſt prompte a paroître; ainſi la lutte des erreurs oppoſées entre elles, a du commencer avant celles des erreurs contre la vérité. L'opinion vraie conſiſte ſouvent à douter là où l'erreur affirme avec aſſurance; ainſi il ſemble qu'il y a une oppoſition moins ouverte entre le ſage et l'eſprit erroné, qu'entre ceux qui s'abandonnent à des erreurs différentes. Enfin a une ſeule vérité correſpondent toujours un très grand nombre d'erreurs, comme à côté de la ligne directe, qui conduit au but, ſe trouvent mille autres lignes, qui en divergent dans tous les ſens." Degerando, vol. iii. 325.

volent paſſions cannot intervene to perplex the queſtion, and to inflame the combatants.

4. Till the genuine, benign, and peaceable ſpirit of the goſpel of Chriſt, ſhall be more cheriſhed and more venerated by public men, we may hope, but we ſhall hope in vain, that the conflict of political ſentiment ſhould occaſion no coldneſs in their friendſhip, and no rancour in their enmity. But, more ſtrange it ſeems, that individuals, who are placed farther from the brink of political contention, who can hardly have any perſonal intereſt in the ſubverſion of one faction, or in the triumph of another, ſhould not be able to think differently on public men and public meaſures, without the moſt furious diſſenſions. Thoſe who are unacquainted with the great actors on the political theatre, and who know nothing of the very intricate machinery which is required to keep the wheels of any government in motion, that preſides over a rich and powerful, but a corrupt and vicious people, can ſeldom judge with tolerable correctneſs, on meaſures of policy, or the characters of politicians. And yet, what company do we enter, in which we do not hear ſome men applauded as if they were patriots, exempt from every vice, and others reviled as ruffians deſtitute of every virtue? On theſe occaſions, we frequently hear meaſures, apparently intended by the adviſers for the public good, inveighed againſt with as much

warmth, and as much bitterneſs, as if they were purpoſely planned for the public deſtruction. Such are ſome of the raſh and unfair judgments, which men, ſometimes, peremptorily affirm, and paſſionately defend; and of which they often hate, and even, as far as their power extends, perſecute thoſe who queſtion the truth, or refuſe an unqualified aſſent to their precipitate aſſertions. In ſpeaking of public characters, men are, uſually, leſs directed by the conviction of knowledge, or the evidence of facts, than by the rumours of common fame, the bitter aſperſions of enemies, or the glowing encomiums of friends; the virulence of ſlanderers, or the adulation of dependants. Political judgments are ſeldom impartial or correct, becauſe the ideas, out of which they are formed, are uſually made to diverge from the ſtraight line of truth, in paſſing through the cloudy medium of ignorance, prejudice, and malignity.

5. What is called the public good, which it is the duty of public men to conſider, and, as far as they have power, to promote, is, from the intricacy of the ſubject, and the multiplicity of particulars which it includes, ſo difficult to be known, and, when known, from the chaos of jarring intereſts that are to be reconciled, ſo difficult to be executed, and ſo many different ways of doing it may ſeem the beſt to different individuals, that the meaſures which public men adopt, or the counſels which they give,

ought not to be promiſcuouſly cenſured becauſe the happen to run adverſe to our own opinions, or to obſtruct our narrow and partial views.

6. It is very eaſy for any one private individual to determine what meaſures he would judge moſt expedient for the national welfare; for men in general are too ready to imagine that what would be beneficial to themſelves, could not be hurtful to the community. But, is it not probable, that a council of ſtateſmen, taking a larger view of the ſubject, and conſidering it not ſo much in its partial, in its local, or its perſonal, as in its general relations, will ſuggeſt very different meaſures, and more conducive to the good of the community*?

7. When ſo few poſſeſs the ability to analyſe the complex idea of the public happineſs, or to trace it through only half its diverſified relations, we may readily diſcern how, without any ſiniſter intentions, or diſhoneſt views, people may think very differently from each other, on queſtions which concern the public welfare. The difficulty of aſcertaining which opinion is right, or which is wrong, which has the ſtrongeſt tendency to promote, and which to coun-

* Different men, placed at different heights of the ſame mountain, will form different notions of the features, the poſitions, and produce of the ſurrounding country. I ſhall leave the application to the reader.

teract the public good, ought to teach their ſeveral defenders diffidence and moderation. On ſuch topics, what ſhould deter us from maintaining oppoſite ſentiments without the leaſt diminution of our mutual regard, or the leaſt interruption of our domeſtic and ſocial intercourſe?

8. Differences of opinion on religious ſubjects, are another fruitful ſource of animoſity. Different ſects, who eſpouſe different doctrines, in a great meaſure, reſemble the different factions in a ſtate, in the ſincerity of their mutual ill-will, in the ardour of their ambition, and the purſuit of an excluſive intereſt. Political factions hate each other, becauſe each regards the reſt as obſtructions to the attainment of ſome temporal end; and religious factions glow with no leſs mutual hatred, as if the future good, to which each aſpires, were totally incompatible with the good of its competitors for eternal happineſs. The firſt ſeek to obtain the ſole, unſhared poſſeſſion of the honours that periſh; the ſecond ſeek to appropriate to themſelves the crown of glory, that fadeth not away. They are both inflamed with the ſpirit of monopoly; but while the one is all greedineſs to engroſs the good things of this preſent world, the other is no leſs greedy to engroſs thoſe of another. In the ſtruggle for temporal and ſpiritual dominion, the political faction ſeems, on the whole, to diſplay, though not, perhaps, more benevolence, more ſagacity than the religious. The temporal diſtinctions, honours, and

emoluments, which the firſt purſues, are limited both in number and in quantity, and there is not enough to appeaſe the ravenous appetites both of themſelves and of their rivals. The richeſt monarch on earth cannot ſatisfy the demands of all the candidates for his favour, or of all the petitioners for his bounty. He cannot even gratify every moderate wiſh, or every reaſonable expectation. Hence we may readily conceive how envy and jealouſy, and all the malignant paſſions, ariſe among the competitors for political preference; and why their different intereſts, which are ſo incompatible, ſhould be ſo difficult to be reconciled. But the rewards which are promiſed to the juſt in heaven, are not ſo circumſcribed in number, or ſo ſcant in quantity. The favours which the Almighty has to beſtow are infinite; and the regard which he ſhows to one, can be no deduction from, and no obſtruction to that to which another may aſpire. If the area of a palace be capable of holding only a few of thoſe who are eager to puſh themſelves into it, there will be ſpace enough in the courts of the manſions above, to contain all the generations of all nations and ages, *who deſerve admiſſion*. It ſeems, therefore, not leſs the exceſs of ſelfiſhneſs than of folly, in the advocates for different creeds and doctrines, to deprive of happineſs thoſe with whom they do not agree, and to engroſs heaven to themſelves. But if man be cruel, God is juſt. Whatever opinions individuals may entertain on ſpeculative points

of religion, THE EVERLASTING GATES will not be ſhut againſt them, who, as far as they have capacity, imitate God in his perfections; and, as often as they have opportunity, do good to their fellow-creatures. Such conſiderations, plain and ſimple as theſe are, may tend to aſſuage the rancour of religious animoſity, and to ſhow the abſurdity of thoſe anathemas which one ſect hurls againſt another.

9. Thoſe religious opinions which are productive of the moſt bitter diſſenſions, uſually relate, not to the weighty matters of religion, but to ſome inexplicable tenets, or ſome frivolous forms. Few are the perſons who do not agree, at leaſt in theory, however much they may differ in practice, reſpecting the importance of purity of manners, and holineſs of life; and thoſe, who thus acquieſce in believing *the eſſentials of ſound doctrine*, ſhould not contend about thoſe things which have no reference to righteouſneſs.

10. It is becoming, and it is neceſſary, that Chriſtians ſhould maintain with warmth, but without paſſion, with zeal, but without intolerance, *the eſſential articles of religious belief*; becauſe ſuch articles have always an intimate connexion with the practice of piety. Thus, thoſe articles of religion which are eſſential, may be clearly diſtinguiſhed from thoſe which are not eſſential. The firſt will always be found favourable to the growth of goodneſs; while

the laſt, uſually afford nothing but occaſion for ſtrife, and fuel for diſſenſion. Eſſential articles of religion, ſuch as theſe, *that there is a God; that he is the rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him; that the Chriſtian religion is a revelation of his will,* cannot be diſbelieved without faith being imperfect; while thoſe articles which are not eſſential, ſuch as theſe, that *the reſurrection of the dead will be a corporeal reſurrection; that the ſtate of the ſoul in the interval between the death of the individual and the laſt judgment, will be a ſtate of inconſciouſneſs,* may be either believed or diſbelieved, without any addition to, or any deduction from, the ſubſtance of religious faith; which, if I may ſo ſpeak, may be believed without gain, and diſbelieved without loſs. Our regard for the unchangeable and eternal obligations of morality, ſhould cauſe us vigorouſly to defend the eſſential articles of religious belief; while the ſpirit of peace ſhould incline us neither pertinaciouſly to ſupport, nor furiouſly to oppoſe, thoſe articles which are not eſſential, becauſe they have no connexion with vital righteouſneſs.

11. If a man believe that there is no God, which is the fundamental principle of natural religion, on which all its truth depends, and all its importance reſts, it is more than probable, that the unſoundneſs of his faith will be manifeſted in the impurity of his conduct. Diſbelieving that which is the great ſpring of practical goodneſs, his unbelief will become a

ſource of practical corruption. As morality conſiſts in a conformity of the conduct to the divine will, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that he will take any pains to conform his conduct to the will of God, who does not believe in his exiſtence, or who denies his ſuperintending providence. The difference of opinion, therefore, that muſt exiſt between a man who diſbelieves, and another who *ſincerely* believes in the being of a God, muſt be ſuch as will neceſſarily occaſion a ſtriking difference in their mutual conduct, and forcibly tend to alienate them from each other in affection as well as in ſentiment*. The opinions and the feelings of an atheiſt, cannot accord with thoſe of a religious man; nor can the ſenſations, the ſentiments, the emotions and deſires of a religious man, be in uniſon with thoſe of an atheiſt. The warm, the artleſs, the ſincere regards of friendſhip, can never be extended towards *him, who ſays in his heart that there is no God*; for friendſhip can-

* It will generally be found, that a man who does not believe in a God, never entertains any hearty good will towards thoſe who do believe; and, probably, becauſe he thinks them more happy and more ſafe. A ſecret conſciouſneſs of his own inſecurity, an undivulged, a perpetually ſtifled, but a conſtantly corroding and corroſive perception of his own wretchedneſs, impel the efforts of the atheiſt to drive others from the rock of their confidence, and to plunge them into miſery as hopeleſs as his own. Hence we diſcern why atheiſts often exceed even the moſt buſy ſectaries in the zeal of making proſelytes.

not flouriſh without confidence; and can he ever be an object of confidence, or ever ceaſe to be an object of diſtruſt, who, wanting the only ſolid principle of fidelity, muſt excite an habitual dread of perfidy and inſincerity? With feelings of commiſeration an atheiſt may be regarded; but the warm ſentiments of our eſteem he can never ſhare. Can we enter into a bland communion with his thoughts, with his ſorrows, or his joys? Can we ſympathiſe with his ſpirits in their loweſt depreſſion, or their higheſt exaltation? Is he not placed either too far above, or ſunk too deep below the ordinary level of human intereſts, ever to be intereſting to our affections? Does he not deem happineſs or miſery as mere *fortuitous* combinations of events that are uncauſed, or of cauſes that do not originate in intelligence? Does he not receive good without thankfulneſs, and ſuffer evil without hope? Does he not deride the paternal affection of Jehovah? Does he not deſpiſe his juſtice, and ſlight his mercy*?

* There is great juſtneſs in the following remarks of one of the wiſeſt of the heathen philoſophers. "Sunt," ſays he, "philoſophi, et fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere cenſerent humanarum rerum procurationem deos. Quorum ſi vera ſententia eſt, quæ poteſt eſſe pietas? quæ ſanctitas? quæ religio? hæc enim omnia pure ac caſtè tribuenda deorum numini ita ſunt, ſi animadvertuntur ab his, et ſi eſt aliquid a diis immortalibus hominum generi tributum: ſin autem dii neque poſſunt nos juvare, neque volunt, nec omnino curant, nec quid agamus, animadvertunt, nec eſt quod ab his ad hominum vitam

12. The great and primary principle of the Chriſtian revealed religion is this, that Jeſus, the founder

permanare poſſit; quid eſt quod ullos diis immortalibus cultus, honores, preces adhibeamus? In ſpecie autem fictæ ſimulationis, ſicut reliquæ virtutes, ita pietas inceſſe non poteſt; cum qua ſimul et ſanctitatem et religionem tolli neceſſe eſt; quibus ſublatis perturbatio vitæ ſequitur et magna confuſio. Atque haud ſcio, an, *pietate adverſus deos ſublatâ, fides etiam et ſocietas humani generis, et una excellentiſſima virtus juſtitia tollatur.*" Cicero de Nat Deor. lib. i. § 3. ed. Lallemand, p. 131. See Grot. de Jur. Bell. et Pac. lib. ii. § 44, 47.

Locke goes ſo far as to ſay, "*thoſe are not at all to be tolerated, who deny the being of a God.* Promiſes, covenants, and oaths, can have no hold upon an atheiſt. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, diſſolves all. Beſides alſo thoſe, that by their atheiſm undermine and deſtroy all religion, can have no pretence of religion, whereupon to challenge the principle of a toleration." Locke's Works, fol. vol. ii. p. 251. In another place, this warm friend to civil and religious liberty, declares, "*No opinions contrary to human ſociety, or to thoſe moral rules which are neceſſary to the preſervation of civil ſociety, are to be tolerated by the magiſtrate.*" Ib. 250. When Mr. Locke ſaid that *thoſe ought not to be tolerated who deny the being of a God,* he certainly did not mean that they ſhould either be ſtrangled or burnt alive, but only that they ſhould be reſtrained in the propagation of their pernicious tenets, and excluded from all places of civil truſt and power. Few are the opinions which ought, or which can reaſonably be the object of penal reſtraint, till they are embodied in ſome overt act; yet caſes may occur, in which the diffuſion of miſchievous principles ought not to be encouraged by impunity. A man may entertain an opinion that there is no God; and ſuch an opinion is certainly not a fair ſubject of judicial cognizance or civil puniſhment; but, if an individual, not contented with the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of

of it, was a perſon commiſſioned by God to declare his will to mankind; to ſhew what ſpecies of wor-

this notion, ſhould travel up and down the country to make proſelytes to it, and to ſpread it abroad among the ignorant multitude, he would, certainly, deſerve an exemplary puniſhment; nor do I think, that in this caſe, it would be either juſt or prudent to ſuſpend the puniſhment till the evil effects of the opinion had become viſible and palpable in ſome open violation of the laws. If I find a man ſowing thiſtles in my field, am I to ſuffer him to proceed till the thiſtles come up and choke my corn? That an atheiſt ought to be excluded from all places of civil and eccleſiaſtical truſt and power, every friend to piety will allow; but then, what teſt ſhall we frame, by which to diſtinguiſh him who really is an atheiſt, from him who really is not an atheiſt? An atheiſt is a man who denies the being of a God; and the being of a God may certainly be denied in two ways; *in word*, AND IN DEED. Now, to deny God in practice, is certainly worſe than to deny him in word only; but if we were to rank as atheiſts all thoſe who deny God in practice, that is, *who live as if there was no God in the world to whom they were accountable for their actions*, I fear that ſome of thoſe who now paſs for ſtrict religioniſts, would themſelves be objects of the very intolerance which they defend! And yet what *better teſt* can you have of a man's belief or unbelief, his religion or irreligion, than his conduct? Let, therefore, no man be admitted to any ſtation of power or truſt, to civil or eccleſiaſtical honours, *whoſe life is ſuch as to prove that he has no fear of God before his eyes*; who has been convicted of perjury, fraud, extortion, adultery, or any heinous violation of morality. And as all puniſhment ought, as much as is poſſible, tend to the reformation of the criminal, let the excluſion continue only for a certain period, or till contrition of heart is manifeſted in a reformation of conduct. Such regulations, adopted by the legiſlature, would be more

ſhip was moſt agreeable to the divine pleaſure, and moſt conducive to their own eternal happineſs. He who denies this, is not a Chriſtian; and we cannot regard him with the ſame affection as we ſhould if he belonged to the fold of Chriſt. Such a diviſion in our ſentiments, will prevent a thorough union in our hearts. We love, and we cannot well help loving thoſe moſt, whoſe principles are moſt congenial to our own, whoſe modes of thinking and of action we moſt approve, and with the varied changes in whoſe affections and circumſtances we feel the ſtrongeſt propenſity to ſympathiſe. A ſincere believer in the Chriſtian revelation, may contemplate a deiſt without averſion and without ſcorn; but how can he regard with unmingled ſatisfaction and *unalloyed* eſteem, one who regards that ſyſtem, in which he finds a perennial ſource of preſent conſolation, and from which he derives a cheering aſſurance of future glory, either as an artfully contrived or a well deſigned impoſture; who looks not unto Chriſt with affection and with reverence, as the beloved ſon of God; who imitates not the perfections of his life; who venerates not the memory of his death; and

likely to ſtop the ſpread of atheiſm, than all the laws that were ever framed, and, perhaps, all the ſermons that were ever preached. In vain ſhall we endeavour to ſtem the torrent of irreligion which is rapidly ſweeping away all the virtuous principles of the people, while we heap riches and honours on thoſe who, if they do profeſs great zeal for the glory of God with their lips, do ſhew *the rankeſt atheiſm in their lives!*

who rejoices not in the hope of his reſurrection? Though in all who glory in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and in whom that profeſſion is aſſociated with vivid feelings of reſpect, of admiration, and of gratitude for the beloved name of Chriſt, ſuch differences of opinion may, and muſt produce a diminution of our perſonal regard, yet they ought not to exclude the individual from that degree of regard which the genuine philanthropiſt will feel for every particular member of the human ſpecies.

13. As God made of one blood all the nations of men that dwell on the face of the whole earth, every ſingle member of the univerſal family of mankind has a claim to certain ſenſations of humane regard; a claim which is indefeaſible and inalienable; which he cannot part with, and which we ought not to caſt away. The ſentient nature of man alone, without any reference to his religion or his country, to the nearneſs or the remoteneſs of his relation to us by any particular, any local or moral ties, ought to be his protection from cruelty, and his ſhield againſt injury *. But at the ſame time, the natural claim to regard which any individual has, as a being poſſeſſing the ſame common properties of the ſame common humanity, is greatly increaſed by the ties of kindred, friendſhip, neighbourhood, which

* Injury is here uſed as any harm done with a malicious intention.

render the general feeling more lively, distinct, particular; and in proportion as these endearments of family, friendship, neighbourhood, of the same civil and religious institutions are diminished, our affection for the individual decreases till it subsides into a sort of serene complacency, which will often border on indifference, and, in some cases, approach aversion; but which ought never to be suffered to swell into rage, or inflame into rancour.

14. Whatever serves to increase or to strengthen our particular attachments, invigorates and multiplies the motives to preference, because it renders that general good-will which we feel towards the universal species of man, more exclusively appropriate to the individual. And these attachments, thus individuated by family, friendship, neighbourhood, by affinities domestic, local, civil, and religious, are greatly heightened by the moral approbation of the person.

15. If a man be our brother, our friend, or acquaintance, he may reasonably have a particular claim to our regard, merely upon the score of kindred, friendship, acquaintance, but these claims will be found, in all cases, to be strengthened, and, in some degree, hallowed by our moral approbation of the individual; and which, in calamity, increases the willingness to relieve, and the pleasure in relieving. If a man be connected with us by no

particular relations, but only as he is a being of the ſame ſpecies, ſubject, like ourſelves, to pain and pleaſure, to imperfections and uncertainties, his claim to any *preference* in diſtreſs, muſt depend almoſt ſolely on the moral eſtimation of his character. In the operations of beneficence, moral qualities will perhaps, in ſome caſes, demand a preference even in the preſence, but always in the abſence of other motives.

16. A communion in religious opinions has a ſtrong tendency to increaſe our good-will towards the individual; and this increaſe of affection may very reaſonably be expected to take place, when thoſe opinions have a direct and intimate aſſociation with goodneſs of conduct; and conſequently raiſe the perſon in the ſcale of moral eſtimation. Moral approbation may, indeed, often neither be diminiſhed nor augmented by a difference or agreement in particular tenets of religion; for the tenets in which we differ or agree, may have no real or apparent connexion with moral worth; may neither favour its growth, nor promote its decline; and, conſequently, ought not to make any addition to, or any deduction from, our moral approbation of him, by whom they are eſpouſed.

17. An individual may differ from me in believing that the day of judgment, as mentioned in ſcripture, is not to be literally conſtrued, but to be

underſtood as an adaptation to human forms of ſpeech *; but ſuch a difference ought not, and can-

* Since the greater part of this work was written, and the former ſheets printed off, I have been favoured with the peruſal of Dr. Parr's Spital ſermon, in which he ſays with his accuſtomed moderation, "Numerous and weighty indeed are the reaſons which induce far the greater part of enlightened Chriſtians to believe, that the ſcriptural paſſages in which ἡ τῆς κρίσεως ἡμέρα, or what is ſometimes equivalent, ἡ ἡμέρα is mentioned, ſhould be interpreted literally, and that the rewards and puniſhments of another life will be diſpenſed judicially. There are, however, ſome perſons, who, with equal ſolicitude for the intereſt of virtue, and equal reverence for the authority of ſcripture, contend, that the well-known principle of ἀνθρωποπάθεια may be applied to ſuch paſſages; *and that the juſtice* of the Deity will be adminiſtered by a regular *ſeries of cauſes and effects*, producing happineſs to the righteous, and miſery to the wicked." p. 152, 153. There may be ſome few queſtions, political, moral, and religious, in which I do not coincide in opinion with Dr. Parr; but, on all the great and fundamental principles of policy, morality, and religion, I truſt that there are only ſuch ſhades of difference between us, as there muſt neceſſarily be between perſons, who, equally attached to the intereſts of truth, will not ſurrender to others the right of thinking for themſelves.

Whatever be the ſubject which engages the attention of Dr. Parr, whether it relate to the delicate refinements of philology, the intricate abſtractions of metaphyſics, the plaineſt truths in morals, or the loftieſt ſpeculations in philoſophy, we never fail of receiving equal inſtruction and delight from the variety of his erudition, the depth of his reſearch, the largeneſs of his views, the warineſs of his concluſions, and the richneſs of his eloquence. The ornaments of his ſtyle are often coſtly, and ſplendid, and gorgeous; but exquiſitely wrought, nicely pro-

not, reaſonably, detract from our moral approbation of each other; for it is of very little conſequence to the great intereſts of morality, and it can neither add to, nor take from the common perſuaſions to moral obligation, whether the laſt judgment be underſtood, according to the popular opinion, in the ſtrictneſs of the letter, or whether, as intimating that every individual will be perſonally judged, if I may ſo ſpeak, the moment that he dies; that is, will paſs immediately after his diſſolution, into that condition of happineſs or miſery, for which he is fitted by the paſt habits of his mortal life.

18. Whether the laſt ſentence be paſſed *collectively and at the ſame time*, on all the individuals of all countries and ages, or whether every particular individual be, *ſeparately*, ſentenced to receive according to his works, is a queſtion more curious than important; and the intereſts of morality will not ſuffer, whichſoever opinion we embrace. But when any individual profeſſes tenets which are entirely adverſe to the fundamental principles of true religion, the caſe is altered; our moral approbation of the perſon vindicating ſuch opinions is diminiſhed; we regard him not only as an alien from the houſehold of faith, but an enemy to the happineſs of

portioned, and happily combined; they reſemble the exuberant magnificence of an eaſtern palace, diſpoſed with the ſimple taſte of a Grecian artiſt.

ſociety. The moral diſſatisfaction, which we feel, chills the warmth of benevolent ſenſation, and repreſſes the activity of the benevolent principle. The claim to compaſſion is more weak, and the motives to ſuccour are leſs ſtrong. But we are to remember that benevolence may be cooled, without malice being inflamed; and that an union of the ſentiments can never be effected by an oppoſition of the paſſions. There is no tendency, in the genius of contention, to refute errors, to extirpate prejudices, to ſettle principles, or to harmoniſe opinions. Reaſon diſallows, humanity proſcribes, and religion forbids ſuch methods of vanquiſhing falſehood, or of aiding the triumphs of truth.

19. Thoſe differences of opinion among Chriſtians, which create ſuch deadly animoſities, ſeldom relate to eſſential matters of belief, but to points, about which we may differ, *without erring from the way of righteouſneſs*. As the members of the ſame family may think very differently on many little points of domeſtic intereſt, without any reaſonable deduction from thoſe tender regards which the ties of family preſcribe; ſo, among Chriſtians, diverſities of ſentiment on many queſtions of uncertain doctrine, as the co-eternity and co-equality of the three perſons in the godhead, the formalities of the future judgment, or the duration of future puniſhments, ought not to produce diſſenſions, ſeparations, and ſchiſms in the great family of Chriſt.

20. In order, as much as poſſible, to prevent diviſions in the church of Chriſt, the apoſtles earneſtly enjoin us, "to follow peace," Heb. xii. 14. to endeavour to "live peaceably with all men," Rom. xii. 18. to "follow righteouſneſs, faith, (that is, truth,) love, peace, together with thoſe that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. ii. 22. In this laſt paſſage it particularly deſerves our attention, that *peace*, or the preſervation of amity and fellowſhip with all good Chriſtians *, is claſſed among the primary Chriſtian virtues, and placed by the ſide of juſtice, truth, and charity. And hence we may learn the crying and damning ſin of diſturbing the peace of the houſehold of Chriſt by miſchievous diviſions and invidious diſtinctions. The guilt of ſchiſm (for ſchiſm, being a violation of Chriſtian charity, is certainly a ſin) is incurred, when thoſe, who ought to agree in one communion, erect hoſtile churches, and form ſeparate congregations, without ſufficient reaſons †.

* Μετὰ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων τον Κύριον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας.

† May I addreſs the preſent champions of eccleſiaſtical diſſenſion in the eloquent interrogatories of the venerable Clement, the companion of St. Paul, and the ſucceſſor of St. Peter? "Ἵνα τι ἐρεις, και θυμοί, καὶ δικοστασίαι, καὶ σχισματα, πολεμος τε ἐν ὑμῖν; ἢ οὐχὶ ἕνα Θεὸν ἐχομεν, καὶ ἕνα Χριστόν; καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος το ἐκχυθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, καὶ μια κλῆσις ἐν Χριστῳ, ἵνα τι διέλκομεν καὶ διασπῶμεν τὰ μέλη τε Χριστῦ, και στασιάζομεν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἴδιον, και ες τοσαυτην ἀπόνοιαν ερχομεθα, ὥστε ἐπιλαθέσθαι ἡμᾶς ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν ἀλληλων;" Vid. S. Clem. ad

21. The only reaſons which can juſtify a ſeceſſion from the boſom of that church, or houſehold of faith, which is eſtabliſhed in the country in which we live, are either great and notorious corruptions in its doctrine, or in the practice of its members, ſuch as cauſed our anceſtors to ſeparate from the communion of papal Rome. But can any reaſons, ſimilar in kind, or equal in ſtrength, be alleged to excuſe the preſent numerous ſeparations from the Proteſtant Church of England? Is her doctrine defiled with the ſame pollutions? Are her rites encumbered with the ſame mummeries, or her miniſters diſgraced by the ſame enormities? If there be ſome ſuperfluities in her liturgy, or ſome erroneous concluſions in her articles, are they of ſuch a nature as to afford a reaſonable pretext to the majority of diſſidents, for the deſertion of her communion?

22. No liturgy can well be ſo framed as to appear blameleſs to men of different opinions, or to ſuit the taſtes and wiſhes of all ſects; but though the Engliſh liturgy may be, and certainly is, liable to particular objections, does it, notwithſtanding, not deſerve the ſincere, if not the unqualified approbation, of all ſects of Chriſtians? In its detached parts, faulty paſ-

Corinth. Epiſt. i. 46. Coteler Patr. Apoſtol. vol. i. p. 174, 175. Ed. Amſtel. 1724. May I, at the ſame time, and on the ſame authority, add? that "ἀγάπη σχισμα ουκ ἐχει, ἀγάπη οὐ στασιάζει, ἀγάπη παντα ποιεῖ εν ὁμονοίᾳ· and that δίχα ἀγάπης οὐδὲν εὐάρεστόν ἐστι τῳ Θεῳ." p. 176.

ſages may appear; ſome prejudices may be remarked which were not ſo much the errors of the authors, as of the age in which they lived; but, conſidered as a whole, it breathes the moſt liberal ſentiments, the moſt enlightened piety, and the moſt comprehenſive charity: it contains petitions ſuited to all the neceſſities, and to all conditions of mankind; not a ſupplication is wanting that we can ever have occaſion to utter, for our own good, or the good of others; and it can never be devoutly read, or attentively heard, without the moſt beneficial influence on our thoughts and actions, our hearts and lives. None of the prayers are polluted by cant, or embarraſſed by hypocriſy; they afford the ſtrongeſt internal teſtimony, that thoſe who compoſed them did not write what they did not feel; they are characteriſed by ſimplicity and ſincerity; and hallowed by the genuine aſpirations of unaffected piety. In ſuch a liturgy, ſo far ſuperior to all the extravagances of extemporaneous devotion, ſo ſalutary in its tendency, ſo benign in its ſpirit, and ſo ſublime in its compoſition, the particular defects are loſt in the general beauty; and ſome few paſſages, which deſerve cenſure, may well be forgotten in the many, on which it would be rank impiety not to beſtow unqualified approbation.

23. Thoſe ſects who pretend that the partial blemiſhes or the particular defects, which they deſcry in the Church of England, are the grounds of their

ſeparation, ought ſurely to conſider whether its general excellence and its general uſefulneſs might not, with more reaſon, become the grounds of their conformity. The latter furniſh ſtronger arguments for ſupport, than the former for oppoſition; the one ſtronger motives for aſſent, than the other for diſſenſion. If the evil be more than balanced by the good, the eſtabliſhment* is not to be reprobated,

* No rational man will, I think, deny, that a ſtate ought to guard the moral, with as much tenderneſs and vigilance as the temporal welfare of its ſubjects; to protect their hearts from the inroads of vice, with as much circumſpection as to preſerve their property from injuſtice, or their lives from deſtruction. Indeed, that government, which does not attend with ſcrupulous anxiety to the morals of its people, appears to me criminally indifferent to their proſperity, and its own ſecurity. In the providential economy of the world, moral and phyſical good ſeem intimately connected; and, though this wiſe order of the divine government may often elude our ſearch, or eſcape our obſervation, in the affairs of individuals, it is very apparent in thoſe diſpenſations which regard the fortune of nations. In the viciſſitudes of nations, in their ebbings and flowings, their elevations and depreſſions, a moral government of the world is too ſtriking not to be remarked; and, according to the eſtabliſhed laws of that government, the proſperity will, generally, be found to bear a certain relative proportion to the virtue of any people. Ancient hiſtory, and more eſpecially, the divine records of the Old Teſtament, will furniſh us with many memorable and impreſſive examples of this ſalutary truth. Conſider the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, the deſtruction of Nineveh, of Babylon, and of Tyre; the depreſſion of Egypt, the ſubverſion of the Perſian and Macedonian empires; the deſolation of Jeruſalem; the declenſion and the fall of

becauſe the good is not greater than it is, or ſo great as it might be; for, of what civil, or what religious

conſular, of imperial, and of papal Rome! Even the phyſical ſtate of the atmoſphere ſeems, according to ſome fixed but inſcrutable appointment of divine wiſdom, to ſympathiſe, if I may ſo expreſs it, with the moral ſtate of man; and where ſuperſtition has deſcribed the malign influences of the planets, the operations of genii, or the ravages of demons, the Chriſtian philoſopher, who labours to inveſtigate the affinities of the moral and the natural world, ſees awful manifeſtations of the moral government of God. How any changes in the moral, do produce any thing like correſponding changes in the natural world, it may be impoſſible to explain; but hiſtory and obſervation will furniſh ſome ſtriking analogies to countenance the ſuppoſition. Indeed I hardly ſee how any ſober and contemplative man who has, for the laſt few years, compared the ſtate of the earth with the ſigns in the heavens, the convulſed, diſordered, and corrupt ſtate of the nations, with the unwholeſomeneſs of the air, the unfruitfulneſs of the ſeaſons, the ſtorms and tempeſts, the droughts and rains, the blights and mildew, the dearth, and fever and diſeaſe, that have prevailed in different parts of the world, can doubt but that moral and phyſical evil are more cloſely connected than is commonly imagined. The hiſtory of the Jews (if we ſuppoſe that hiſtory true, and what hiſtory is true if that be falſe?) proves the intimate connexion ſubſiſting between the moral and the natural world; we ſee the heavens opened or ſhut, the ſeaſons fruitful or unproductive, the air wholeſome or peſtilential, the land parched with drought or refreſhed with rain, according to the righteouſneſs or the depravity, the moral good or the moral evil of the people. And, if there be, at preſent, *any connexion* ſubſiſting between the moral ſtate of man, and the natural ſtate of the ſeaſons, the air, the earth, and the ocean, it is certainly an argument of no ſmall weight to prove how

inſtitutions, that ever exiſted in the world, was the good produced entirely anſwerable to the expecta-

important it is for thoſe governments which regard the happineſs of their ſubjects, and the proſperity of their country, to make the intereſts of morality a *primary* object of their policy. It does not ſeem poſſible for any government to keep up a *lively* ſenſe of moral duty among the great maſs of its ſubjects, without giving to moral precepts the authority of religious ſanctions, and invigorating the practice by the force of religious motives. Neither the blandiſhments of philoſophy, nor rhetorical pictures of the beauty of vice or the uglineſs of virtue, nor even the terrors of penal law, can, independent of the motives and ſanctions of religion, give ſtrength and energy, animation and *conſtancy*, to a ſenſe of moral duty. *Without ſome aid from the devotional habits of religion*, our notions of moral duty will, notwithſtanding the moſt aſſiduous endeavours to prevent it, wither and die; fall off from the heart, and fade from the conſcience.

It is not ſo much by a dread of puniſhment, as by a ſenſe of duty, that a good and wiſe government will labour to check the increaſe of crimes, and to promote the growth of virtue. But can a ſenſe of moral duty by any artifice or ſophiſtry be rendered freſh, vigorous, and laſting, without aſſociate feelings of religious reverence, without any truſt in the being of a God, who will reward the righteous, and puniſh the wicked? It is this perſuaſion of theſe truths, that gives ſtrength and conſiſtency to virtuous conduct; that makes men fearful to tranſgreſs, and anxious to do the will of God. Penal laws, for the moſt part, operate as preventives of evil; but religious perſuaſions as incentives to good. The firſt deter from crimes, the laſt prompt to acts of virtue; perjury and injuſtice may be diſcouraged by the one, but truth, and righteouſneſs, and charity, are enlivened by the other. And the influence of religious belief is more conſtant and permanent than that of penal law. When

tion, to the capacity or the poſſibility? If it be objected by ſome ſects, that they cannot continue

a criminal ſees the gallows before his eyes, on which ſome delinquent has paid the forfeit of his crimes, the image may impreſs a momentary terror on his heart, but it leaves no wholeſome impreſſion on his conſcience. It produces ſenſations of danger, but it does not trouble his ſoul with a ſenſe of guilt; it does not excite his abhorrence of moral evil, nor a conviction of moral good. It may generate caution, but it does not favour the growth of virtue. Penal laws may be, indirectly, but are never directly, beneficial. They contribute a negative, not a poſitive quantity, to the ſum of moral goodneſs. On the other hand, right perſuaſions of religious duty never deter from evil without inciting to good. They not only ſhow us that we have no intereſt in doing evil, but that we have a great intereſt in doing good. They operate on the ſoul of man by the dread of ſuffering, and the hope of bliſs. Taking hold of our ſtrongeſt feelings, hope on one ſide, and fear on the other, whoſe united ſtrength, when combined in due proportions, produces the greateſt will to act, and the greateſt energy in action, they operate on the conduct by the ſtrongeſt poſſible motives, and render us unwearied in well doing. Hence it will, I think, be evident of what vaſt and inconceivable importance it is, to furniſh ſuch a being as man with religious motives to moral action. But, is it poſſible to furniſh religious motives without religious inſtruction? and how can any ſtate diſſeminate religious belief, or ſpread religious inſtruction among the great maſs of its ſubjects, without the intermediate aid of an order of men ſpecially educated for, and ſpecially devoted to, that important purpoſe? As if aware of theſe intereſting truths, few have been the governments, which hiſtory records, who have not inſtituted and maintained a particular claſs of men to keep up the fear of God among the people, and to ſtrengthen the precepts of morality by the

in communion with the Church of England, becauſe ſhe holds tenets which they deem unſcriptural; may

ſanctions of religion. And thoſe governments which have not been bleſſed with the light of true religion, have, uſually, found it expedient to invent a falſe; and forge divine ſanctions to give ſtability to human inſtitutions. All religion has for its baſis the moral government of God, or, at leaſt, ſuppoſes that there are powers above which intereſt themſelves in the affairs of the world below. Such a perſuaſion, whether it be the produce of fiction or of truth, muſt be ſalutary; but, in thoſe countries, in which the will of God has been clearly evinced by the glorious light of revelation, it is incumbent on every government to make the truth of that revelation univerſally known, and its precepts univerſally reſpected. It may be ſaid, that religious truths are ſo congenial to the reaſon, and religious feelings ſo entwined around the heart, that the belief and the practice of Chriſtianity would be as prevalent without, as it is with an eſtabliſhed miniſtry. To this, I would anſwer, that the fact might *poſſibly* be ſo; but, that it *probably* would not; and that no government feeling a fatherly concern for the good of its ſubjects, ought to leave a matter of ſuch infinite importance, as the knowledge of religious truth and moral obligation, to uncertainty and accident. And we are to conſider that it is not only the duty of every government to communicate religious inſtruction to its ſubjects, in order to prevent the growth of immorality, but of ſuperſtition; that their hearts may not be depraved, nor their minds bewildered by religious jugglers; that they may be taught to conſider religion, not as a topic of contention, but a rule of life: not as ſupplying aliment for diſſenſion, but motives to righteouſneſs. I ſhall be told, that religion, being entirely a perſonal concern, individuals ſhould be at liberty to chooſe a religious paſtor for themſelves. Enlightened people may do this; but are the majority thus enlightened? Are they capable of determining what are

we not, without offence, exhort them to conſider that " charity is the *bond of perfection*," and " *the end*

the qualifications beſt ſuited to a miniſter of the goſpel of Chriſt? Certainly not. If the religious miniſters of the different pariſhes throughout the kingdom were appointed by the ſuffrage of the multitude, we ſhould have all our churches filled, not with ſober Chriſtian teachers, but with brawling fanatics and canting hypocrites, who uſually poſſeſs thoſe qualifications which are moſt likely to win the attention, and to impoſe on the credulity of the multitude. Such preachers, inſtead of inſtructing the people in moral duty, would cauſe them to wander far and wide from the ſtraight track of common ſenſe, till they were loſt in the wilds of myſtery. Morality would be driven, as ſome profane and merely nominal Chriſtians have attempted to drive it, from the Chriſtian ſanctuary; and the religion of Jeſus would be evaporated in the heat of controverſy, or buried under a maſs of Phariſaic forms. The ſimple ſayings and reaſonable decrees of the Chriſtian lawgiver, would be forgotten in a rigorous devotion to ſuperſtitious ordinances; and the milk of the goſpel would be converted into the poiſon of the aſp.

The French philoſophers committed a ſignal error in policy, and ſhewed an aſtoniſhing ignorance both of the nature and the hiſtory of man, when they ſuppoſed that the ſtrength of their civil, would be diminiſhed, or their purity defiled by an alliance with religious inſtitutions. Political power is always moſt ſtable and ſecure when it reſts on the columns of religion. Religion, I mean not corrupt, but pure, undefiled religion, renders it venerable, and gives it an influence over the public will and affections, which nothing elſe can beſtow. It ſerves to convert the political into a moral government; it arms the ſovereign with a power, in ſome meaſure, more than human; and makes obedience to the civil magiſtrate a part of our duty to the God of heaven. The Chriſtian religion, I am well con-

of the commandment;" and that eccleſiaſtical peace, which is diſturbed by their ſchiſms and broken by their diviſions is a part of charity?

vinced, does not need the frail ſtay of civil power; but it is quite another thing to ſuppoſe that a ſtate needs a religious eſtabliſhment, and that religion needs a ſtate eſtabliſhment. The latter poſition may be falſe, and the former true; for human power and human inſtitutions may want the aid of religion, though religion may not want *their* aid. The alliance between church and ſtate is for the benefit of both; but the advantages of the union preponderate greatly in favour of the latter. An eſtabliſhed church muſt conduce to the preſervation of civil liberty. It ſpreads over the country *juſt* and *true* and *rational* notions of the natural equality of mankind; it teaches the prince that, in the eyes of the Father of ſpirits, he is no greater than the meaneſt of his ſubjects; and it tends to make the peaſant contented by impreſſing his ſuperiors with humility. It repreſſes the two extremes of behaviour, which are equally adverſe to public liberty, abject ſervility on the one ſide, and hard-hearted inſolence on the other. It inſpires ſentiments of independance; it cheriſhes in every mind right notions of the eſſential dignity of human nature; it brings the rich and the poor together, and by teaching them their common origin, and their common end, their mutual wants and infirmities, their relative dependance on each other, and their abſolute dependance upon God, it promotes the growth and expanſion of all the ſocial virtues, which are the ſource of ſuch a variety of happineſs. The remarks, which I have here made, on religious eſtabliſhments, may be conſidered as ſupplemental to thoſe which I have inſerted in "Morality united with Policy *." At ſome future period, if a convenient opportunity

* I particularly refer the reader to that pamphlet from page 85 line 17, to page 91 line 12.

24. If the multiplication of ſect againſt ſect and church againſt church keep on increaſing in the ſame rapid ratio in which it has increaſed for the laſt few years, Chriſtians will at laſt be ſplit into almoſt as many ſects as there are individuals; and the genuine ſpirit, and the eſſential duties of Chriſtianity will be loſt and forgotten under the cloud of their diſſenſions *. In order, as much as poſſible, to ſtop the progreſs and to counteract the miſchief of theſe endleſs diviſions, let the ſpirit of mutual charity and a bond of univerſal concord be eſtabliſhed among Chriſtians of all ſects and denominations by this important and tranquillizing conſideration, that CHRISTIANITY IS NOTHING MORE THAN A RULE OF LIFE †; and that,

ſhall occur, I ſhall not ſhrink from a more full diſcuſſion of this important ſubject. At preſent I cannot help expreſſing my ardent wiſh, that every national church were founded on truly catholic principles, ſuch as would allay the jealouſies of the ſectary, and appeaſe the violence of religious animoſity.

* If the well meaning and honeſt diſſenters of different ſects and opinions ſhould, inſtead of erecting hoſtile churches, think it more accordant with the ſpirit of Chriſtian charity, to aſſemble themſelves together in the boſom of the Church of England, ſtrict orders ſhould be given to the miniſters of the eſtabliſhment never to preach on any uncertain, diſputed, and unprofitable doctrines; but to forſake the ſpurious and polemical, for the genuine practical theology; and to make it their primary ſtudy to illuſtrate and to enforce thoſe great Chriſtian virtues which relate to the government of the thoughts, the affections, and the conduct.

† See Anti-Calviniſt, 2d edit. p. 25—28. Perhaps the reader, who may not like to aſſent to this moſt intereſting

conſequently, thoſe only are meet to receive the favour of God in this world and in the next, who

conclusion on the authority of the humble curate of Harbury, may give it his cordial assent when it is presented to him in the words of Dr. Samuel Clarke. "Since," says this great ornament and support of the English protestant church, "God truly and sincerely desires to make men happy by the exercise of virtue; and since *that* virtue, which is the condition of this happiness, is no other than the practice of those great moral duties of godliness, righteousness, and temperance, which are the eternal and unchangeable law of God; it follows necessarily, that the *great and ultimate design of all true religion can be no other than to recommend these virtues, and to enforce their practice.* Other things may be *helps* and *assistances* of religion; many external observances may, for wise reasons, be positively commanded; and may be of exceeding great use as *means* to promote devotion and piety: but THE LIFE AND SUBSTANCE OF ALL TRUE RELIGION, THE END AND SCOPE IN WHICH ALL THINGS ELSE MUST TERMINATE, CANNOT, POSSIBLY, BE ANY OTHER, THAN THE PRACTICE OF THESE GREAT AND ETERNAL DUTIES." Clarke's Works, vol. iii. p. 587, 588.

"The best definition," says Jeremy Taylor, "I can give of it (Christianity) is this; IT IS THE WISDOM OF GOD BROUGHT DOWN AMONG US TO DO GOOD TO MEN." See Supplem. to Taylor's Sermons, p. 5. That the Christians of the primitive times, considered Christianity as *nothing more than a rule of life*, the reader will readily discover by a perusal of Caves' primitive Christianity, parts 2 and 3; a book which I once heard very strenuously recommended in a plain, judicious, and unaffected charge, delivered to the clergy by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. In Bishop Watson's excellent collection of theological tracts, the reader will find, in vol. vi. a work entitled, "The Design of Christianity;" which may be perused with advantage by those who think that Christianity is either something *less* or something *more* than a rule of life.

ſhow greater zeal in running the race of goodneſs than the more vain and inglorious race of ſpeculative altercation. When Chriſtians ſhall embrace and hold faſt this great reaſonable and ſcriptural truth, to which the diligent ſtudy of the doctrine of Chriſt, as it is intimated in the actions of his life, and declared in the words of his diſcourſes, will inevitably lead every honeſt inquirer; the different ſects of Chriſtians, ſeeing the little profit, and feeling the great impiety of their mutual contentions, will agree, notwithſtanding the countleſs variety of their opinions, to hold the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace. Inſtead of fomenting idle and cauſeleſs ſchiſms in the body of the church of Chriſt, and needleſs and inſidious ſeparations from each other, they will coaleſce into a benevolent and holy union, lifting up their hands in the ſame houſe of prayer, bending their knees at the ſame altar, cheriſhing in their hearts the precious recollection of the founder of their faith, breathing the true ſpirit of righteouſneſs, and animated with the flame of univerſal charity.

25. Though it be our duty to endeavour, by every argument which reaſon approves, and every perſuaſion which charity ſuggeſts, to bring all Chriſtians of all denominations, into the fellowſhip of one communion, we are to uſe no compulſory meaſures whatever in order to promote ſo deſirable an end. Their fellowſhip muſt not be the effect of force, but the

fruit of affection; it must be voluntary, that it may be lasting. We have no right whatever to the least dominion over the private judgment of the meanest individual in matters of religion. All attempts to fetter the consciences of men is the usurpation of a power, which it is arrogance to claim, and impiety to exercise. We are rather to conduct ourselves with gentleness towards those who oppose themselves; we are to bear with the froward, and to shew patience toward the stubborn.

26. When Christians come rightly to distinguish the essentials of true religion from things indifferent, they will carefully avoid foolish and unlearned questions, which do gender strifes*. The essentials of the pure unsophisticated Christian religion consist in *soberness*, *righteousness*, and *godliness* †; to the habitual exercise of which we are incited by the awful prospect of a day of judgment, and the hope of a happy immortality. *Soberness* relates to the prevention of all *excess* in the indulgence of our appetites and passions; to the due observation of temperance in act and in desire; *righteousness* includes truth and justice, and all those duties which cannot be violated without wrong being done to others; *godliness* comprehends all our acts and expressions of religious adoration; and it more particularly implies the imitation of God in the operations of his benefi-

* See 2 Tim. ii 23. † See Tit. ii. 11, 12.

cence *. He, therefore, and he only, can be denominated truly religious, whose appetites and passions, whose mind and affections, are under the heavenly government of temperance, of truth, of justice, and of charity.

27. If *soberness*, *righteousness*, and *godliness*, be the only essential principles of the true Christian religion, it will, I think, be found that all separations are groundless, and all schisms contrary to the genius and temper of the Christian religion, which are not occasioned by some glaring difference of opinion respecting the sanctity of the performance of these eternal obligations. If *soberness*, *righteousness*, *and godliness*; if temperance, truth, justice, and mercy, the weighty matters of the Mosaic law, and the weightier matters of the Christian gospel, be the cause for which we separate from any national church, the ground of our separation is well founded, and ought to be maintained. Not to separate for such reasons is impiety; to separate on any other account seems a want of charity †.

* True and genuine piety, εὐσεβεια, is the active imitation of the goodness of God. Hear St. James; "The religion which is pure and undefiled before *our* God and Father is this; to take care of orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world."

† To separate from any church because the sacrament is received kneeling instead of standing, or standing instead of kneeling, because there happens to be a picture of the cruci-

28. If any national church authorize or excuſe any corruptions, which are contrary to the immutable precepts of the moral law, which tend to relax its hold on the conſcience, or its influence on the life, it becomes a duty in every faithful follower of Chriſt Jeſus to abjure the communion of ſuch a church, in which ſuch immoralities prevail. If any church aſſume a right to diſpenſe with the obligations of truth, juſtice, and charity, if ſhe grant ſpecial exemptions from the puniſhment due to perjury, to injuſtice, to brutal cruelty, or brutal luſt*, ſhe becomes an enemy to the glory of God, and the happineſs of mankind. She violates her vows, and betrays her truſt. Then, the voice of conſcience will exclaim to us, as it did to our anceſtors of old, when they renounced the church of Rome, "come out of her, my people; that ye be not partakers of her plagues, and drink not of the cup of her abomina-

fixion over the altar, becauſe the miniſter wears a hood or a ſurplice, or becauſe the form of church diſcipline is not according to the Calviniſtic repreſentations of primitive ſeverity;—to ſeparate for theſe reaſons, or reaſons ſimilar to theſe, ſhews great imbecility of mind, and great contraction of heart.

* It is well known that when the corruptions of the Romiſh church were at their higheſt, a licence might be purchaſed for the commiſſion of the moſt atrocious crimes. I ſhall mention only one inſtance, but a little ſearch would eaſily furniſh a thouſand. The Cardinal of St. Lucia requeſted of Pope Sixtus IV. permiſſion for himſelf and his family to commit * * * * * * during the three hot months in the year: to which *modeſt* petition the indulgent father replied, "*Fiat ut petitur.*"

tions." On ſuch occaſions, the preſervation of peace with a ſociety ſo polluted and ſo polluting, is to be ſacrificed to the vital intereſts of righteouſneſs.

29. But, can it be pretended, with any colouring of reaſon, even by the moſt inveterate enemies of the church of England, that her doctrine or her prayers, her inſtitutions or her practice, do, in any way, diſcourage the intereſts of real virtue, or the practice of real piety? Her errors, whatever may be the errors for which ſo many abjure her fellowſhip, are not ſubverſive of true righteouſneſs and godlineſs; and conſequently, are inſufficient to juſtify their ſeparation. Though every good and every wiſe man muſt ſincerely wiſh that ſuch alterations were made in our articles and our liturgy, as to remove every ſtone of ſtumbling and cauſe of offence, yet, I think, that even at preſent, there is not one ſingle ſect of diſſenters, who can, on any broad and and liberal principles of reaſon or of conſcience, ſquared by the meaſures of Chriſtian charity, refuſe to addreſs the great Father of Spirits in our churches, and to celebrate the memory of his crucified Son at our altars. In the Engliſh ritual all the *weightier matters* of religion are powerfully recommended to the attention, and impreſſed upon the conſcience, by the moſt ſublime effuſions of devotional piety; and if, on ſome myſterious points of faith, all ſects cannot aſſent to the tenets of the Engliſh church, yet, very different opinions on *thoſe* tenets being clearly

compatible with the culture and the practice of these sovereign Christian virtues, soberness, righteousness, and godliness, which are the alone *conditions* of salvation, ought neither to alienate their affections from her, nor her affections from them. Instead of making every trifling cavil a pretext for dissension, the separatists from the church of England ought rather to forego their prejudices, and to sacrifice their scruples, *when they are not scruples relative to points of moral obligation*, in order to preserve the relations of amity and good neighbourhood with the established household of their fellow Christians; and to grow strong in the spirit, and the practice of that love which is *the fulfilling of the law*. Eager contentions about forms that are insignificant, and mysteries that are inscrutable, profit nothing; *but, by cherishing perverseness and engendering malignity, they may bring destruction on the soul*; while ecclesiastical peace, at the same time that it contributes largely to present happiness, is one of the modifications of that heavenly temper which will cover a multitude of sins*.

* It must be confessed that, without any breach of charitable supposition, there are strong reasons for believing that many late separations from the Church of England have not originated so much in honest scruples of conscience, as in the wanton pride of opposition; not so much in the love of truth, as the lust of singularity; not so much in the fervour of artless piety, as in the extravagance of a certain wild and prurient curiosity. From these causes, and causes similar to these, religious dissensions have been begun in our towns, and scattered

30. Some occaſions there are, but they will rarely occur, in which a diverſity of opinions can reaſonably juſtify a diminution of our benevolent regard. The opinions of an individual may, indeed, be ſo hoſtile to the beſt intereſts of ſociety, as to give our ſentiments and affections a tendency to averſion, greater than any tendency in our nature to more

through our villages. Hence has ariſen an hoſt of fanatics, who are grown powerful by our ſupineneſs, and ſtrong by our diviſions; and who have lately become objects of fearful apprehenſion to the friends of rational Chriſtianity, from the increaſe of their numbers, and the cloſeneſs of their union. Such terrors may ſeem ideal; but they are ideal only to thoſe who have not analyſed the genius of fanaticiſm; who have not eſtimated its energies, nor calculated its reſources. Fanaticiſm is always dangerous; but when her votaries, inſtead of being only a few individuals, thinly ſcattered over a large expanſe of country, incapable of co-operation, and without ſtrength to co-operate with effect, are condenſed into large maſſes in different parts of the kingdom; when the detached parts, obeying one centre of action, may be made to combine with the greateſt facility in the moſt deſtructive projects; then the terrors of fanatics and fanaticiſm are not imaginary. They are not the terrors of hobgoblins or apparitions, of ſhadows on the wall, or of warriors in the fire; they are the terrors of viſible, tangible, corporeal realities. The ſpirit of fanaticiſm, particularly when religious emotions give it birth, and the enrapturing viſions of eternity increaſe the delirium, imparts incredible excitement to the phyſical and the moral powers of the individual; to the faculties of the body, and the paſſions of the ſoul; and perhaps, one fanatic, thus excited, poſſeſſes greater capacity to do miſchief, than can be counteracted by five ordinary men, not ſo ſublimed by airs from heaven, or by blaſts from hell.

benevolent emotions, can counteract. But no opinions ſhould chill our affection towards the individual, but thoſe which indicate not only error in the judgment, but depravity in the heart; opinions which are adverſe to the virtue and the welfare of ſociety *.

* It was well ſaid, that one bad maxim is capable of doing more miſchief than a hundred bad examples. The influence of a bad example is confined to the narrow ſphere of agency which almoſt every individual occupies. The ſpace is very limited in which it can become an object of imitation, or over which its baneful influence can be ſpread. But one bad maxim may diffuſe its poiſon over a wider circumference; it may put in motion an indefinite number of agents, and embrace a vaſt extent of action. It may find admiſſion into the minds and hearts of thouſands, who may not have ſagacity to detect its falſehood, to diſcern its tendency, or to meaſure its effects. Made attractive by eloquence, and captivating by its favourable appeal to the ſtrongeſt paſſions of human nature, it may do miſchief which cannot be calculated, and, perhaps, never be repaired. Such a principle as that which is dignified with the name of *the general good*, would, if it were generally acted upon, *in the way that Mr. Godwin recommends*, be found more deſtructive to the peace and happineſs of the world, than all the plagues that ever deſolated the earth.

The *new morality*, as it is called, though its progreſs has been checked, and its virulence corrected by the united exertions of ſeveral writers, has, I fear, been the ruin of thouſands. It may be agreeable to the taſte, it may be beautiful to the eye, but it is no ſooner ſwallowed than death enſues; the death of every principle that is upright or amiable, or praiſeworthy in the ſoul of man. Falſe theories of religion and of morals, ought to be oppoſed by every meaſure *which is conſiſtent with juſtice and with charity*; but the only force which, in ſuch a ſervice, we can employ with prudence and ſucceſs, is the moral force of

31. If we meet with thoſe, who think that promiſes are not binding any longer than while they

reaſon; and reaſon certainly can never be exerted in a cauſe more agreeable to the will of him, by whom it was beſtowed, than when it is exerted in the defence of genuine religion and morality. The principles of morals, and the truth of religion, can receive no laſting injury from the fulleſt and the freeſt diſcuſſion. The principles of morals are ſo fixed in the immutable relations of things, and ſo congenial to the natural feelings and ſympathies of human nature, that, though they may be occaſionally expunged from the conſcience of individuals, they can never be, entirely, eraſed from the mind and the heart of the ſpecies of man. They have been in exiſtence ſince the world began; and they will laſt while the world laſts. The intrinſic value of revelation depends entirely on its truth; and that truth, being a well-grounded probability, its approximation to certainty can be aſcertained only by a ſober calculation of the weight due to the different arguments which have been, or which can be adduced againſt it, or in its ſupport. When the evidences are thus compared with the objections, the degree of probability is, in ſome meaſure, reduced to a definite idea, and we ſee more diſtinctly and more forcibly the preponderance of the proof. The writers in favour of revelation, are uſually reſtrained, as if by timidity, from ſtating in a plain and candid manner, the objections of their adverſaries. Are theſe writers fearful of the ground on which they tread? Have they any ſecret ſuſpicion, any lurking dread that Chriſtianity is an illuſion? Do they not know that objections againſt the truth of Chriſtianity, if *they* are weak, will give *it* ſtrength; and that, if they are ſtrong, they will have the ſame effect, if they can be ſubverted by arguments which are ſtronger. Chriſtianity is not valuable only becauſe it is imagined to be true; but becauſe it is actually true; and the actual truth can be made known only by a full, and fair, and unreſerved inveſtigation

have an intereſt in keeping them; that gratitude for benefits received is not to be cheriſhed; that ſeduction is no ſin; and that chaſtity may be violated as often as any wayward appetite prompt to the violation; we are not to ſuffer a falſe delicacy, or a ſpurious politeneſs, to prevent us from ſlighting their intercourſe, and ſhunning their ſociety. In imitation of our Divine Maſter, we may, and ought, not only not to refuſe, but to ſeek admiſſion into the company of the profligate, when there ſeems a fair probability of reclaiming them by counſel, or of relieving them by charity; but when we poſſeſs no

of the whole evidence. If Chriſtianity be true, no arguments can overturn it; they can only make the degree of the probability more definite; and the more definite the probability is, the better will people in general be able to eſtimate the danger of not making its precepts the rule of their conduct, and the ſtandard of their intereſt. If the accumulated objections againſt the truth of Chriſtianity can be proved, as I am of opinion that they might be proved, by a fair compariſon of the number and weight of oppoſing probabilities, to be only as $\frac{1}{99}$, then the probable truth, or the approximation to certainty in the evidences of revelation, would be as $\frac{99}{1}$, or there would be ninety nine chances in favour of the truth to one againſt it. Would not ſuch an argument, fully made out, and perſpicuouſly ſtated, have a great influence on the private and the public conduct, on the thoughts and actions of mankind? Would they be ſo ready to do evil in thought, word, or deed, when they were convinced that there were ſo many probabilities in favour of a future judgment, when every ſecret thing ſhall be revealed, and men ſhall receive according to the meaſure of their righteouſneſs?

power to do, or see no chance of doing them any moral or physical good, the love of virtue will cause us to shun the ways in which they walk, and the house in which they dwell. To live in habits of familiarity with men, who contemptuously deride or violate the known laws of God, is to countenance their principles, and to be accessary to their impiety.

32. It is a false notion that a man's conduct is not, in most cases, assimilated to his opinions. If the principles and the practice of men be often at variance, they will, I trust, be found more often to agree. But, as we mark the variations more than the agreement, we are too apt to draw general conclusions from particular facts, and to imagine that a man's conduct is not regulated by his principles, because it does not accord with them *in all instances*. A good man may occasionally act wrong; and a bad man may occasionally act right. But if a man's heart and conscience be impressed with right notions of moral obligation, his actions will, in a great majority of cases, accord with his opinions. He will adhere to what he deems morally good, and shun what he thinks morally evil. But, if a person really believe the obligations of truth, justice, gratitude, chastity, to be only empty names, and not binding on the conscience; what fruits can we expect to be the product of such opinions? Must we not expect to find favours received without thankfulness,

promiſes broken without reluctance, juſtice violated without remorſe, and chaſtity without ſhame?

33. To greet with the ſmile of affection, or the right hand of friendſhip, men profeſſing opinions inimical to the intereſts of religion and morality, is to lend our individual aid to counteract the public opinion *, by which they are oppoſed. Public opinion, when wiſely directed, is one of the ſtrongeſt barriers which virtue poſſeſſes againſt the inroads of vice; for, hardened indeed muſt be the offender, who can endure the general diſapprobation of his fellow-creatures. Thoſe violations of the will of God, or of the decencies of ſociety, againſt which the public opinion ſets ſo ſtrong, that he who commits them becomes the theme of public reproach, and the mark of public ſcorn, will always be leſs frequent than they would be if no ſuch diſcouragement operated in favour of their prevention.

34. Some offences are, perhaps, puniſhed more ſeverely, and prevented more effectually by the public diſapprobation, than by any other mode of puniſhment, or means of prevention. Public diſapprobation condemns the culprit to the worſt kind of ſolitude. It renders him, in a meaſure, ſolitary

* The ſtate of public morals may generally be aſcertained by the ſtate of the public opinion reſpecting any particular violations of moral duty.

in the confluence of ſociety; and his ſufferings are more excruciating than if he were placed in a deſert, barren of inhabitants, where he could trace no foot-ſteps but his own; but where he could not read in the countenance of others the ſentence of his condemnation * !

35. The feeling of ſhame is for the moſt part a painful conſciouſneſs of degradation in the eyes of others; a conſciouſneſs of inferiority deſerved, and brought on ourſelves by the contempt of rules, to which we ought to have conformed our conduct. And this feeling is the uſual aſſociate of thoſe actions, which, being contrary to the public opinion, experience the public diſapprobation; for, if theſe very actions, inſtead of being the objects of public averſion, were the topics of public praiſe, they would in all caſes, be perpetrated with leſs reluctance, and often with perfect ſelf-approbation.

36. *Self-approbation has, uſually, ſome reference to the approbation of others.* In ſome licentious companies, an unprincipled man will boaſt, with no ſmall degree of ſelf-approbation, of the number of virtuous women he has ſeduced. In this caſe, the ſelf-complacency which the perſon feels in recounting the ſucceſs of his ſtratagems, or the ſkilfulneſs of his addreſs, is, in a great meaſure, occaſioned by

* See Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments, v. i. p. 210, 6th ed.

the applauſes of his aſſociates. But, place the ſame man in any company where a juſt ſenſe of moral rectitude prevails; not one around him will ſympathize with the vain recital of his guilty pleaſures; not one will echo the filthy jeſt, or applaud the wanton tale. Inſtead of the ſmiles of baſe congratulation, he will ſee on every forehead the frown of abhorrence, and in every eye the flaſh of indignation. Hardened, indeed, muſt he be in iniquity, if, in ſuch a ſituation, ſome emotions of ſhame do not agitate his heart; and though his countenance may not betray any outward ſigns of remorſe, yet certain it is, he will experience a ſecret, inward ſelf-diſſatisfaction. There will be a ſenſation of ſelf-loathing; a painful feeling of unworthineſs!

37. Theſe conſiderations ſhew how important it is for individuals, who regard the welfare of ſociety, and who conſider juſt notions of religion and virtue neceſſary to the peace and the happineſs of the world, not to encourage, directly or indirectly, by their approbation avowed or implied, any actions, or any principles, which are adverſe to genuine religion and ſound morals, to the endearing charities, or *even the elegant decencies and modeſt proprieties of ſocial life.*

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

The Genius of Chriſtian Charity.

1. THAT part of piety which regards our duty towards each other, is comprehended in two words; juſtice and charity. Juſtice and charity united, conſtitute the perfection of morality; and the obligations of both are contained in that golden rule, which tells us to do to others what we would that others ſhould do unto us. We cannot experience injuſtice or inhumanity, without ſenſations of pain and averſion; nor can we act unjuſtly or cruelly towards others, without their feeling as we ſhould feel in the like circumſtances. As this law of the goſpel teaches us to make our perceptions of ſuffering, or ſenſations of miſery, the ſtandard by which we eſtimate the ſufferings of our fellow-creatures, it ſhows us how, in the beſt poſſible manner, to refrain from every violation of juſtice and humanity; and, at the ſame time, by enjoining us, in the varied tranſactions of life, to place ourſelves in the ſituation of our neigh-

bour, it perſuades us not to be regardleſs of his happineſs and intereſt, when we are purſuing our own. It identifies the relative obligations of juſtice and charity in the mind; and it conſecrates their union in the heart.

2. Juſtice and charity are the ſubſtance of the law and the prophets. They are the pillars, on which the great fabric of piety is erected; and which muſt inevitably crumble into duſt when they are taken away. For, once eraſe juſtice and charity from the duties of religion, and what will religion be but a miſchievous ſuperſtition? The practice, therefore, of juſtice and of charity, are the moſt eſſential parts of religion. They are the fundamental principles of that law which God hath written on the conſcience of man, and eſtabliſhed in the goſpel of Chriſt.

3. The duty of charity is more often mentioned, and more ſtrenuouſly inculcated in the goſpel, than that of juſtice, becauſe charity cannot exiſt where juſtice is violated. When, then, our Lord and his apoſtles, inſiſt on the obligations of charity, they always ſuppoſe that thoſe of juſtice are already fulfilled. Charity, as it is the greater duty, neceſſarily includes juſtice, which is the leſs. For this reaſon, charity is called in ſcripture *the bond of perfectneſs*, becauſe it contains in its capacious boſom all thoſe duties in which true righteouſneſs conſiſts; while its

preſence gives them a luſtre in the eye of man, and a favour in the ſight of the Father of Spirits, which they could not otherwiſe poſſeſs.

4. Charity is, as it were, the ſunſhine of moral excellence; it gives it radiance and beauty; it invigorates its growth, and multiplies its fruits. Thus, St. Paul, deſcribing the comprehenſive efficacy of charity, ſays, "*all the law is fulfilled in one word,—thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.*" Gal. v. 14. In another place he ſays, "*he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law;*" Rom. xiii. and the reaſon is, that "*love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*" Rom. xiii. 10. Charity excludes all moral corruption; adultery, murder, injuſtice, falſe witneſs, covetouſneſs, every evil thought, and every malevolent deſire.

5. Our Lord, on being aſked which was the great commandment in the law, anſwered, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind; this is the firſt and great commandment; *and the ſecond is like unto it; Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Matt. xxii. 37—40. Here, it is well worth our obſerving, that Jeſus makes the love of our neighbour and the love of God one and the ſame indiviſible principle of piety. He ſays, "*the ſecond commandment is like unto the firſt;*" thus *he makes charity not an adventi-*

tious part, but the ſubſtance of true religion. He ſuppoſes that the love of God cannot exiſt in the ſoul apart from the love of mankind. Genuine charity, therefore, is genuine adoration; and the worſhip that is offered to the Father of Spirits, is acceptable only when it is breathed from a heart which benevolence warms with its preſence, and hallows with its flame.

6. Charity is denominated *the bond of perfectneſs*, becauſe it contains, in one word, the ſubſtance of the two tables of the decalogue. The firſt table of the commandments is incomplete without the ſecond; the firſt table points to the fountain; the laſt exhibits the beneficent effects of true religion. The firſt exclaims glory to God; the laſt pronounces good-will to man; but charity, pure and undefiled, embraces both tables; it bows to God while it embraces man; it gives honour to the firſt, while it does good to the laſt; it places its hopes in the heavens above, while it ſtrives to diminiſh the miſery of the earth below.

7. Charity is the perfection of godlineſs. As God does not need our homage, as he is not glorified by our prayers, nor benefited by our devotion, he commands our worſhip, that it may, by producing juſt notions of our dependance on his will, make us poor in ſpirit; and, by exciting a juſt ſenſe of his goodneſs, render us kind in heart. The end of thankſgiving is to melt us with compaſſion, and to

increaſe our ſympathy for the wants of others. Thus the worſhip of God tends to inſpire the ſpirit of benevolence; and thus charity is the perfection of godlineſs; without which the adoration of God is vain; which is the beſt hymn of praiſe for his goodneſs, and the beſt ſong of thankſgiving for his mercies.

8. Charity is the perfection of juſtice. Juſtice conſiſts in giving to every one his due; charity imparts to others that which belongs to itſelf, and to which others have no juſt claim. Juſtice teaches us to do no wrong to our neighbour; charity excites us to do him all the good in our power. Juſtice conſiſts in preventing miſery; charity has a direct tendency to promote happineſs. Juſtice regards only the obligations of ſtrict right; charity conſults the ſofter obligations of humanity. Charity is gratuitous; juſtice is compulſory. The laws of ſociety may force us to be juſt; but charity is a matter of diſcretion. Juſtice is the ſatisfaction of a debt; charity the conferring of a favour. Juſtice may produce veneration; but charity conciliates love. Juſtice may ſatisfy the conſcience; but charity cauſes hope and joy and tranſport in the ſoul. Juſtice deſerves the meed of human reſpect; but to charity more eſpecially belongs the promiſe of eternity. Juſtice receives the applauſe of the wiſe and the good on earth; but charity ſurvives the grave, and will be welcomed into heaven by the hoſannas of angels.

9. Charity, in ſcripture, denotes the external acts of beneficence, and the internal principle from which thoſe acts ſpring, and without which, they are vain. By the internal principle of charity I mean the love of God; which is the true benevolent principle, alive and vigorous in the ſoul, diffuſing its influence over the whole ſurface of the affections, and warming the very core of our hearts. It is this principle of charity which produces patience and meekneſs; that ſweet complacency of manner with which vanity is never mingled, and which envy does not canker; that ſenſitive, affectionate ſympathy with the feelings, the intereſts, with the hopes and fears, the joys and ſorrows of our fellow-creatures, which beſpeaks the abſence of every unkind thought and every malevolent ſenſation. This is the true charity, which never faileth; and which may flouriſh in the heart in all ſituations and circumſtances; in the ſtorm of misfortune, and the ſunſhine of proſperity.

10. Charity is that love of God, which excludes all doubt concerning his providential care; and which, conſequently, generates reſignation under ſuffering, equanimity in danger, and hope in affliction. To charity belongs that ſenſe of dependance upon God, which produces humility of ſoul; that conſciouſneſs of his protection, which makes us feel that vengeance is his; which renders us placable when we have been offended, and eager to make reſtitution when we have given offence. To charity

belong thoſe exalted notions of the great Father of the univerſe, who maketh his ſun to ſhine and his rain to fall upon the juſt and the unjuſt; which make us willing to return bleſſing for reproach, and to do good, even where we have received evil. This is that charity, without which, even the tongue of angels would be but as a ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal; without which, though we had faith ſo that we could remove mountains, we ſhould be as nothing.

11. The charity which is ſo highly extolled by St. Paul, in the thirteenth chapter of his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, as the ſummit of Chriſtian perfection, and the crown of moral excellence, does not belong excluſively either to the mean or to the noble, to the poor or to the rich. A man may be oppreſſed with want, without a mite to beſtow in alms, and yet be animated with the flame of a purer charity than he, who, having thouſands, laviſhes them on others with indiſcriminate profuſeneſs. A man may even give his body to be burned for the benefit of others, and beſtow all his goods to feed the poor; and yet, wanting the true principle of charity, may fail of his reward.

12. Actions, apparently the moſt generous, and exertions of beneficence the moſt extenſive, ſtriking the mind with admiration, and impreſſing the heart with gratitude, may ſpring from motives which true

charity diſclaims. The ſtream may look clear, and yet ſome deſtructive mixture may be diſſolved in the waters; the air may ſeem pure and refreſhing, when ſome peſtilential vapour floats in every gale. Vanity or malignity, the advancement of ſome temporal end, or the indulgence of ſome unlicenſed deſire, may lurk at the bottom of the moſt ſplendid efforts of human charity. He, who ſhould endow almshouſes or build hoſpitals, as he would erect temples or grottos, merely to gratify his vanity, or to attract the gaze and admiration of the world, is not rich in charity towards God. That charity which is deſigned for a public ſhow, is charity reviled. It wants that elementary principle of religious love which conſecrates its worth. The very oſtentatiouſneſs of beneficence may give it a value, and gain it a currency among men; but it is the ſecret gift which is moſt acceptable to God. He values not the offering of him who is panting for the noiſy breath of praiſe, ſo much as that alms which is beſtowed in ſilence, and is beſtowed by him who looks not to man for his recompence. Our Saviour ſtrongly forbad his diſciples to make vanity the groundwork of their beneficence, by this forcible injunction, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* He made the love of God, as the father of mankind, the fountain of charity; that we might do good to each other, not to obtain the applauſe of men, which is vapid and tranſient, but to conciliate his favour, which is everlaſting.

13. When the love of God is the root of charity, it excludes every evil thought and every malevolent ſenſation. Genuine charity, therefore, whether regarded as a ſingle act, or an accumulation of acts wrought into a habit, is inſeparable from a benevolent ſtate of the affections. He would not be truly charitable, who ſhould make ſuch a ſacrifice of ſelf-love, as to give his body to be burned for the ſake of ſome, while he cheriſhed any ill-will in his heart towards others. Charity loves its friends; but charity is not vindictive towards its enemies. It promotes the intereſt of the one; but without obſtructing the welfare of the other. It ſmothers its animoſities; ſtifles its reſentments; it feeds its enemy when he is hungry; ſuccours him when oppreſſed; and refreſhes him when faint.

14. Acts of beneficence are ſpurious, where the malevolent principle is not extinguiſhed. One ſingle act of charity, performed when the ſpirit of forgiveneſs has got *entire* poſſeſſion of the heart, aſcends to the throne of mercy with a fragrance more ſweet, and an influence more availing, than a thouſand alms which are beſtowed when one malevolent wiſh reſts brooding on the ſoul, or one particle of rancour pollutes the heart that pities, or the hand that gives. The mite of the widow was accepted more than all the coſtly offerings of the rich, becauſe the benevolent principle that prompted the act was ſtronger in her ſoul than it was in theirs. In her no bitterneſs

was to be found; the love of God reigned ſole ſovereign of her mind; breathing on every thought ſhe entertained, and every deſire ſhe cheriſhed, good-will unfeigned, and charity undefiled.

15. Let no man, therefore, vainly ſuppoſe that he is excuſed, or can be exempted by the meanneſs of his condition, or the penury of his circumſtances, from the obligations of Chriſtian charity. That immortal principle of benevolence, without whoſe ſanctifying preſence all external acts of beneficence are, in the ſight of God, nothing worth, may be cheriſhed in as much purity, and burn with as much luſtre, in the affections of the peaſant, as of the prince. Though the poor man may not have it in his power to beſtow one mite upon one ſuffering fellow-creature, yet it is in his power to exerciſe that charity, "*which ſuffereth long, and is kind, which doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, which is not eaſily provoked, which thinketh no evil*;" that charity, in ſhort, which preſerves the mind from pollution, and prevents the heart from being cold; which cleanſes the thoughts of the one, and mollifies the ſenſations of the other.

16. Wherever wealth gives the means, there no plea can exempt from the exertions of actual beneficence. Where providence has provided the reſources, there nothing can privilege us from thoſe ſpecific acts of charity, by which the wants of the poor are relieved; by which the naked are clothed,

and the hungry fed; by which the fatherleſs are comforted, and the widow's heart is made to ſing for joy. Theſe are the fruits which the genuine benevolent principle will always produce, wherever it finds a ſoil capable of their production. Theſe are the fruits, by which it will delight to ſhow its life, and to manifeſt its reality. He, who is warmed with the ſpotleſs flame of Chriſtian benevolence, will not only do good, *but will take pleaſure in doing it.* He will not eſtimate his own enjoyments like the ſelfiſh man, by their excluſiveneſs; he will appreciate them by the degree in which they are made ſubſervient to the enjoyments of others; he will meaſure his happineſs by the happineſs which he imparts, and the miſery which he alleviates. He will not ſtrive to engroſs, but to diffuſe bliſs; and the pleaſurable ſenſations that thrill in his own boſom will be increaſed in proportion to the number of perſons with whom they are ſhared, and the wideneſs of the ſurface over which they are ſpread.

17. The object of our acts of charity is our neighbour; a name, of which the ſignification is ſomewhat different under the Moſaic and the Chriſtian diſpenſations. Under the former, it more particularly denoted an Iſraelite, a perſon of the ſame religion and nation; though, on ſome occaſions, it was extended to the ſtranger, the fatherleſs, and the widow of other countries. But, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, the diſtinctions of Jew and Gentile are aboliſhed,

and all national differences done away. The term neighbour, therefore, as it is employed in the new covenant, has no partial, no local, nor circumſcribed meaning; but relates, as we may infer from the parable of the good Samaritan, to every individual among the ſcattered thouſands of mankind, who wants our relief, and whom we can relieve.

18. The God of the Chriſtians is no reſpecter of perſons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him. Acts x. 34, 35. Under the diſpenſation of the goſpel there is no invidious diſtinction made between Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female; for we are all one in Chriſt Jeſus. See Gall. vi. 28. But though, according to the Chriſtian ſcheme, there is no diſtinction between perſons, places, and nations, though there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, bond nor free, but Chriſt is all in all; though Chriſtian charity, animated by the enlarged views of the founder of Chriſtianity, will embrace all who want its ſuccour; yet, in its actual operations, it will make thoſe wiſe and prudent diſtinctions between kindred and ſtrangers, friends and enemies, which the genius of Chriſtianity does not diſclaim; and to which we are impelled by the dictates of reaſon, and the ſympathies of humanity.

19. The glow of univerſal philanthropy will be warm and vigorous in every Chriſtian heart; and he

is no Chriſtian, whoſe boſom is inſenſible to its animated and animating flame. But, as the means of actual charity, even in the moſt opulent individuals, are ſcanty indeed compared to the aggregate of human woe, ſo it is neceſſary for every individual, in the diſtributions of beneficence, to pay a more eſpecial regard to the ties of family and of kindred, of friendſhip, of religion, and of country. Where other circumſtances are the ſame, and where, in other reſpects, the degree of want or the claims to compaſſion may be equal, theſe ties are rational grounds of preference, which it is inhumanity to violate, and impiety not to reverence. Theſe grounds of preference we are not contemptuouſly to deride, but affectionately to cheriſh; not coldly to neglect, but diligently to obſerve; as we are connected with each other by the endearments of blood and friendſhip, or the more diſtant affinities of a common religion, or a common country.

20. We cannot do good to all men; we muſt, therefore, be contented with doing good to individuals; and, in ſuccouring the wants, relieving the neceſſities, promoting the intereſts, or alleviating the miſeries of individuals, we muſt pay a juſt attention to the ſtrength of their reſpective claims. We muſt regard the degree of their relationſhip, and, if I may ſo expreſs it, of their proximity to our affections; and, often, even to our homes. In the diſtributions of beneficence, we are to regard thoſe firſt who are

poor and deſtitute in our own family; then among our friends; then among our acquaintance. We are to ſuccour a diſtreſſed citizen of our own country before a foreigner, and a Chriſtian ſhould relieve a ſuffering Chriſtian before a ſuffering Heathen.

21. That boaſted practice of univerſal philanthropy, which has been extolled as the perfection of morals, is vain in theory, and impoſſible in practice. He who forgets the ſuffering individuals to whom nature or ſympathy has given a claim on his affections, while he is vainly attempting to embrace a wider ſphere of beneficence, or is ſpeculating on ſome airy ſcheme of univerſal good, is like a man who ſhould abandon the wife of his boſom, or the friend of his heart, to periſh with hunger, while he vainly attempted to convey food to all the nations on the globe, by ſcattering a few baſkets of bread upon the ocean.

22. Chriſtianity, wiſely attending to the narrow limits of our capacity, and to the vaſt ſum of human wants, enjoins us, not *only, as far as we have opportunity, to do good unto all men*; but, ESPECIALLY, unto them who are of the houſhold of faith. While it enjoins us to do univerſal good in the degree in which we are capable of doing it, it does not ſanction the illuſions of promiſcuous benevolence. It orders us to attend to the diſtinctions of family and religion. We are to calculate the claim upon our

compaſſion not only by the degree of diſtreſs, but by the degree of relation and affinity.

23. As the apoſtle tells us *more eſpecially to do good to thoſe, who are of the houſehold of faith*, we ſhould beware not to make this exhortation a pretext for cheriſhing religious animoſity. Though we are to prefer thoſe who profeſs the Chriſtian faith to thoſe by whom it is oppoſed, yet we are not to foſter a narrow ſpirit of ſectarian antipathy and bitterneſs. We are not only to cheriſh ſentiments of regard for, but are to live in habits of amity with all Chriſtians of all ſects and denominations, however diſſimilar their modes of worſhip or of doctrine may be from our own, *as long as their tenets are not repugnant to the genius, or their lives do not reflect a ſcandal on the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.*

24. Though thoſe who profeſs the Chriſtian religion will generally have a claim to our ſympathy, and, if diſtreſſed, to our alms, ſuperior to thoſe who do not profeſs it, we are not to permit our zeal for Chriſtianity to make us *indifferent* to the happineſs or to the intereſts of the reſt of mankind. Though Chriſtianity, by incorporating us as members of the ſame body, under one head, Chriſt Jeſus, has formed a cloſe bond of relationſhip among Chriſtians; *yet we are to remember that Chriſtianity was not ſent to make us aliens from the great and univerſal family of mankind.*— We are to conſider that God made of one blood,

all nations that dwell on the face of the whole earth; and that, conſequently, we are not to look with ſullen averſion or malignant ſcorn on the followers of Confucius or of Mahomet. We are to love without hypocriſy, even Jews, Turks, and infidels; we are to behold with a compaſſionating regard all thoſe, who, in the blindneſs of their minds, or in the folly of their hearts, bow the knee to idols made of wood and ſtone; or who worſhip the ſun by day and the moon by night. We are to pray, with that fervor of charity, which will give to the ſupplications of man the eloquence of cherubim or ſeraphim, that ſuperſtition may be baniſhed from the earth; that all mankind may at laſt come into one fold, under one ſhepherd, Jeſus Chriſt the Lord.

25. Chriſtianity, though it directs the free and unreſtrained exerciſe of the benevolent affections, requires them to be exerciſed in their due order and cheriſhed in their due proportions. Our affections, as if by a law of our nature, gravitate moſt forcibly toward thoſe with whom we have the cloſeſt communion of intereſts and ſenſations; in whoſe good or bad fortune, in whoſe joys or ſorrows, we are in ſome meaſure perſonally concerned. The intereſts and ſenſations of our relations, of our parents, our wives, our children, are moſt nearly identified with our own. Their proſperity or adverſity, their ſickneſs or their health, come, if I may ſo expreſs it, more in contact with our feelings, than the proſperity

or the adverſity, the ſickneſs or the health of others. Hence they have and ought to have a ſtronger hold on our affections, than thoſe, in the variation of whoſe circumſtances, or intereſts, or ſenſations, we are leſs concerned.

26. Affections are generally the ſtrongeſt where the reciprocations of pleaſure and pain are the moſt frequent, where they are the ſooneſt excited and the moſt forcibly felt. Hence, in moſt caſes, according to the common courſe of nature, which it has often been the aim of metaphyſical ſubtilty to invert, or of falſe philoſophy to deſtroy, the reciprocations of pleaſure and pain muſt generally be more frequent, and conſequently more forcible, between kindred than between friends, between friends than between ſtrangers, between the inhabitants of the ſame town than the inhabitants of the ſame country, between the inhabitants of the ſame country than foreigners, between ſubjects of the ſame government than thoſe of a different, between members of the ſame, than thoſe of a contrary communion.

27. The power of what I call the reciprocations of pleaſure and pain in producing affection, and in invigorating it when produced, is very viſible in the growth of maternal love. The mother who ſuckles her child at her *own* breaſt, and often fondles it in her *own* arms, who watches its ſleeping and its waking hours, who plays with it in health and tends it

in ſickneſs, has always a warmer and ſtronger affection for it, than that more unnatural mother, who commits her offspring to be reared at the breaſt and nurſed in the arms of a ſtranger. The affection of the firſt has a ſource of ſtrength and a means of increaſe which the other wants. The one reciprocates more with the pleaſures and the pains of its child than the other.

28. Where ſtrength of benevolence is moſt wanted, there Providence has taken moſt care to favour its production; to render its growth moſt eaſy and its increaſe moſt certain. We ſee this, particularly in the affection between parents and children; for the relation between parents and children occaſions ſuch a continual reciprocation of pleaſures and pains, of hopes and fears, of joys and ſorrows, ſuch an unremitted interchange of ſympathies, as muſt neceſſarily produce parental love on one ſide, and filial on the other. Family love was intended as a ſtay to the helpleſſneſs of individuals, as a ſtaff to the aged and a pillow to the young; as a ſuccour to the indigent, and a conſolation to the miſerable. Strength of benevolent affection is therefore highly neceſſary among kindred; and the providential diſpoſitions of nature tend to plant it in our boſoms, and to fix it in our hearts. It begins in the early intercourſe of brothers and ſiſters, and it is gradually diffuſed to the remoteſt branches of relationſhip. Brothers and ſiſters ſoon learn to ſympathize with

each others wants and embarraſſments. Their ſufferings, their pains and pleaſures are often mutual; and the happineſs of the one is generally aſſociated with that of the other. Hence, by degrees, they learn to feel for and with each other, in circumſtances in which there could be no participation of actual ſuffering between them; in circumſtances, in which ſympathy could not be prompted by ſelfiſhneſs, or by any dread of wanting the aid we give, and the conſolation we beſtow.

29. The ſeeds of kindred love, which are ſown in the nurſery, when properly cultured, ſpring up into a tree of luxuriant verdure and ſtately growth, from which depend the bloſſoms and the fruits of all the benevolent affections. Though kindred love may be contracted in its expanſion, nipped in its buds, or withered in its leaves, by injudicious management or unpropitious circumſtances; yet it is a plant of ſo hardy a nature, and the circumſtances of life in which we muſt be placed do neceſſarily ſo favour its production, it takes ſuch deep root in the heart, and ſpreads its fibres ſo cloſely over the ſurface of the affections, that there is rarely a boſom on which it has not made ſome impreſſions or on which it exerts no influence.

30. There can hardly help being more frequent reciprocations of pleaſure and pain, ſtronger aſſociations and ſympathies, and conſequently ſtronger af-

fections between relations than between ſtrangers. The intereſts and ſenſations of kindred muſt come more into contact with our own than thoſe of perſons not allied to us by blood, nor connected with us by intercourſe. Family love commonly ſows the firſt ſeeds of benevolence, which are afterwards matured into all the ſocial virtues.

31. Before the benevolent affections can flouriſh, the ſelfiſh principle muſt be brought under proper regulations. The ſelfiſh principle counteracts the growth of the benevolent affections; and the benevolent affections abate the rancour and prevent the increaſe of the ſelfiſh principle. The more our intereſts are, as it were, divided, the more the ſenſations of our hearts are communicated to others; and the more the ſenſations of others vibrate in our own, the leſs we are abſorbed in the purſuit of *excluſive* gratifications. *Family love makes the firſt diviſion in our intereſts and ſenſations, by mingling them with the intereſts and ſenſations of others.*

32. The maturation of the benevolent principle is greatly aſſiſted by marriage, by friendſhip, and ſociety; till the ſoul, animated with the flame of benevolence, is diſpoſed to ſympathize with the intereſts of all mankind. Marriage, on Chriſtian principles, in a more eſpecial manner encourages the expanſion of the benevolent affections. It weakens the force of the ſelfiſh principle, by making our own

intereſt one and indiviſible with that of another; and when it gives birth to children, it ſtill farther promotes the increaſe of benevolence, by rendering our intereſt one and the ſame with that of many others. The benevolent principle will, in general, for theſe reaſons, be ſeldom found ſo ſtrong in unmarried as in married people.

33. Friendſhip is another ſoil very genial to the growth of the benevolent affections, and, indeed, true friendſhip never warmed a heart that true benevolence did not warm. True benevolence gives birth to the moſt ſincere, the moſt ardent and laſting friendſhip. A benevolent man muſt have friends, becauſe he muſt be friendly. The benevolent man loves his kind; and even the experience of treachery, of favours ill requited, or kindneſs not returned, will not chill his boſom, or indiſpoſe it to delight in the good of others. The benevolent affections teach us how to overcome evil with good; they teach us how to conquer without fighting for victory, to conciliate the vindictive, to bend the ſtubborn, and to appeaſe the paſſionate.

34. The happineſs of nations muſt be the greater the more that the benevolent affections warm the breaſts of individuals. Nations are only families on a larger ſcale; and the happineſs of the great family of nations is only an aggregate of the happineſs of all the individuals who compoſe it. The more in-

dividuals are happy, the greater is the public happineſs. The benevolent affections inſpire the individuals whom they animate, with zeal and vigour in promoting the happineſs of others, of their kindred, of their friends, of thoſe connected with them by blood or acquaintance, by the ties of religion, of neighbourhood, or country; or by any of thoſe ſympathies that bind man with man in all the nations of the earth, and through the whole circumference of humanity. The more individuals there are in a ſingle family, in whoſe boſoms the benevolent affections glow, the leſs ſtrife, the leſs envy, and the leſs ill-will there will be in each conſtituent part; and conſequently the greater tendency to promote the happineſs of the whole. If every member of a family were animated by the benevolent affections, no miſery could well be felt. One would be a ſtay to the other. The bitterneſs of family hate would be loſt in the ſweet intercourſe of family affection. Jealouſy between brothers and ſiſters, between near and more diſtant kindred, and which ſpring from a divided intereſt, would be at an end. They would be united by a reciprocity of intereſts and ſenſations. The rich would not ſhun the intercourſe, or be inſenſible to the wants of their relations in diſtreſs. The proſperity or adverſity of the one, would in ſome meaſure be the proſperity and adverſity of the other. They would be ſeen together in the ſunſhine and in the ſtorm.

35. True benevolence, though it will bear preſſure, loves expanſion. It breaths the moſt exhilarating ſweetneſs over the adjoining region of the affections; but it alſo ſcatters its fragrance far and wide, from thoſe who have the neareſt claims on the heart, to thoſe whoſe claims are more remote. It ſpreads from the wife of our boſom, or the child of our hope, from the father, who was the ſtay of our infancy, or the brother who was the companion of our youth, to the friends, with whom we have taken ſweet counſel together, to the companions with whom we have travelled in the road of life; to thoſe, whoſe fields and homes border on our own; to thoſe, who kneel with us at the ſame altar; or who are united in the intereſt or endeared by the name of one common country, till it embraces the whole peopled world.

36. Whenever a ſpirit of benevolence ſhall animate the councils of nations, and the governments of the earth, public oppreſſion will ceaſe, and want will be felt no more. Liberty, pure and genuine, ſuch as is worthy of a rational nature, that liberty which impoſes no reſtraints on harmleſs or innocent gratification, which allows freedom of ſpeech and liberty of inquiry, which encourages the growth of reaſon and the growth of virtue, which protects the rich from the ravage of the poor, and the poor from the inſults and extortions of the rich; this liberty would flouriſh in all its beauty, not like that tree of

liberty, which, in theſe calamitous days, has ſo often been planted by the ſword; which has been watered by the tears of the widow and the orphan; whoſe trunk has been fattened with ſlaughter; and whoſe boughs have been hung with the trophies of outraged humanity and violated juſtice. That liberty which would naturally grow out of the ſovereign ſway of the benevolent affections, would ſhelter the fatherleſs and the widow; under its ſpacious boughs the rich and the poor might dwell ſafely; humanity would tend its growth, juſtice would prune its branches, and the favour of heaven, ſmiling on ſo fair a plant, would protect its leaves from the canker, and harden its trunk againſt the ſtorm.

37. Under a government where the benevolent affections preſided, ſwaying the ſceptre of policy and moderating the ſeverity of juſtice, inſurrections could not happen; for mankind, by a ſort of inſtinctive impulſe, neceſſarily love a government that conſults their happineſs, that protects their property, that is tenderly alive to the ſecurity of their rights and the preſervation of their freedom. A people, that was animated by the true principle of benevolence, would cheriſh ſuch a government with a more than filial affection, and would be ready to ſpend their laſt ſhilling for its neceſſities, and ſpill their laſt drop of blood for its ſupport.

38. In whatever nation a ſpirit of benevolence animated the people and the government, the hearts of individuals and the councils of the ſtate, that nation would, as far as in it lay, remain at peace with all the world. It would not lightly or wantonly unſheath the ſword; it would engage in no wars of aggreſſion or ambition; and, if attacked by another power, it would not carry on hoſtilities with rancour or malevolence; but would eſteem the reſtoration of peace of more importance to the happineſs of its people, than the vain boaſts of conqueſt, or the idle trophies of ambition.

39. The Divine Author of Chriſtianity, by enjoining the benevolent affections ſo forcibly in his doctrine, and, above all, by his example, by ſo powerfully enforcing their cultivation, and by lending the ſanctions and promiſing the bleſſings of eternity to their practice, acted as the beſt friend of man. Conſcious of our wants, ſenſible of our diſtreſſes, and unequalled in wiſdom and in goodneſs, he propoſed in his counſels, and recommended by his life, that remedy, which alone can wipe all tears from all eyes, and drive heavineſs from all hearts. Whenever Chriſtianity ſhall be univerſally profeſſed in all its truth, and practiſed in all its purity, the world will be one univerſal monarchy under the reign of Love. Truth and Juſtice will dwell among the nations; and Benevolence will cover the earth as with a ſhield.

RELIGION WITHOUT CANT.

Moral good the greateſt good; or the nature, tendencies, and effects of moral action, theologically deſcribed, philoſophically diſcuſſed, and practically enforced.

1. God gives to his intelligent creatures various faculties, of which he requires a right uſe. The right uſe of the faculties, which we poſſeſs, conſiſts in their conformity to the end for which they were deſigned; or, in other words, in their conformity to the will of him by whom they were beſtowed.

2. Of the faculties which God gives to his intelligent creatures, he does not interfere, by any immediate act of power, to controul the agency; for this would render the faculties of intelligent beings like the wheels of a piece of machinery, which are put in motion by a power foreign to the machine itſelf.

3. Of thoſe laws, according to which God directs but does not compel our faculties to be employed,

he gives us reaſon to diſcover the utility, or he makes their exiſtence ſo plain by their effects, that they cannot be unknown. It is in conformity to theſe laws, or in obedience to the will of the lawgiver, that our happineſs conſiſts; and we cannot violate them, without taking ſomething from the ſum of our happineſs, or adding ſomething to that of our miſery.

4. We cannot violate thoſe laws of temperance, to which God deſires the faculties of our bodies to be kept ſubſervient without impairing our health; and though the effect of a ſingle act of intemperance may not be apparent, it is not the leſs real; it ſeems not to admit the relations of quantity, but, if often repeated, it ſoon accumulates to a ſum of phyſical evil, under the preſſure of which the health diſappears and the body decays. It is probable, in like manner, that we cannot violate the great laws of truth and juſtice, by whoſe immutable decrees our words and actions ought to be governed, even in a ſingle inſtance, without deducting ſomething from the ſum of good, which would otherwiſe be our portion. Though the effect be not immediate nor palpable, its influence operates, though it operates unſeen. It falls in, as it were, with the great and powerful ſtream of moral cauſes, which are in a ſtate of continual motion; and which invariably tend to carry evil to him by whom evil has been done.

5. Every immoral act, or act of disobedience to the divine will, (for I consider morality in no other light than the will of God,) has a necessary and uniform tendency to bring us, as it were, within the confines of misery *. As physical evil is hurtful to the body, so moral evil is destructive to the soul of man.

6. Why does God require us to observe the moral law, but because he wills us to be happy? And why does he require us not to violate it, but because he wills that we should not be miserable? The moral law is an emanation of his goodness, and the practice of it was commanded for the good of his creatures. The good of his creatures is the object of the will of

* Oh that kings and governments would remember this! That they would consider themselves as the servants of God upon earth, whose duty it is to execute *his* will rather than their *own!* Let the despot, before he issues his arbitrary "fiat," consider whether it be agreeable to the law of the moral Governor of the world. No governments should enact any laws, adverse in their spirit, or hostile in their tendency, to those of the Great King of heaven and earth. They should make the *moral law* the basis of the civil and criminal laws of the land. They should make a conformity to it, the standard of their interest and the pillar of their policy. Then nations would be happy, and the governors of nations would erect their power on the immoveable rock of truth, of justice, and of mercy; instead of raising it on the shifting sand of Machiavelian stratagem, cruelty, and injustice. See "Morality united with Policy," pp. 49—52. Printed for White, Fleet Street. Price 2s. 6d.

God; for God in ſcripture is ſtiled love, to denote his benevolent concern for his creatures, and his diſpoſition to contribute to their happineſs. And as the moral law is the will of God, a conformity to its decrees muſt tend to make us happy; for God, who is love, cannot will his creatures to be miſerable.

7. God has appointed laws for the government of the fleſh and of the ſpirit; laws to direct our agency, as we are animals, ſuſceptible of pleaſure and of pain; and laws to govern us, as we are moral agents, reſponſible in another life for our behaviour in this. On our conformity to theſe laws, our preſent and our future happineſs depends. The firſt relate to good, circumſcribed within the period of this life; the laſt to good, that extends beyond it.

8. Every deviation from the laws of the fleſh, or of our animal conſtitution, muſt indeed, in ſome meaſure, be a deviation from the laws of the ſpirit or of our moral conſtitution, for both originate from the ſame divine will, and a deflection from one is an offence againſt the power that appointed the other. What ſinks us lower in the ſcale of animality, depreſſes us proportionally in that of intelligence; the exceſs of the animal is the depravation of the moral man.

9. Every ſenſual exceſs, as far as it is the act of a rational being, poſſeſſing a diſtinct ſenſe of right and

wrong, is a deduction from the sum of present and of future good; from that good, which is bounded by the horizon of mortality, and that which awaits the righteous after death. A man may, indeed, deviate from the laws of his animal nature, he may be guilty of excess in eating and drinking, and in criminal pleasures, and which may have a direct influence on his present physical good; but he may not be conscious, at the time, that he is doing any thing morally wrong; and therefore, the act, not being a *wilful* breach of any moral obligation, may have no connection with his condition in another life. It may not be a transgression for which he will be called to account; for a man may offend against those laws, by which a due moderation of all the appetites is made subservient to his present interest, without knowing that he is sinning against the will of a superior power, which it is his duty to obey; and therefore the transgression, though it may be physically injurious, may not be morally destructive; though it may, from the natural association of cause and effect, be hurtful to the body in this world, it may not affect the state of the soul in the next.

10. Nothing will operate against the happiness of man in another life, but moral disobedience in this; and moral disobedience implies a perverse application of that faculty by which we discern evil from good, and good from evil. A man may trespass against the wise laws of his animal constitution, by

which pain is aſſociated with exceſs of indulgence, and yet not ſin againſt the moral law, becauſe he may not know, or be capable of knowing, that there is ſuch a law in being.

11. Before any man, as a being accountable to God for his actions, can do what is morally wrong, there muſt be a ſenſe of what is morally right and morally wrong upon his conſcience; or he muſt have a faculty of diſcerning their differences, which it is his duty to exert; or the differences themſelves muſt have been obliterated by long continuance in iniquity. No man can be excuſed for doing what is morally evil, becauſe he neglects the uſe of the power which he poſſeſſes to diſcover what is morally evil; or becauſe he has ſuffered the moral ſenſe to waſte away through diſuſe, or to be paralyſed by wickedneſs.

12. The laws which relate to the preſent animal economy of man are inflexible and univerſal in their operation. Neither the fool nor the wiſe man can treſpaſs againſt them with impunity. When an idiot tranſgreſſes the laws of health, the effect follows the courſe; the aggregate of phyſical good, which he could otherwiſe have enjoyed, experiences a certain, though not an immediate and viſible diminution *.

* The idiot wants reaſon, but he poſſeſſes ſenſation; and ſenſation alone will teach the neceſſity of temperance. The

But, if another perſon, who has a right uſe of his rational faculties, and on whoſe conſcience the diſtinctions of right and wrong, of moral good and moral evil are engraven, ſhould be guilty of the ſame offence, the conſequences may be extended beyond this ſphere of things.

13. Wherever there is a faculty of making juſt diſtinctions between right and wrong, there moral and phyſical good are the ſame; there preſent is identified with future good; there the intereſts of time are incorporated with thoſe of eternity. The intemperance of the idiot, who has no right ſenſe of moral obligation, may affect only his preſent good; but the intemperance of a wiſer man may be a deduction from his future.

14. The laws which relate to the government of the fleſh, or the animal economy of man, embrace the whole ſentient human race; but thoſe laws which relate to the government of the ſpirit, of the thoughts, the affections, and the whole moral economy of man, can concern only thoſe who know the differences between good and evil, and underſtand the weighty matters of moral obligation. But, as in

ignorant may, in many caſes, draw concluſions from ſenſation without any intermediate ſteps of reaſoning, as well as the philoſopher can by the more laborious proceſs of ratiocination. Senſation often diſcovers wiſe axioms of conduct, by bringing us, as it were, into contact with their benefits.

the firſt caſe, every deviation from the laws of our animal nature, takes ſomething from the ſum of phyſical good, which we ſhould otherwiſe enjoy, ſo it is highly probable from analogies in nature, and from the intimations of ſcripture, that every individual deviation from the laws of our moral nature muſt ſubtract ſomething from the ſum of our future, or what I call moral and eternal, in oppoſition to our preſent, phyſical, and tranſient good.

15. It ſeems the expreſs doctrine of ſcripture, that the more righteous, or the more obedient to God's will men are in this life, the more happy they will be in another. Now, as every individual act of diſobedience takes ſomething from the ſum total of our righteouſneſs, and conſequently ſomething from the ſum of our future happineſs, ſo every individual act of obedience adds ſomething to the ſum total of our righteouſneſs, (for a righteous life is only an accumulation of many particular acts of obedience,) and conſequently will make ſome addition to the ſum of our bliſs, in that ſtate to which this life is leading us. Theſe are weighty conſiderations, and highly neceſſary for us to cheriſh, that we may not make a mock of ſin, and count any one act of diſobedience to the divine will a matter of little moment.

16. A righteous life is only an accumulation of many particular acts of obedience; and, on the con-

trary, an unrighteous life is only an accumulation of many particular acts of disobedience. How many particular acts of obedience or of disobedience will cause us, through the mercy of God operating in the atonement of Christ, to appear just in his divine presence on the one hand, or will occasion our exclusion from his favour on the other, we cannot ascertain, nor does it become us to inquire; but this weighty truth it is highly important for us to know and to remember, that every individual act of good or of evil, of obedience or of disobedience, will have some influence on our eternal destiny. Oh that we would lay this truth to heart! That we would meditate on it ere we sleep at night; and ponder it well when we wake in the morning!

17. The greatest good which man can seek on earth, or enjoy in heaven, which can animate his exertions here, or reward his labours hereafter, is the favour of God. And the only condition, by which this perfect gift can be obtained, or to the performance of which it is appended, is a conformity to the moral law, the law of righteousness and true holiness. Every act of immorality, being a transgression of the will of God, must cause a diminution of his favour towards us. As God is a perfect being, and all his perfections of power, of wisdom, of justice, and goodness, though considered separately by us, in order that they may be brought more within the grasp of our narrow apprehensions, are, in fact, only

one and indiviſible, the will and the favour of God muſt coincide. The only way to obtain his favour is to do his will; and thoſe who moſt zealouſly ſtrive to perform the one, will enjoy the greateſt portion of the other.

18. The will of God, conſidered as operating in the moral world, ſuperintending its government, and diſpoſing its whole economy for the encouragement of moral good, and the puniſhment of moral evil, may be conſidered as a ſtrait line, pointing to our greateſt happineſs, and ſtretching through this life into eternity. The more we violate the divine precepts, the more we recede from this line, and the farther we depart from happineſs; and, if inſtead of ſteering our way through life by its direction, we keep removing farther and farther from it, from the time when the power of making juſt diſtinctions between right and wrong commences to the period when it ends, we may loſe the favour of God, without being reſtored to it again for ever * !

* If this ſuppoſition be true, the puniſhments denounced in ſcripture againſt the wicked, may be not only figuratively but literally accompliſhed. *They may be eternal!* Here, O ſinful man! pauſe and conſider thy danger before thou ruſheſt into irretrievable deſtruction!

In the Picture of Chriſtian Philoſophy, 3d edit. pp. 58—60. I have ſuggeſted that the puniſhment of the wicked in another world will probably be of long, but not of infinite duration; and I have ſaid that an eternity of puniſhment for temporal

19. Continual acts or habits of goodneſs cauſe us, as it were, to keep a courſe parallel with the will of

offences appears repugnant to any enlarged notions of the juſtice and the goodneſs of God. At the moment I am writing this note, (Friday morning, Jan. 2d, 1801,) I do earneſtly hope that all, even the greateſt ſinners may, and I do ſurmiſe that they *will* be ſaved. I have many reaſons for believing that the puniſhment of the wicked will tend, though ſlowly, and through a long ſeries of ſuffering, to extirpate the evil habits, which they have formed, and to bring about their reconciliation with the God whom they have offended. But then this belief is rather the expreſſion of hope, than the aſſurance of certainty; rather a conjecture which I love to indulge, than a poſition which the ſcripture gives me any expreſs authority to ſupport. The language of the ſacred writers upon the ſubject hardly warrants the concluſion which I wiſh to draw; and though that language may poſſibly be, and probably is, only the common inflation of the eaſtern idiom, yet when I conſider that this life is a ſtate of trial for eternity, and that when this probationary ſcene of things is over, it may never be ſucceeded by another, *in which there will be any room left for repentance or for pardon*, and that, conſequently, in this caſe, the ſinner would retain to all eternity the corrupt habits in which he left the world, and would thus remain for ever unfit for the communion of the juſt; when I conſider this, I dare not pronounce raſhly on ſo weighty a queſtion. And this truth it behoves us ſeriouſly to weigh, and attentively to remember, that whether the puniſhment reſerved for the ſinner in another life be temporal or eternal, *godlineſs in this world muſt be great gain with reſpect to another*. Reader, whoever thou art, or to whatever ſect thou mayeſt belong, if thou haſt turned aſide from the path of goodneſs, which, believe me, is *the only path of happineſs*, let me conjure thee as a friend, intereſted in thy welfare, to meaſure back thy way, ere the long night ſet in, and the thick darkneſs overwhelm thee!

God; or, at leaſt, with only ſome occaſional and tranſient deviations from it, ſuch as are hardly to be avoided by human imperfection. But from ſuch deviations to moral evil, a return is eaſy to moral good, when the principle of righteouſneſs is fixed in the mind and engraven on the heart. And even the ſinner who has made not only ſome few and occaſional deflections, but who has long continued in a ſtate of deflection from the ſtrait line of obedience, though he may never, in this life, be able to attain to that point of obedience, at which, if he had not ſo often or ſo long erred, he might have arrived *, yet he may approach it in an indefinite degree; ſo as to eſcape the being carried after death into the abyſs of miſery. But every ſtep that a ſinner removes farther from the line of religious obedience, the

* How great, how incalculable is the importance of early impreſſions of piety! Impreſſions, which, by a careful culture, may be conſolidated into habits that the company of the diſſolute cannot afterwards deprave, nor the arts of the inſidious undermine. A man *may* turn to God in his old age; but habits of righteouſneſs begun at that late period, though they may deliver from the wrath to come, cannot be ſo productive of future happineſs, as thoſe habits of righteouſneſs, of which the ſeeds were ſown in youth. Ye guardians of the young, before all other accompliſhments, labour to inſtruct their minds in the knowledge, and to imbue their affections with the ſpirit of true religion! Ariſtotle ſays with great truth, ȣ μικρον ȣν διαφερει το ȣ̓τως ἢ ȣ̓τως ευθυς εκ νεων εθιζεσθαι αλλα παμπολυ, μαλλον δε το παν. Ariſtot. Eth. Nicom. lib. ii. c. 1. Ed. Pet. Victor. 4to. Francofurti 1584. p. 22. line 17.

more difficult it will be for him to retrace his way to the point of deviation; for the momentum of bad habit increaſes as he proceeds, and the more his pace is accelerated towards deſtruction.

20. Every ſingle act of ſin is a deflection from the ſtrait line of duty, and conſequently deducts ſomething from the happineſs which we ſhould otherwiſe enjoy; for duty is conformity to the will of God, and to this conformity his favour is appended, *in which alone true happineſs conſiſts*. Hence we ſee the neceſſity of abſtaining, with all the vigilance, which we can exert, even from thoſe ſmall individual tranſgreſſions which we are too apt to regard as matters of little moment; which ſeem not at the time to ſubtract any thing from our happineſs, or add any thing to our miſery. But, habitual ſins, though they may be habitual violations of *only one of the leaſt of the commandments*, are a continual infraction of the will of God; a continual turning from our duty, and, conſequently, a continual ſacrifice of our only real and ſubſtantial intereſt and glory.

21. The moſt righteous in this world will make ſome occaſional deflections from their duty; but thoſe muſt be the happieſt who make the feweſt. The nearer we approach that line of perfect obedience and abſolute ſubmiſſion to the will of God, where true glory and happineſs begin and end, or, in other words, the more our habits of goodneſs in this

life advance in ſtature and increaſe in ſtrength, the greater will be our portion of bliſs in the life to come; and if the righteous grow, as they probably will grow in goodneſs to all eternity, they muſt increaſe in happineſs to all eternity.

22. The felicity of the righteous muſt keep pace with their *moral improvement*; and the one may advance perpetually like the other. Eternity does not admit the relations of time; but as it is poſſible to ſuppoſe any given portion of time capable of endleſs accumulations, ſo it is poſſible to imagine any particular portion of virtue or of happineſs to be increaſed, and to go on increaſing through all eternity.

23. The perfections of God, being infinite, can never be changed; they admit of no limitations or additions; they cannot be enlarged or diminiſhed in number or in ſize; but the perfections (perhaps I ought rather to ſay the imperfections) of man being only a finite quantity, may be continually augmented, or continually diminiſhed; continually ameliorated or continually depraved. The increaſing perfections of man bear a conſtant relation to his paſt imperfections. And the comparative perfections of the creature may keep continually growing in vigour and in ſize, without ever becoming infinite; they may be extended to an immeaſurable diſtance from the point of imperfection at which they ſet out, and yet attain no nearer to the infinite perfections of God, than they were at the beginning. What is finite,

however vaſt it may ſeem to what is, if I may ſo expreſs it, more finite than itſelf, can bear no poſſible proportion to what is infinite; no, not ſo much as a mite does to the ſubſtance of the world.

24. The will of God, in a conformity to which morality conſiſts, is the perfection of his power, of his wiſdom and his goodneſs. When God, by his ſimple volition, created light, his will was the image of his attributes, of his power, his wiſdom, and his goodneſs. The moral law, by which he governs the intellectual world, and the relations of which muſt have exiſted in the divine mind from the beginning of time, was as much the reſult of his ſimple volition, as the creation of light, or the eſtabliſhment of the laws which regulate the univerſal ſyſtem. The moral law ſhews his wiſdom in contriving it, his power in fixing and perpetuating its relations, and his goodneſs in ſo arranging the wonderful economy of cauſes and effects, of actions and their conſequences, as, without controuling the free agency of man, makes obedience to its decrees always ultimately productive of good and aſſociated with happineſs.

25. The more we obſerve the moral law, the more we do the will of God; and the more we do his will, the more we approach his perfections; for the divine will and the divine perfections are identified. The will of God, according to the different lights in which it is wiewed, is the abſtract idea, the

collective ſum or the active force of all his perfections. And the moral law, according to the different relations in which it is conſidered, may be regarded as a proviſion made by the divine wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, for the happineſs of the whole rational creation. The moral perfectionning* of man conſiſts in the increaſing conformity of his conduct to the moral law, or in his increaſing obedience to the will of God. We cannot do *all* his will, for that ſuppoſes infinite perfection; but we may keep on, through all eternity, improving in the faculty of doing it †.

26. In the whole univerſe, there can be but one perfect ‡ being, and that is God; for every created

* Had the philoſophers Condorcet, Godwin, and others, conſidered perfectibility not as an acquiſition of phyſical and intellectual powers, which can never be attained by individual man in his mortal ſtate; but as a gradual growth in goodneſs, a continual increaſe in our ſingle acts of obedience to the divine will, and a conſequent approximation to the divine image; a *moral* perfectionning begun in this world and continued in the next; who could have objected to their hypotheſis? Who could have derided ſuch a ſpeculation? Who could have diſputed its great practical utility? The mind of man can entertain few reflections more uſeful or more juſt.

† We are not to ſuppoſe that man will continue ſtationary in that ſtate to which death will lead him; it is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he will keep through all eternity advancing from one ſtate of intelligence to another, and from one degree of glory to a higher.

‡ Here the word perfect is taken in its abſolute ſignification, as excluding every idea of imperfection; and not as before,

being (and every being is and muſt be created, God alone excepted) muſt be imperfect; and though there may be many, nay infinite degrees of imperfection, when one created being is viewed in its relations to or conſidered in compariſon with another, yet as the difference between that which had a beginning, and that which had none, is infinite, all created beings muſt be placed equally diſtant from his perfections, in whoſe eyes the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth his angels with folly.

27. But though the imperfections of man, conſidered in their ſtrict philoſophical relation to the abſolute perfections of God, may always continue in the ſame ſtate of inferiority, though no created nature can, in any period of its improvement, though that improvement ſhould be carried on through an endleſs ſucceſſion of ages, ever approach *within any given diſtance* of the infinite power by which it was produced; yet the perfections of man, viewed either as relative to the paſt ſtate of the individual, or in compariſon with the ſtate of other created natures, may keep continually improving; and it is in the perpetual accumulation of that improvement that moral perfectionning conſiſts. We are to uſe the utmoſt endeavours, and make the moſt ſtrenuous exertions,

when I was ſpeaking of the perfections of man, where the word is taken as relative to ſomething greater or ſomething leſs.

never to be ſtationary in the race of moral improvement. Not looking back, but preſſing forward, we are to labour continually to go beyond that point in the race of goodneſs, at which we laſt arrived. We are to ſtrive to excel both ourſelves and others, who are running the ſame courſe, and panting to reach the ſame goal, in the great work of obedience to the will of God; and we are to conſider that obedience as the greateſt good, which we can purſue, or which we can attain.

28. It may be objected, that obedience to the will of God does not always conſtitute our greateſt good, but is often productive of great pain and inconvenience. If, indeed, the connection between morality and intereſt were terminated by the grave, obedience to the will of God might not always be our intereſt; for circumſtances may occur, in which one act of juſtice or one exertion of humanity may coſt a man his life. But, as the relations between morality and intereſt are carried beyond the grave, and though they are very cloſe and eaſily diſcoverable here, they will be indiſſoluble and ſelf-evident hereafter; and though they are ſubject to certain contingencies in this world, they will be liable to no interruptions in the next; the conformity of our conduct to the moral law or the will of God, muſt always, in all circumſtances, and under all poſſible combinations of *preſent* good or evil, be our greateſt good; for the greateſt good, which it is poſſible to attain in this ſhort life, can

bear no proportion to the eſſential and endleſs good that is promiſed in another.

29. The more narrowly and attentively we look into the moral economy of the univerſe, a field of ſpeculation well fitted for the rational powers of man, where they may range with the greateſt freedom, and exert their vigour with the greateſt ſucceſs; where truths of the higheſt importance to the welfare of the world are to be explored; and where alone that true philoſophy is to be found which connects earth with heaven, and elevates rational man to the precincts of pure intelligence; the more we ſhall find that God has, in the moral order of things, made as immutable diſtinctions between right and wrong, between truth and falſehood, juſtice and injuſtice, as he has made in the phyſical order of things, between ſweet and bitter, pain and pleaſure, miſery and happineſs.

30. Pleaſurable ſenſation in a moderate degree is always phyſical good; but animal pleaſure may be ſo long continued as to cloy, or ſo often repeated as to produce a pain greater than itſelf can counteract; but obedience to the will of God, which is moral good *, can never be too long in duration, or

* Moral good in this acceptation of the words, is ſpiritual joy; and JOY SO TRULY SPIRITUAL, NEVER SPRINGS FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE. The Calviniſts think that ſpiritual joy can flow only from the wild orgaſms of devotion; but, *in the moral*

too intenſe in degree. It teems with delight that never tires; with pleaſure that never cloys. Moral pleaſures, or pleaſures reſulting from the practice of truth, of juſtice, and of charity, are not ſubject to any repletion of enjoyment. They admit an infinite augmentation, and the more often they are taſted, the greater becomes their capacity to give pleaſure and ours to receive it. Senſual pleaſures are uſually greater in the fond illuſions of anticipation than in the reality of poſſeſſion. But moral pleaſures, *being no illuſion, the reality only can delight*; they are therefore little known till they are experienced, and the experience always ſurpaſſes the higheſt expectation. Senſual pleaſures flouriſh moſt in the bloom of youth, but moral pleaſures increaſe with increaſing years. Endued with an immortal principle, they charm when the glow of phyſical ſenſibility expires; they extend their delight even to our hoar hairs; and promiſe to the dying an eternity of bliſs.

31. Our nature is ſo conſtituted, that, as what is ſweet is agreeable to the taſte, or what is ſmooth to the touch, ſo what is morally good, inſtantly, and without any labour of preparation, gratifies both the mind and the heart. As a taſte for what is ſweet is natural, and a taſte for what is bitter artificial, ſo a

improvement of their conduct, they would find joys more ſweet and more genuine, raptures more delicious but more reaſonable; and, though more tranquil, more ſublime.

taſte for moral good is the inſtinctive propenſity of the ſoul, and a taſte for moral evil is the product of habit.

32. Pleaſurable ſenſation is the primary object of man; but pleaſurable ſenſation, the pureſt in kind and the greateſt in degree, is connected with and reſults from acts of goodneſs. Thus God has given to our nature a bias to moral good in preference to moral evil *; and our ſenſations themſelves are, in ſome meaſure, capable of diſtinguiſhing their differences. The practice of truth, juſtice, and mercy, ſeems a natural ſource of agreeable ſenſation, to which the reaſon cannot deny its aſſent nor the heart its ſanction. But the practice of falſehood, of injuſtice, and of cruelty, is a natural cauſe of painful feelings †, for it is abhorrent to the plain dictates

* Juſt in the ſame manner as he has given us a deſire of happineſs in preference to miſery. Moral good is happineſs, moral evil miſery; though perverſe aſſociations and a rapaciouſneſs of preſent pleaſure make us blind to this truth, and indifferent to the conſequences.

† If painful feelings be not always produced by falſehood, injuſtice, &c. it does not follow that they have not a *natural* tendency to produce them. For, the taſte of tobacco and of many other things has a *natural* tendency to produce naufea and excite averſion; though it ſometimes produces neither the one nor the other, but quite the contrary. In the laſt caſe, the phyſical taſte is impaired, or a new and unnatural one has been ſuperinduced by habit; and whenever vice is reliſhed, or virtue

of common ſenſe, and the unvitiated ſenſibilities of humanity *.

loathed, *the natural healthy moral taſte has been corrupted from its original ſimplicity.*

* There ſeems a ſtrong propenſity in mankind to be ſpectators of ſcenes of miſery Children, as I have often obſerved, aſſemble in greater crowds to ſee a funeral than a wedding, and the populace will always quit a puppet ſhow to attend a criminal to the gallows. Sympathy, when it is ſtrong and vivid, always forcibly attracts us towards the object; and it is this ſympathy which carries men to witneſs an execution in preference to other ſcenes apparently more agreeable. It muſt not be ſuppoſed, that becauſe men are thus powerfully impelled, by a certain principle in their nature, to be ſpectators of others ſufferings, they ſeek to derive, or that they actually do derive pleaſurable ſenſations from the ſufferings of their fellow-creatures; for the principle of ſympathy which, if I may ſo ſpeak, accelerates our ſteps to ſome ſcene of miſery, *was made thus operative in our breaſts on purpoſe to ſtimulate us to relieve it.* It may be aſked, how can ſympathy impel us to be ſpectators of miſery, which we have no proſpect of relieving, to ſee pain inflicted and anguiſh felt, which we can neither prevent nor alleviate? But the principle of compaſſion, which is one of the aboriginal principles of the human nature, always poſſeſſes a general tendency to attract us towards objects of miſery; and this paſſive ſtate of compaſſion uſually precedes its active operations. In a populous city, when the news of any terrible accident or calamity is made known, multitudes inſtantly ruſh to the ſpot; but in this caſe, I do not believe that the majority are actuated more by emotions of curioſity, than by the principle of compaſſion. When compaſſion impels us to take a near view of the pains and ſufferings of others, it ſeems to do it in order that thoſe pains and ſufferings may excite our benevolence into action. Miſery which is ſeen, is more

33. We derive pleaſure from the practice of truth, of juſtice, and of mercy, abſtracted from the

likely to make us ſtrive to relieve the ſufferer, than that miſery which, being out of our ſight, does not ſo powerfully act on our ſenſations. A few, indeed, will gaze idly on the ſufferer and paſs on, but the many will make ſome effort to relieve him, and where circumſtances render relief impoſſible, the deſire of affording it will be expreſſed on the countenance and felt in the heart. The miniſtration of comfort to the dejected, or help to the needy, affords pleaſure; and the ſimple but heart-felt deſire of adminiſtering it, produces a pleaſurable ſtate of ſelf-ſatisfaction. Thus ſympathy ſeems the principle which ſo forcibly impels men to be ſpectators of executions, of ſights of wretchedneſs, and ſcenes of woe; and in general, except in caſes of atrocious guilt, or in one or two individuals, who may ſeek to gratify the paſſion of revenge in beholding the ſufferings of an enemy, it will be found, that the ſpectators do not only compaſſionate the ſufferer, but feel a ſtrong deſire to avert or to abate his ſufferings.

In beholding the ſufferings of others, we may, in ſome caſes, involuntarily feel a ſort of negative pleaſure in the conſciouſneſs of perſonal ſecurity; for the ſight of miſery may induce us to make agreeable compariſons in our own favour. But though the motive which impels men to be ſpectators of the ſufferings of others may often be of a very mixed and complex kind, compaſſion is always, in the great majority of caſes, one of its principal conſtituents; and perhaps its force is more than equal to that of all the reſt. Thus the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are very obſervable in his having made compaſſion one of the maſter-principles of our nature, and to the influence of which ſo many others are ſubſervient.

It has been ſaid that our active habits are ſtrengthened, and our paſſive weakened by exerciſe. Thus the pain which is felt at the ſight of miſerable objects, is diminiſhed by the fre-

consideration of any personal advantage, to which they may tend, or with which they may be con-

quency of the spectacle; but if the active principle of compassion be exercised as well as the passive, the willingness to relieve objects of misery is increased in proportion as the pain which they cause becomes less, or as the disagreeable impressions, which they make on the system, wear away. Hence it is right not only to indulge a passive sympathy, but, as much as possible, to cherish and to exert the principle of active beneficence; for, by this means, the painful feelings which a miserable object causes, will become less in degree, while the pleasurable feelings derived from active goodness will increase as the habit is matured. But if we cherish only the passive feeling, without exerting the active energies of compassion, the disposition will receive a tendency to cruelty; for the impressions which sights of wretchedness make, being diminished in strength by familiarity, and the decay of the passive not being associated with a proportionate increase in the active habit of benevolence, the person will at last come not only to be affected with no painful feelings from, but to take pleasure in the spectacle, and perhaps even in the production of misery. Hence we may easily learn, how, in many cases, that character which is termed cruel is formed. The feeling of compassion is, by degrees, weakened, and the active principle of beneficence is not proportionably strengthened, till the misery of others ceasing to excite pain, causes at last positive pleasure. I need not, I trust, anticipate the sagacity of the reader, in applying some of the remarks, which I have made in this note to the practice of education; nor need I remind him, that they tend to show in what manner the habit of sentimental and pathetic novel-reading, while it seems to soften, tends in fact to harden the heart; and I think that they will furnish a clue to discover why Rousseau, Sterne, and other writers, who were so remarkable for a passive sensibility, were so deficient in practical beneficence.

nected; but when we derive pleasure from the practice of falsehood or injustice, the pleasure is not produced by the transgression, but by the emolument with which it may be connected, or the interest which it may promote. The mind always disapproves the practice of falsehood or injustice, though its disapprobation may have less influence on the will, than the gratification with which the vice flatters the senses. We never approve falsehood as falsehood, or injustice as injustice, though some temporary advantages connected with the practice, or some animal pleasure resulting from it, may make us blind to their deformity and insensible to their tendency. But, on the other hand, we always approve justice as justice, and truth as truth; they want no associated circumstances to give them an interest in our hearts; they need no adventitious ornaments to make them please, no artificial lustre to make them captivate; and pleasures, pure and exquisite, always flow from an inviolable adherence to their obligations.

34. All the pleasure that can be derived from the most successful violations of truth and justice, is animal pleasure; and which is always diminished, if not entirely destroyed, by *moral dissatisfaction*. On the other hand, when, resisting the allurements of falsehood or injustice, we make any considerable sacrifices at the shrine of truth and justice, our sensations, ruffled, perhaps, for a short season, always ultimately settle into that pleasurable state of moral satisfaction,

which converts the loſs into gain *, and inſpires that feeling of conſcious rectitude, of which the poſſeſſion is better than all the accumulated intereſts of unrighteouſneſs. And though, on ſome occaſions, we may be required to cut off an arm, to pluck out an eye, or to part even with life itſelf, for the ſake of truth, of juſtice, and humanity, we ought not to ſhrink from the ſacrifice; for if it diſſolve our connection with the fleeting intereſts of time, it will conſolidate it with the intereſts of eternity. *He*, ſays the Lord, *who loſes his life for my ſake ſhall ſave it*; that is, he

* If God have made morality our intereſt, if he have implanted in the mind, ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of its utility, that we never can, rationally, approve falſehood and injuſtice, and never rationally condemn truth and juſtice, how can it be ſaid that we are *born* altogether corrupt and abominable, radically diſpoſed to evil and indiſpoſed to good? For, it appears, that if any conſtitutional bias be laid on our choice, it is rather in favour of virtue than of vice. When pain and pleaſure are rightly diſtinguiſhed, we always prefer pleaſure to pain; and when moral right and wrong are offered to the choice, the mind always prefers moral good to moral evil, unleſs when it is corrupted by the dominion of ſenſual appetites and perverſe aſſociations. Moral good, *rightly conſidered*, is the higheſt and moſt refined corporeal pleaſure; and it is the ſweeteſt pleaſure which we can taſte, for it is pleaſure, in conformity to thoſe laws of the author of our being, in whoſe favour is life, and *without whoſe regard there can be no laſting pleaſure*. Conſider this, ye ſticklers for the innate moral corruption of man! Conſider this, and no longer make the great Father of ſpirits the contriver and abettor of human depravity!

who keeps my ſayings, and is obedient to my laws, even unto death, ſhall receive his recompenſe in a better world. Bleſſed, therefore, thrice bleſſed are thoſe, *who are undefiled in the way, and walk in the law of the Lord.* Truth and juſtice, falſehood and injuſtice, are not mere matters of human convention; they are not the random conjectures of the ignorant, or the barren ſpeculations of the wiſe; their relations do not originate in the mind of man, but in the will of God; and inſtead of being dependant on the verſatile changes of opinion or of policy, they have been eſtabliſhed and incorporated in the nature of things, by a decree which cannot alter, which has been fixed from the beginning, and will continue to the end of time.

35. Chriſtianity, by placing human conduct in its true relation to the intereſts of eternity, proves that moral good is our greateſt good, and moral evil our greateſt evil. By promiſing to recompenſe us *according to our works* *, it ſhows that the ſtate which we ſhall paſs into after death, has a cloſe connection with our preſent habits; for when Chriſt declares that he will judge us according to our works, we cannot ſuppoſe that the ſentence which he will paſs upon us, will be determined ſo much by a few ſingle acts as by the general habits of our lives. He will take a large and impartial ſurvey of our whole con-

* Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. xi. 6.

duct from the beginning to the end of our days. The more perfect therefore our habits of obedience to the law of God have been, the greater will be our happineſs after death. *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly.* Now the only ſeed which we can ſow in this life, preparatory to a rich harveſt of future glory in the next, is acts of obedience and righteouſneſs gradually ſtrengthening into an habitual conformity of the conduct to the will of God. The more numerous our acts of obedience are, or the leſs interruption they experience from acts of a contrary tendency, the more robuſt and vigorous is the habit; and conſequently the greater will be the capacity of the individual for immortal bliſs.

36. Every ſingle act of obedience to the divine will may probably have ſome influence on our future happineſs, as far as it adds ſomething to the intenſity of thoſe habits of righteouſneſs, which are *conditional qualifications* for eternal glory. An habit of religious obedience may be conſidered as formed of many particular and individual acts of obedience, *each of which has ſome ſhare in its formation.* Thus, therefore, the power of the habit muſt increaſe in proportion to the number of the particular acts of obedience from which it reſults, of which it is the collective growth and the accumulated force.

37. Every particular act of religious obedience carries on the increaſe of the habit in the ſoul, and

cauſes our moral energies to expand more and more to the fulneſs of the ſtature of Chriſt. Habits of truth, of juſtice, and of temperance, grow, as it were, out of the many particular occaſions in which truth has been ſpoken, and juſtice and temperance practiſed; or in which the temptations to falſehood, to injuſtice, and intemperance, have been reſiſted. The habit of righteouſneſs advances with an accelerated pace, according to the number of the individual acts of righteouſneſs that we have performed and the ſtrength and number of the temptations which we have ſubdued.

38. Every temptation withſtood by the reaſon, and made ſubject by the conſcience, is not only ſo much power taken from the ſtrength of ſin, but ſo much added to that of righteouſneſs; and, in the ſame manner, every particular act of obedience to the law of righteouſneſs tends to augment the force of the habit, and conſequently to aboliſh the law of ſin which may reign in our members. Hence, it may be readily underſtood, how every particular act of religious obedience adds ſomething to the intenſity of the habit of obedience; and hence, we ſee the neceſſity of uſing our utmoſt endeavours to abſtain from every particular violation of the law of righteouſneſs, and even from the infraction of thoſe ſmaller moral obligations, which we are wont to tranſgreſs with indifference, and think to tranſgreſs with impunity. But as every ſingle act of obedience adds ſome-

thing to the intenſity of the habit, and every act of diſobedience takes ſomething from it, ſo the infraction of what our Lord calls the leaſt commandments muſt have ſome influence on the moral character; and conſequently *on the preparation of the heart for another life.*

39. The more intenſe our habits of religious obedience are, the greater muſt be our fitneſs for future happineſs; for a future life will be, according to the intimations of ſcripture and the ſuggeſtions of reaſon, *a ſtate of moral retribution*; when glory and honour ſhall be rendered to him who hath done good, and tribulation and anguiſh to him who hath done evil. A future life being therefore *a ſtate of moral retribution*, its happineſs muſt be proportioned to the degree of moral obedience in the individual, or to the intenſity of his habits of righteouſneſs *. The more intenſe and vigorous the habit is, or the nearer approach that the individual makes, *proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoys*, to the goodneſs which was manifeſted in the life of Chriſt Jeſus, the greater

* The intenſity of the habit muſt bear a certain determinate relation to the time allotted to the individual to acquire it. Thus, habits of righteouſneſs acquired by an individual, who periſhes in his youth, may be conſidered in relation to the time allowed for the acquiſition, as intenſe, and contain a reaſonable fitneſs for as high a ſtate of future happineſs, as the habits of righteouſneſs acquired by another who lived to a good old age.

will be his capacity for happineſs in the life to come.

40. The word of God bears fruit, in different degrees, in different perſons; in ſome it brings forth thirty, in others ſixty, in others ninety fold; but thoſe who, *with equal opportunities*, make it yield the greateſt increaſe, will receive the largeſt recompence at the reſurrection of the juſt. Thoſe in whom the doctrine of Jeſus has been moſt prolific of righteouſneſs, will occupy the higheſt ſtation among the ſpirits of good men in heaven. Though there ſeems no truth leſs regarded, yet there is none in the whole compaſs of ſcripture more clear than this. In the parable of the ten pieces of money, (Luke xix.) he who had converted the one pound which he had received into ten pounds, received authority over ten cities; he, who with one pound, had gained five pounds, received authority over five cities; while he who kept his pound laid up in a napkin, not only received no reward, but was deprived of all that he had; as in the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv.) the *unprofitable* ſervant was caſt into outer darkneſs, where there is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. *So will it be at the great day of retribution!* O ponder this! ye, who either make a mock at ſin, or do not ſtrive with that diligence and zeal, which become men who are one day to give an account of their thoughts, words, and actions, to improve in habits of obedience, to the will of the only Juſt, the only

Wiſe, and the only Good! O ponder this! ye *who hold the truth* IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS! Conſider, before it be too late! that every act of diſobedience is a ſtep towards miſery and deſtruction. O ponder this! and labour to advance in the race of righteouſneſs; *the only race in which true happineſs is to be obtained or laſting glory to be won!*

41. The more we do the will of God, the more we become like God; for to do the will of God, is to imitate the perfections of God, whoſe will is the ſum of his perfections. In whatever he wills, his infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, are engaged. All his works are contrived with wiſdom, executed with power, and perfected in goodneſs. The volitions of man are often ſeparated from wiſdom, power, and goodneſs. Man often wills to do that which he has not ſagacity to deviſe, or ſtrength to execute, or of which the execution anſwers no good end. There is often folly in the beginning, weakneſs in the progreſs, and deſtruction in the conſummation of his ſchemes. When man wills any thing, ſome interval of time, greater or leſs, always elapſes between the volition and the accompliſhment; but when God wills any thing, we cannot imagine the intervention even of a ſecond time between *his fiat* and the execution.

42. When we ſay that God wills our obedience to the moral law, we do not mean that God has, by any

abſolute decree, impoſed on man the neceſſity of obeying it, any more than he has impoſed the neceſſity of violating it. This would be to enſlave the human will, and to deſtroy the morality of human actions, by making them the reſult of a mechanical compulſion. We do not therefore aſſert that God willed our obedience to the moral law in the ſame manner as he willed the creation of light, ("let there be light, and there was light;") but that he has appointed to the moral agency of man barriers, *which cannot be paſſed with impunity*; that he has eſtabliſhed an order of things, by which obedience to the moral law becomes the intereſt, and diſobedience to it the bane of man; that He has made a cloſe and permanent connection between truth, juſtice, benevolence, and happineſs; and between falſehood, injuſtice, malevolence, and miſery; and that theſe relations which the All Wiſe, and All Good, has ordained for the promotion of human virtue, and the extenſion of human happineſs, though they ſometimes appear imperfect, broken and diſordered here, will take place without any confuſion, any failure or imperfection hereafter.

43. Morality, or a conformity of our conduct to the will of God, does not, in this world, for wiſe and good purpoſes, always conduct to preſent happineſs; but the occaſional miſery which it experiences ſhould be regarded as the fatherly correction of the moral Governor of the univerſe, deſigned to extend

the expectations of the individual towards another life, and at the same time to increase the fitness for its enjoyment. Though God has established the moral law, he does not so constrain the human will, as to force the performance of its obligations. He gives man a faculty to discern between right and wrong, and an inward monitor to keep their differences alive in his sensations, and he then causes his happiness to depend on the choice which he makes. If God have fixed a close, and easily perceptible connection between morality of conduct and present good, and an indissoluble connection between righteousness and future good, it is plain that he wills the morality of our actions, as a kind father wills the welfare of his children, without controuling their choice, or annihilating their freedom. Morality must therefore be our greatest good; and every act of immorality must be a dereliction of our greatest interest.

44. True, plain, rational morality *, whose obligations, when clearly explained and forcibly inculcated, come directly home to the business and the bosoms of all mankind, is the perfection of natural religion, which consists in the imitation of God; and

* I do not mean the morality of the metaphysician or the casuist, of which the practical efficacy is lost in the clouds of speculation, in the subtleties of evasion, or the perplexities of ingenious imposture.

the ſame morality is the perfection of revealed religion, which conſiſts in the imitation of Chriſt.

45. Natural reaſon, by inveſtigating the attributes of God, as they are diſplayed in the natural, or as they may be deduced from the order of the moral world, may form a ſort of abſtract model of excellence, in the imitation of whoſe virtues the beauty and perfection of natural religion will conſiſt; but in revelation we behold, as it were, all the divine perfections embodied in an individual. In revelation, we ſee exhibited a diſtinct, corporeal model of practical righteouſneſs, exciting the admiration of the mind, and warming the ſenſibilities of the heart. It is a model on which the virtuous look with love, and which the vicious cannot hate. The moſt illiterate cannot be inſenſible to its beauty, and the wiſeſt are diſmayed in the contemplation of its majeſty. It is a ſpectacle intereſting to the philoſopher, who, like Newton, has ſurveyed the ſpacious heavens, or who, like Bacon and Locke, or Hartley and Butler, has inveſtigated the moral economy of man; and it is equally intereſting to him, whoſe ideas do not ſoar above the preſſure of his animal neceſſities, and whoſe affections are in a great degree circumſcribed by his privations. It is, in one word, intereſting to all, who poſſeſs the common feelings of humanity. It is a model of perfection, not too depreſſed for the high, nor too elevated for the low; it is ſuited to the imitation of man in all regions and climes, under all

changes of manners and opinions, and all poſſible varieties of laws and governments *. In the imitation

* Nothing can more ſtrongly ſhow the truth of Chriſtianity, than the ſingularly ſtriking adaptation of Chriſt's character, as a pattern of excellence and a model of imitation to univerſal man. Had the character been fictitious, taken from no living archetype, copied from no corporeal reality, can we imagine it poſſible for ignorant people, like the Evangeliſts, to have faſhioned it with the niceſt philoſophical accuracy and diſcrimination, ſo as to ſuit all the neceſſities of man?—a pattern of excellence for the human race in all ages and nations, and abſtracted from all conſiderations of place and time; whoſe practical uſefulneſs can never be ſuperſeded by the progreſſion of the world in wiſdom, or by its improvement in virtue; which is calculated to excite love the more it is ſtudied, and to diffuſe happineſs the more it is imitated. All the accumulations of hiſtorical proof that have been ſo induſtriouſly collected by Lardner, and ſo judiciouſly arranged by Paley, do not amount to half that fulneſs of proof in ſupport of the truth of revelation, as the conſideration of Chriſt's character alone will furniſh to a thinking mind. Were I aſked on what particular part of the evidence I would reſt the truth of Chriſtianity, I ſhould inſtantly reply, on the tranſcendant excellence of Chriſt's character, conſidered as an inimitable repreſentation of every imitable virtue; and compared with the circumſtances of the authors, by whom it was drawn, and with the manners and genius of the people, among whom the glorious original lived and died. On the imitation of this character, which we not only read, but ſee, in the memoirs of the Evangeliſts, the moral perfectionning of man depends; and the more its virtues are abſorbed into the manners, the diſpoſition, and the conduct of the human ſpecies, the leſs muſt be the ſum of its imperfections. And in proportion as the practical excellencies of Chriſt's character are receded from, the greater muſt be the deviation of

of this character, the character and the virtues of Jeſus of Nazareth, who is God with us *, the perfection of revealed religion conſiſts; *and thoſe who*

individuals and of nations from the path of true happineſs and glory.

On the external evidence of Chriſtianity all ſeems to have been ſaid that can be ſaid; but the internal evidence has not yet been exhauſted by the reſearch of the learned, or the reflections of the wiſe. Some juſt, and inſtructive, and acute obſervations, may be found in Wakefield's Evidences of Chriſtianity. I do not coincide with Mr. Wakefield in all his theological or political opinions, but I admire his learning, and I revere his virtues.

* Without meaning to enter into the dark controverſy about the doctrine of the Trinity, which I leave to older theologians, and more recondite ſcholars, I cannot help remarking, that all the perfections of the Godhead, power, wiſdom, goodneſs infinite, did reſide in a bodily form, in the perſon of Jeſus of Nazareth; and that, conſequently, he was, according to the doctrine of the church of England, perfect God and perfect man. But whether the divine attributes which he exerciſed were hypoſtically and eternally inherent, according to the Trinitarian, or only delegated according to the Unitarian ſcheme, whether he were God *per ſe*, or inveſted with the power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, as his repreſentative, ſtill it muſt be confeſſed that he was GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH. On this ſubject, the moſt difficult in the whole compaſs of theological inquiry, let us not be bitter towards others for thinking differently from ourſelves. Let the zealous Trinitarian conſider, that though he underſtand all myſteries, and have not charity, he is nothing.

endeavour to make it conſiſt in any thing elſe, will only mar its beauty and deſtroy its uſefulneſs *.

46. The divine perfections, as they are diſplayed in the vaſt and magnificent ſyſtem of creation, are beyond the utmoſt ſtretch of mortal comprehenſion. Of the works of God, of the operations of his providence, the exertions of his power, the contrivances of his wiſdom, and the conſummations of his goodneſs, it may truly be ſaid that their effulgence dazzles

* May I expreſs a few ſentiments very genial to my heart, in the words of Epiſcopius? " Veram theologiam credimus mere practicam eſſe, et proinde quæcunque in ea traduntur, eo unice referenda, ut ad officium ſuum ſedulo faciendum, et mandata Jeſu Chriſti obſervandum acrius aptiuſque homo inflammetur atque animetur. Arida enim, effæta, ſterilis, et proinde ſpuria eſt theologia, que intra inanem ſpeculationem, et contemplationem meram conſiſtit, quæque poſtquam diu multumque vigilantiſſimi cujuſque induſtriam fatigavit, atque ingenium ſolum operoſe exercuit, ad voluntatem tamen non penetrat, et debitum Deo obſequium in eâ non gignit; eoque nec veram ac ſalutiferam Dei Chriſtique notitiam in nobis efficit. " Qui enim dicit, ſe Deum noſſe, et mandata ejus non ſervat, mendax eſt et in eo veritas non eſt." Prima igitur ac præcipua theologiæ laus in eo ſita eſt, ſi animum hominis in obſequium Dei flectat, et eam noſtri partem, quam libertate naturali donavit Deus, et quaſi ſui juris atque arbitrii fecit, ita inclinet, ut Deo ſeſe totam ſponte ſua iterum ſubjiciat, et abdicato priſtino libertatis ſuæ abuſu, ductum divinæ tantum voluntatis ſequatur *Cetera omnia, niſi ad hunc ſcopum dirigantur, coram Deo vana ſunt et frivola, et per ſe minimi precii, adeoque pene nihili ducenda.*" Prefat. ad Confeſſ. Remonſt. p. 73.

our ſight, and their obſcurity mocks our penetration; that their variety eludes our ſearch, and their ſublimity exceeds the utmoſt elevation of the human faculties. But, in the perſon of Chriſt, we behold, as it were, theſe inconceivable perfections reduced to the ſize of our apprehenſion, and brought within the angle of our ſight. We behold a pattern of excellence, of which we can, in ſome degree, meaſure the dimenſions, and which we are capable of imitating.

47. In the character of Chriſt, we ſee the higheſt abſtractions of goodneſs, which the mind can feign, moulded into a certain diſtinct figure and ſhape; in his life and in his doctrine we obſerve every ſpecies of moral excellence, that can be attained in practice, or imagined in ſpeculation *.

48. If there be any part in Chriſt's character, where all is purity without a ſpot, and ſplendour

* Hence the great ſuperiority of the Chriſtian over every other ſyſtem of theology. In all other ſyſtems, ſuch an example is wanting, and no other ſyſtem beſides poſſeſſes the eſſential characteriſtics of, and the neceſſary fitneſs for an univerſal religion. True religion admits not the narrow limitations of time and place, of cuſtoms, manners, &c.; but on what religion but the Chriſtian can this praiſe be beſtowed? All the nations and governments of the earth may live, and move, and have their being, under its influence. It puts nothing out of its place, it promotes good will inſtead of ſtrife, and calm acquieſcence inſtead of factious diſcontent.

without a cloud, which more particularly excites our love and engages our eſteem, it is the conſtancy of his benevolence. The benevolent affections give morality its fragrance, virtue its attractions, and religion its uſefulneſs. There is no place, and there can be no circumſtances, in which their cultivation is not required for the good, and in which their practice is not eſſential to the happineſs of mankind. They produce content, and cheerfulneſs, and mirth, in the ſilent hamlet and in the obſtreperous city; in the vale of ſecluſion and in the throng of ſociety; in the affairs of families and in the councils of nations. They alone make the eye to ſparkle with genuine joy, and the heart to thrill with laſting pleaſure. Theſe affections, ſo auſpicious in their influence, and ſo inexhauſtible in their benefits, ſhone with an inimitable luſtre in the ſentiments and in the conduct of Jeſus; and nothing can ſo powerfully promote their growth in the heart, and their diffuſion through the world, as the vigorous and general imitation of his character.

49. Chriſtianity, by being delivered in the form of a hiſtory, and that hiſtory containing the delineation of a perfect character, ſhowing the man Jeſus an unrivalled example of humility, meekneſs, and every virtue, enduring inſults with gentleneſs, injuries with forbearance, ſubduing oppreſſion by patience, and malevolence by charity, endeavours to keep a pattern of righteouſneſs conſtantly fixed before our eyes.

Had the precepts * been delivered in a more dry and abſtract form, without being ſo diſtinctly perſonified in a corporeal reality, or had they been tranſmitted to us in the ſhape of a philoſophical treatiſe, diſtinguiſhed by the nicety of the arrangement, and the juſtneſs of the reaſoning, by the eloquence of the ſtyle, and the concluſiveneſs of the deductions, and had this treatiſe even been confirmed, at its original publication, by certain miraculous appearances, yet it could not have excited ſo much intereſt, or been aſſociated with ſo much good, as the ſimple narrative of the Evangeliſts; in which we meet with hiſtorical relation inſtead of elaborate diſcuſſion; with accidental diſcourſes inſtead of premeditated orations; with ſhort authoritative ſayings inſtead of logical argumentation. The character gives weight and dignity to the precepts, and the precepts add to the intereſt and the authority of the character; the force and juſtneſs of the one, and the beauty and the fitneſs of the other, impreſs a conviction on the mind, and gain an aſcendency in the heart, which could not eaſily have been produced by the more abſtruſe and leſs popular method of philoſophical inquiry.

50. Chriſtianity, by holding a model of ſuch perfection before our eyes, takes the ſureſt and the

* The precepts are a perfect rule of life; but it is the character which gives them ſo much beauty and effect, which renders them ſo perſuaſive and ſo intereſting.

ſhorteſt way to facilitate our improvement in righteouſneſs, to animate our exertions, and to accelerate our progreſs. The view of a character ſo excellent tends to produce that juſt ſenſe of our own inferiority, which generates humility, and, at the ſame time, it inſpires an honeſt zeal, and inſtigates to vigorous efforts to attain perfection.

51. The imitation of any individual, conſpicuous for wiſdom or for virtue among our fellow-creatures, tends to improve the character. It generates a hearty deſire to get rid of our own imperfections, to amend what is evil, and to improve what is good; to ſtrengthen what is weak, and to eſtabliſh what is ſtrong. But, in the wiſeſt and the beſt of men, though there may be much to imitate, there will be ſomething to ſhun. There will be ſome blemiſhes to abate our admiration, and to excite our compaſſion, if not our ſcorn. But, in the character of Chriſt, which is perfection abſolute, integrity without blemiſh, and innocence without guile, there is nothing which we may not love and ought not to imitate. There is nothing to extenuate regard or to produce diſguſt; there is no littleneſs to take off from the greatneſs; the goodneſs is not debaſed by one particle of evil; and the wiſdom is not blurred by the preſence of a ſingle abſurdity. We behold a perſon like ourſelves, a man poſſeſſing all the characteriſtics of humanity, without any of thoſe defects which excite averſion, and with all thoſe virtues which generate cordial eſteem

and every pleaſurable ſenſation. We ſee nothing but perfection; but it is the perfection of mortality. It is a perfection exactly ſuited to our apprehenſions; it is not an indefinite, imaginary ſomething, which our minds cannot graſp, or with which our hearts cannot ſympathize. We behold Jeſus endued with that wiſdom which bears with the froward and inſtructs the ſimple, and with that beneficence which condoles with the ſad and rejoices with the happy. He appears, indeed, inveſted with the ſceptre of the power of God, but his power does not excite dread ſo much as love, for he exerts it only in doing good.

52. In the natural world, we may diſcern numerous appearances, from which to deduce and collect numerous arguments, by which to eſtabliſh the goodneſs of God; but we do likewiſe obſerve ſome things which *ſeem* to indicate an indifference to the happineſs of mankind. We behold evident marks of a deſign to impart happineſs; but do we not diſcover ſomething like the features of a being that delights in miſery? We ſee, and we feel a great deal of good, but it is, at leaſt to our groſs perceptions, mingled with a great deal of evil. We behold the wiſeſt and the kindeſt arrangements made for the preſervation of man; but there are others which ſeem contrived, as if, in mere wantonneſs, for his deſtruction. In contemplating the Deity, in the natural and moral economy of the world, we meet with certain mani-

feſtations of great regard for his creatures; but we ſometimes obſerve good and evil diſpenſed with a ſort of fortuitous extravagance. We ſee all things happening alike to all, and the rain and the dew falling on the righteous and the ſinner. The fields of the liberal are ſometimes parched with drought; while thoſe of the covetous are fertilized by continual ſhowers. The property of the ſimple and induſtrious peaſant is ſwept away by a torrent, while that of his corrupt and luxurious neighbour *ſeems* purpoſely exempted from its violence. We ſee the hopes of the upright withered and decayed, while the fraudulent flouriſh beyond their moſt ſanguine expectations. The earth is decorated with flowers and enriched with fruit; but whole cities are ſometimes buried under the eruptions of volcanoes; and the innocent are not ſpared in earthquakes and convulſions. Man occaſionally enjoys, as it were, the full ſunſhine of the divine benevolence; but he often mourns under the ſhadow of adverſity, and groans under the oppreſſion of the Moſt High. In ſhort, the goodneſs of God, many as are the proofs of it, which are palpable to ſenſe and obvious to inquiry, is liable to objections, which may well prevent acquieſcence in his decrees and reſignation to his will; *unleſs we take a future life into our view of this, and conſider the preſent evil world as a paſſage to a better.*

53. If the good which there is in the world, and which is ſufficient to prove the benevolence of the

Creator, were *more predominant than it is*, men could not reaſonably expect a future life; and if the proportion of evil were much greater than it is, they could feel little pleaſure in the contemplation. For, if the evil abounded much more than it does at preſent, the proofs of the divine benevolence would be proportionally diminiſhed; and in this caſe, even on the ſuppoſition that there were a future life, ſo far would the probability be decreaſed of that life's being a ſtate of happineſs. But, under the preſent ſyſtem of things, the good is juſt ſo predominant as ſtrikingly to demonſtrate a diſpoſition to produce happineſs, and juſt enough evil is mingled with it, to cheriſh the expectation of a better, a leſs precarious, and leſs miſerable exiſtence *.

* It is a vain attempt to reaſon men out of their ſenſations by abſtract propoſitions. That there is much pain and miſery in the world cannot be denied; but then I think that every one will acknowledge them to be terms of degree and of compariſon; and that in the individual they may be conſidered as relative to what is paſt and to what is to come. A greater pain abſorbs a leſs, and a leſs following a greater is comparative pleaſure. Whether the Deity could not have conſtituted this world without any intermixture of pain and miſery it is uſeleſs to inquire; nor does it belong to us to meaſure the poſſibilities. But, taking the world as it is, we are to conſider whether marks of benevolent deſign be not widely ſcattered through the whole ſyſtem, and whether the portion of pain and ſorrow which we do experience, and under which creation often ſeems to groan, do not, on the whole, increaſe the balance of enjoyment; and, *by diverſifying the ſenſations of man augment his hap-*

54. Were there much leſs miſery than there is in the world, were the good leſs allayed with evil, were

pineſs. It may, indeed, very fairly be aſked, whether, in a being ſo conſtituted as man, there could be a ſenſe of happineſs without any acquaintance with miſery, or a conſciouſneſs of pleaſure, if there were a total inconſciouſneſs of pain? But however this may be, certain it is, that the experience of pain always heightens the reliſh for pleaſure. The ſcheme of the univerſe is probably ſo ordered, that every intelligent being is rendered capable of a continual and endleſs progreſſion in happineſs; and this progreſſion, with reſpect to the individual, may be an interminable ſeries of compariſons in the experience of ſucceſſive ſtates of happineſs. In our future exiſtence, there may be always ſomething beyond us to animate exertion; and this ſomething obtained, new deſires may ſucceed as the old are gratified. Thus we may keep on for ever and ever advancing from one degree of excellence and of bliſs to another, in a perpetual and never-ceaſing approximation to the unclouded ſunſhine of the glory of God. The ſtate of the ſpiritual man in heaven, of the mortal cloathed with immortality, cannot be ſuppoſed a ſtate of torpid quieſcence but of increaſed activity; a ſtate in which deſire ſhall never ſtagnate and improvement never end.

Happy would it be for us, if we would conſider the ſeveral degrees of pain and miſery which we meet with in this world, as relative to pleaſure and happineſs, either in the life which now is, or in that which is to come. This would teach us to bear afflictions with patience, and to be cheerful when all looks diſmal around us. It would keep hope freſh and the ſpirits gay. We ſhould reflect that the various ſorrows and troubles which we meet with in life (thoſe only excepted which are owing to our vices) are neceſſary ingredients in our condition; and that in the diſpenſations of providence, miſery often becomes the ſhorteſt way to the temple of bliſs. In this world, we begin our being, in a ſtate of things in which there is a great mixture of affliction, and of which no ſon of man ever

this mortal life leſs chequered with uncertainty and misfortune, this ſtate of things would furniſh ſuch ſtrong arguments for, and ſuch powerful perſuaſions to *preſent acquieſcence and unmingled ſatisfaction*, as would make the mind too well contented, and the heart too much delighted with its preſent ſituation. There would not be that longing after immortality, that buſy expectation of ſomething to come after death, which there now is. Man finding this world a ſtation of eaſe and reſt, not oppreſſed with difficulties nor ſaddened with care, would take up his reſt here. He would ſay to his ſoul, "Soul! take

falls into the grave without experiencing his ſhare. But when this life is conſidered as connected with, and preparatory to other happier modes and ſtates of exiſtence, all, even its ſevereſt miſeries, dwindle into inſignificance, and become lighter than air upon the balance. Theſe conſiderations prove that the miſery which there is in the world, viewed in the light in which I have placed it, inſtead of being any argument againſt, is one of the ſtrongeſt arguments for the divine benevolence; for the goodneſs of God muſt be infinite, even as exerted towards the leaſt unit of intelligent nature, if he have ſo arranged the economy of the univerſe, that every individual intelligent being is made ſuſceptible of AN ENDLESS PROGRESSION IN HAPPINESS. That a created being cannot, like the one uncreated God, enjoy infinite happineſs, is a truth that will not be conteſted. How then is ſuch a being to be made moſt happy? Certainly not by being allotted to his greateſt degree of happineſs at once, and there kept ſtationary; but, by being rendered progreſſive in bliſs, and ſo progreſſive, that though ever tending to, he may never arrive at that point where bliſs will no more increaſe. In this note I have attempted to give a plain and intelligible ſolution to many difficulties, which have often perplexed the moraliſt and the divine.

thy full glut of pleaſure; eat, drink, and be merry, for there is nothing to come hereafter!" But the vexations and uncertainties of this preſent life do not permit this unclouded tranquillity of the mind, and this unruffled joy of the heart. Man is born to trouble; and ſeeing no *ſure* refuge from ſorrow on this ſide the grave, he naturally looks to one beyond it. Obſerving virtue often diſtreſſed and vice proſperous, the wicked riding in triumph, and the righteous proſtrate in the duſt, and yet beholding amid all this apparent confuſion, ſtriking and irrefragable proofs of the moral government of the world, he can diſcover no end to his perplexity, and no reſolution to his doubts, but in the ſuppoſition of a future life. The preſent ſtate of things, therefore, furniſhes arguments for a future life, in which the mind may reaſonably acquieſce; by which the incredulous may be ſatisfied, and the ſorrowful conſoled *.

* The reader will obſerve that, in this paſſage, I am conſidering the probabilities which natural reaſon may diſcover in favour of a future and happier life; where good ſhall be leſs chequered with evil, pleaſure leſs balanced with pain; where the wicked ſhall ceaſe from troubling and the weary be at reſt. But all the moſt profound deductions of reaſon on this important ſubject, are very inferior in ſtrength to convince, and in intereſt to perſuade, to that palpable proof of it, which the reſurrection of Jeſus affords; and the probabilities in favour of the fact of his reſurrection, greatly exceed any probabilities which reaſon can adduce in favour of a future ſtate, when unaſſiſted by that light which the Chriſtian revelation has ſpread over the world.

55. In ſending his ſon into the world, the expreſs image of his perſon, the ſchechinah of his preſence, and the repreſentative of his glory, God has diſtinctly, palpably, and incontrovertibly, manifeſted the perfection of his goodneſs. In Jeſus we behold goodneſs which no argument can invalidate, and no facts or occurrences in his hiſtory can diminiſh. Chriſt, therefore, is the Divine Goodneſs, diſplayed in a viſible and tangible model of perfection. And as goodneſs is the eſſential principle of morality, without which it is rotten and lifeleſs; ſo the perfection of morality muſt conſiſt in the imitation of the character of Chriſt, who is perfect goodneſs; in whoſe heart was no malice and no guile.

56. That morality which conſiſts in the imitation of Chriſt, in the practice of his virtues, and the obſervance of his ſayings, while it is more pleaſing to God than all the ſubtle ſpeculations of all the wiſe men of this world, has likewiſe a ſtronger tendency than any ſyſtem of morality, formed on any other model, or regulated by any other laws, can have to make us happy. Of the Chriſtian virtues, while the principle forcibly inclines us to love our fellow-creatures, the exertion naturally inclines them to love us. It is not ſufficient to object that the proud will trample on the humble, that the inſolent will oppreſs the meek, the vindictive the forgiving, and the hard-hearted the benevolent; for the practice of that pure morality which conſiſts in humility, meekneſs, forgiveneſs, brotherly kindneſs, charity, muſt, by the

powerful operation of natural cauſes, by the inviſible, but in a great meaſure irreſiſtible agency of the common ſympathies of humanity, in a vaſt majority of inſtances, occaſion the warm and artleſs reciprocations of eſteem and love *.

57. The Chriſtian virtues, having no tendency to excite envy or fear, but tending to produce a ſtate of the ſenſations, totally oppoſite to the experience of thoſe baleful paſſions, pave the way for the introduction of all the kind ſentiments into the heart. Where neither hate, nor envy, nor fear, have ſhed their mildew on the breaſt, benevolence will eaſily kindle its holy flame. Thoſe amiable and inoffenſive qualities; thoſe ſerene, unoſtentatious, and intereſting graces, the culture of which the Chriſtian doctrine cheriſhes and matures, and the practice of

* There is nothing like what is commonly called philoſophical reaſoning in the goſpel; yet the rules of life there delivered *are all philoſophically juſt*; and the more they are analyſed into their elementary principles, and the more they are traced through all their ramifications and tendencies, through their near and their remote conſequences, the more they will be found conformable to the moſt elaborate abſtractions of philoſophy. By the philoſophy here mentioned, I do not mean ſuch philoſophy as that of Voltaire, Diderot, or Godwin; but that philoſophy which is conſecrated by the illuſtrious names of Bacon, Locke, Clarke, Hartley, Butler, &c. Theſe men were true philoſophers, and their writings are a ſpacious, and I truſt a laſting reſervoir of *ſalubrious philoſophy*. The term philoſophy has of late been greatly abuſed; but let not therefore the thing itſelf be held in deriſion.

which our Lord ſo ſtrenuouſly recommended by the captivating eloquence of his diſcourſes, and the more eloquent captivations of his example, by cleanſing the affections from every ſenſation of ill-will towards others, muſt operate, with no ordinary efficacy, to extrude every ſenſation of ill-will from the hearts of others towards us *.

* The love of God is the only firm and laſting foundation of benevolence. The love of God is not like the principle of the *general good*, a cold abſtraction, but a warm reality. The ſenſe of the Divine Preſence, as Biſhop Butler has moſt ably taught us, may be realized, fixed in the mind, and embodied in the heart; and when it is thus brought, as it were, into contact with the thoughts and ſenſations, who can doubt the ſalutary influence which it muſt exerciſe on the benevolent affections? Where benevolence does not reſt on this immutable principle, (the love of God,) it is ſubject to the moſt capricious variations, liable to be chilled by ingratitude, and to be extinguiſhed by perſecution. It is not, it cannot be fixed or permanent; it may ſubſide into apathy, or be converted into hate; but the love of God gives it vigour and conſtancy, breathing into it the ſpirit to act, and producing conſiſtency in action. Animated by love divine, cheriſhed by its flame, and hallowed by its preſence, the benevolent principle loſes its frail and periſhable nature. It ſtrikes root in the ſoul, and it bears fruit in the conduct. No blaſt withers its leaves, and no ſtorm ſhakes its trunk.

Hence, we ſee the wiſdom of our Lord in commanding us firſt to love God and then to love mankind; thus making the religious principle the root of the benevolent, making that principle which prompts our adoration and binds our hearts to the Father of ſpirits, give life and ſtrength to the benevolent affections; which attach us to the intereſt of our fellow-creatures; which perſuade us to miniſter comfort to the wretched and relief to the diſtreſſed.

58. The genuine principles of Chriſtianity, whether in their immediate operations, or their in-

The love of God, particularly when aſſiſted by thoſe increaſed motives to love him, which are furniſhed by revelation, refreſhes the benevolent affections with a ſecret but conſtant aſpiration. Natural religion, or that theory of our intereſt and our duty, which reaſon forms from the light of nature, urges us to love God as the author and preſerver of our being; but revelation teaches us to love him, not only as the giver of life, but a deliverer from death; not only as the author of all the good things which we enjoy here, but of a glorious immortality which is reſerved for us hereafter. Revelation ſhows us in a manner more clear and by arguments more convincing than unaſſiſted reaſon could ſuggeſt, that the regard which God has for man, is not confined to this ſhort life, but extends through all eternity.

Without the pervading, the cheriſhing, and preſerving flame of theopathy, the benevolent affections ſoon expire. Hence the benevolence of an atheiſt, *if, from ſome happy impreſſions made on him in his infancy, whoſe influence remains when the cauſe is forgotten, it be poſſible for an atheiſt to be benevolent*, can be only an occaſional emotion of goodneſs, in which the ſavage ſpeculations of his reaſon diſappear in the ſympathies of his humanity. But the benevolent principle itſelf, in the heart of an atheiſt, muſt want vigour and conſtancy; one ill requited kindneſs, or one ſpark of enmity, will waſte its ſtrength or ſuſpend its operations. The majority of atheiſts, of whom, happily, there are not many in the world, are ſeldom warmed even by one glow of the benevolent principle; their hearts are either one tranſient chill and uniform expanſe of apathy, or one torrid maſs of maliciouſneſs. They are either totally inſenſible to the miſery of others, or they delight in beholding, and glory in promoting it. Were the world governed by atheiſt rulers and legiſlators for about a century, more than half the human ſpecies would probably be exterminated by the end of it.

direct influence, have a tendency to extinguish hate, and to kindle love, and consequently to diminish

Let not Mr. Godwin, the terror-striking sceptick of the day, who has attempted to rear a system of benevolence on a metaphysical abstraction, imagine that any system which will effectually counteract the malevolent, and diffuse the benevolent spirit among men, can be erected on any other principle than that which the Divine Founder of Christianity recommended. Let Mr. G. study (and, as a minister of the gospel, I most affectionately exhort him to study) the motives to action, and the incitements to beneficence, which are to be found in the simple and incorrupt doctrine of Christ; let him consider the persuasions by which it prompts to the production of *individual and general good*; and he will then discover that the peasant of Galilee, who was not instructed in the subtleties of logic, or in the refinements of metaphysical speculation, in the art of obscuring what is clear, or perplexing what is plain, was a greater philosopher than Helvetius, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Condorcet, or any of his favourite French authors.

In Mr. Godwin's St. Leon, I perceive, and I perceive with pleasure, traces of a disposition to return from the wilds of metaphysics into the regions of common sense; and to retract those pernicious tenets which he once propagated with so much industry and so much zeal. God grant that the conversion of Mr. Godwin, which seems begun, may be happily finished! May he look on Him, whose religion he has pierced with insults, whose name he has loaded with reproaches! May repentance touch his heart! and may the angel of favour minister peace to his troubled soul!

Respecting the literary merits of Mr. Godwin's St. Leon, I am happy to coincide in opinion with Miss Seward of Lichfield; a lady, whose genius can furnish amusement for the idle, reflection for the serious, and instruction for the wise; whose poetry unites delicacy of sentiment with vigour of expression; the simplicity of nature with the polish of art; a taste sensitive, discriminative, correct, with an imagination various, expanded, and sublime.

miſery and to generate happineſs. The experience of benevolence always gives an agreeable flow to the current of our ſenſations; whoſe freſhneſs malevolence taints, and whoſe ſerenity it diſturbs. That diſpoſition of the ſoul, which beſt fits us to communicate happineſs to others, at the ſame time beſt prepares us for the perception of happineſs ourſelves. True benevolence, therefore, which moſt favours the production of ſocial, moſt favours the increaſe even of ſelfiſh bliſs. What tends to make the individual contribute largely to the happineſs of his fellow-creatures, will be found, when rightly underſtood, moſt inſtrumental to his own. Hence, when the founder of Chriſtianity gives us this rule of life, *to love our neighbour as ourſelves*, he delivers a precept, which, whenever it be generally acted upon, will be found to contribute more to the ſolid enjoyment of him, who practiſes it, than any other more ſelfiſh mode of conduct, or more excluſive and narrow ſcheme for obtaining happineſs.

59. The Chriſtian morals, which in their beginning originate, and in the whole circumference of their action gravitate to this great principle, "*Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*," or what, in its practical tendency, comes to the ſame thing, "*Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy ſoul**," are nicely adapted to produce not only

* Matt. xxii. 36—39.

individual but general good, to make every man advance his own intereſt and the intereſt of his ſpecies. Hence we ſee the profound intelligence of Jeſus, The Chriſt; who has exhibited in the Chriſtian ſcheme, that comprehenſion of view, and that minuteneſs of detail, that vaſtneſs of deſign in the whole, and that nicety of proportion in every part, to which we find many correſponding analogies in the conſtitution of the natural world; and which may well incline us to believe that He who made the ſtars in the firmament above, and arranged this fair and beautiful order of things on the earth below, was likewiſe the providential author of the Chriſtian revelation. His wiſdom planned it, his power eſtabliſhed it, and his goodneſs will bring it to a happy conſummation.

60. That goodneſs of heart and life which the principles of Chriſtianity, *whenever they are acted upon*, will invariably produce, muſt tend, in all inſtances, to promote the good of others; and in the majority of inſtances, it will be found, even in the preſent degenerate ſtate of public morals, to be moſt favourable to the increaſe of our own individual ſatisfaction and enjoyment. Goodneſs, which tends to diffuſe happineſs, not only gives the individual a greater *capacity* for happineſs, but greatly multiplies the probabilities of his being happy.

61. The principle of gratitude is natural to man; it is homogeneous with his frame and ſhoots up ſpon-

taneouſly in his ſoul; and, much as may be ſaid about the rareneſs of the virtue, or the infrequency of the practice*, it will, I believe, be found in ninety-nine inſtances out of an hundred, that men never receive any benefits from others, without having ſenſations of gratitude excited in their breaſts. Theſe ſenſations may not indeed always ripen into action; they may die away with the pleaſure which the benefit produces; but if they be always, or almoſt always felt, this fact alone is ſufficient to prove that *there is in the heart of man a natural tendency to gratitude* †. The ſenſation of gratitude which is occaſioned by any benefit received, is aſſociated with a certain pleaſurable idea of him who conferred it; and this idea is thus brought into contact with the affections, and *ſome deſire of remuneration is excited.* Such a deſire muſt not be ſuppoſed not to be felt, when it is not expreſſed by words or indicated by any outward ſigns; for though when there is a ſenſe of favours received impreſſed upon the heart, it will *uſually* burſt from the lips in praiſes, and acknowledgements, and good wiſhes ‡, yet the true ſeat of grati-

* The complaint will be found moſt common with thoſe, in whoſe diſpoſition there is an acerbity, which favours of mi.anthropy; or who expect more than a *quid pro quo, a fair retribution proportioned to the means of the individual.*

† May I refer the reader to my Picture of Chriſtian Philoſophy, 3d edit. p. 165.

‡ I do not mean the cant or mechanical acknowledgments of beggars and vagrants; but mankind in general, when they receive favours, can ſeldom refrain from the vocal expreſſion of

tude is in the affections, and that gratitude, is ſometimes moſt forcibly felt, which works in ſecret in the ſoul, but which the tongue wants eloquence to utter.

62. Many are the cauſes which conſpire to prevent the poſitive remunerations of beneficence, and the active operations of gratitude; but there is a principle in what Sir Mathew Hale calls the *craſis* of man, which gives birth to the ſenſation, and which nothing can deſtroy. It is interwoven with the phyſical organization, and it is a conſtituent part of the moral economy of man. The alleviation of our wants, or the removal of our pains, the increaſe of our happineſs, or the diminution of our miſery, muſt neceſſarily cauſe pleaſurable emotions in the mind, and pleaſurable ſenſations in the heart; and theſe pleaſurable ſenſations and emotions can ſeldom be unconnected with a kind diſpoſition towards the author of them; and what is gratitude but a kind diſpoſition towards its object? The ſenſe of benefits conferred on us, does, in moſt caſes, except where ſome perverſe aſſociations of pride or envy interpoſe, work as agreeably on the moral part of man, as food taken into the ſtomach does on his phyſical conſtitution.

63. True Chriſtian goodneſs, whether conſidered in its paſſive influence on the heart and as aſſociated with meekneſs, humbleneſs of mind, an unwilling-

praiſe and love, of a conſciouſneſs of happineſs imparted, and a reciprocal deſire of imparting happineſs, *even when the benefactor is not preſent, and when there can be no poſſible temptation to make a ſhow of thankfulneſs which is not felt.*

neſs to offend, and a readineſs to be reconciled, or conſidered in its active ſtate, as rouſing the vigorous exertions of beneficence, muſt directly tend to increaſe our own happineſs and the happineſs of others *. And whatever produces or aſſiſts in the production of happineſs, favours the growth of gratitude. Gratitude ſeems, in its incipient ſtate, nothing more than a certain agreeable feeling of kindneſs towards its object; but, as its influence is ſpread over the affections, it calls forth, as opportunity offers, the active reciprocations of beneficence.

64. The Divine Founder of Chriſtianity, whoſe plain authoritative ſayings, whether we conſider their philoſophical juſtneſs, or their practical uſefulneſs, the accumulated wiſdom of ages will never excel, was well acquainted with that tendency, which there is in the human heart, when not incruſted by pride, by jealouſy, and prejudice, to abſorb ſenſations of gratitude, and in the human mind to call them into action; and it is very obſervable, that he lays the greateſt ſtreſs on that morality, whoſe operations, manifeſting our good-will towards others, do, by their natural influence on the moral organization of

* What may be called, or what is often called the indirect action of moral cauſes, is often ſtronger than the direct. Thus the exertions of a charitable diſpoſition directly tend to the good of others; but they probably always, though indirectly, and by a ſort of re-action, do a greater good to ourſelves. *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord.* The inference is plain; but the conſideration of this ſubject in all its relations and bearings would lead me into too wide a field of diſcuſſion.

man, naturally excite the good-will of others towards us. Thus the Chriſtian graces, meekneſs, gentleneſs, forbearance, humbleneſs of mind, complacency of manners *, and love unfeigned, which diffuſe a pleaſurable influence over the whole ſphere of their agency, *do tend, in moſt inſtances, to produce a preſent remuneration to the individual.*

65. If the Chriſtian virtues will ſeldom be found, in reſpect even to the production of preſent happineſs, not to yield an ample compenſation to thoſe who cultivate them, their cultivation muſt be highly neceſſary as a means of increaſing our preſent good; (for nothing elſe will be found to yield ſenſations ſo pleaſurable or bliſs ſo exquiſite;) but moſt important muſt it be to us to cheriſh their growth and to encourage their expanſion, when we conſider their intimate connection with our future glory and happineſs in that world, of which every moment that glides away is carrying us nearer to the confines.

* In the ſermon on the mount all thoſe qualities are recommended which conſtitute true politeneſs; that peaceableneſs and ſerenity, and unaffected mildneſs of behaviour, which prevents ſtrife and conciliates affection. The more man becomes civilized, the more he will ſee the neceſſity of cultivating, and the more he will cultivate the paſſive but truly magnanimous qualities by which our Lord was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed, and by which he enjoined his followers to labour to attain diſtinction. We muſt learn of him, who was meek and lowly in heart, if we wiſh to find reſt to our ſouls; if we wiſh to taſte or to communicate unmingled ſatisfaction.

66. Every individual act of obedience to the Chriſtian precepts has probably ſome influence on our happineſs; but individual acts of obedience, ſtrengthened into habits of righteouſneſs, muſt promote our happineſs in a high degree here, and in the higheſt degree hereafter. As our fitneſs for the bliſs of another life will be proportioned to the goodneſs which we manifeſt in mind and heart, in thought, in word, and deed, in the life which now is, our capacity for future enjoyment muſt be greater the more perfect our habits of obedience have been, or the fewer tranſgreſſions we have committed, by which their continuity has been broken and their operations interrupted.

67. In another life we ſhall probably have a nearer view of the divine perfections; but it is only that goodneſs which is an approximation to the nature of God, that can enable us to enjoy his preſence, or to behold him as he is. "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." God is love; he is goodneſs abſolute and perfect; and goodneſs is the only object of love; but nothing but goodneſs can really love goodneſs *. In proportion as a man grows in goodneſs the love of God will expand within his ſoul; and the more God is loved, the more beneficent will the individual become.

* For this reaſon, a malevolent man cannot love God; and if ever he do love him, he muſt ceaſe to be malevolent, for malevolence and the love of God are two ſenſations that *can never*

68. In the perſon and character of Jeſus of Nazareth we behold the divine goodneſs, as it were, in a bodily ſhape; and therefore to love God with all our heart and all our ſoul, is to endeavour with all our heart and all our ſoul to imitate the conduct of his earthly repreſentative, or, in other words, *to put on the Lord Jeſus*. This is that morality, which is the ſum and ſubſtance of Chriſtianity, and which alone can recommend us to the favour of God, becauſe it alone can generate a conduct agreeable to his will.

69. Let us conſider that in the favour of God our only true happineſs conſiſts; and that every individual tranſgreſſion is ſome deduction from that portion of his favour, which we ſhould otherwiſe enjoy, and that if individual tranſgreſſions be repeated till they harden into habits of ſin, our caſe is deſperate. If we die in habits of unrighteouſneſs, we die in a ſtate of diſpleaſure with God; and, after death, we ſhall be aliens from his preſence, and ſtrangers *in the outer darkneſs*.

exiſt in the ſame heart, at the ſame time. Our Lord was well acquainted with this truth, and there ſeems to have been a moſt powerful perſuaſion of its importance on the heart of the diſciple whom he loved; for throughout the firſt epiſtle of John, there is a conſtant and earneſt endeavour to impreſs it on thoſe whom he addreſſed.

THE END.

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ADDITIONS.

To come after " homicidia," *p.* 5, *l.* 23, *note.*

" Hæc eſt, piorum conſolatio," ſaid they, " non illa pecca fortiter, ſed crede fortius; et nihil tibi nocebunt centum homicidia et mille ſtupra." " Peccata illa, qualia Davidis, id eſt homicidia et adulteria electis non imputari verba ſunt Marlorati. Dicitis quidem," ſays Grotius, addreſſing the Calviniſtic champions of religious diſcord, " in juſtificatis omnibus pœnitentiam ſemper tequi: quod ego verum non arbitror. Et deinde quæ eſt illa pœnitentia? vivere ut lubet: deinde inſtante morte dicere Miniſtro, Nollem factum, et credo juſtitiam Chriſti mihi imputari, idque verum eſſe, quia id credo. Cum hoc viatico ſtatim ille in cœlum evolat: deque eo dubitare Stygiæ eſt incredulitatis." Vid. Grot. tom. III. 676.

Additions to the note printed p. 256.

On the doctrine of the Holy Trinity the reader will, I think, derive both inſtruction and delight from the following paſſages in the works of Jeremy Taylor; and which ſhow at once the depth of his reſearch, and the ſolidity of his judgment. " As the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is ſet down

in ſcripture, and in the Apoſtles creed, I know no difficulties it hath; what it hath met withal ſince, proceeds from the too curious handling of that which we cannot underſtand. The ſchoolmen have ſo pried into this ſecret, and have ſo confounded themſelves and the articles, that they have made it too unintelligible, inexplicable, indefenſible in all their minuits and particularities; and it is too ſadly apparent in the arguments of the *Antitrinitarians*, whoſe *ſophiſms* againſt the article itſelf, although they are moſt eaſily anſwered, yet as they bring them againſt the *minutiæ* and impertinences of the ſchool, they are not ſo eaſily to be avoided. Concerning God we know but very few things; and concerning the *myſterious Trinity* that which is revealed is extremely little; and it is general, without deſcending to particulars: and the difficulty of the ſeeming arguments againſt that, being taken from our philoſophy, and the common manner of ſpeaking, cannot be apportioned and fitted to ſo great a ſecret; neither can that at all be meaſured by any thing here below. When the church, for the underſtanding of this ſecret of the Holy Trinity, hath taken words from metaphyſical learning, as *perſon*, *hypoſtaſis*, *conſubſtantiality*, ὁμοούσιος, and ſuch like, the words of themſelves were apt to change their ſignification, and to put on the ſenſe of the preſent ſchool. But the church was forced to uſe ſuch words as

ſhe had, the higheſt, the neareſt, the moſt ſeparate and myſterious. But when ſhe ſtill kept theſe words to the ſame myſtery, the words ſwelled or altered in their ſenſe; and were exacted according to what they did ſignify among men in their low notices; this begat difficulty in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. For better words ſhe had none, and all that which they did ſignify in our philoſophy could not be applied to this myſtery; and therefore we have found difficulty; and ſhall for ever, till, in this article, the church returns to her ancient ſimplicity of expreſſion." Taylor's Polem. Diſc. third edition, p. 242, 243. "He that goes about to ſpeak of and to underſtand the myſterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, or by ſuch which ſignify contingently, if he reckons this myſtery by the mythology of numbers, by the *cabala* of letters, by the diſtinctions of the ſchool, and by the weak inventions of diſputing people; if he only talks of eſſences and exiſtences, hypoſtaſes and perſonalities, diſtinctions without difference, and priority in coequalities, and unity in pluralities, and of ſuperior prædicates of no larger extent than the inferior ſubjects, he may amuſe himſelf, and find his underſtanding will be like St. Peter's upon the mount of *Tabor* at the Transfiguration: he may build three tabernacles in his head, and talk ſomething he knows not what. But the good

man, that feels the *power of the Father*, and he to whom the Son is become *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification*, and *redemption*; he in *whoſe heart the love of the Spirit of God is ſpread*, to whom God hath communicated the *Holy Ghoſt*, the *Comforter*; this man, though he underſtands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet *he only* underſtands the myſterioufneſs of the Holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wiſely of the Article of the *Holy*, *Bleſſed*, and *Undivided Trinity*, but he that feels the mightineſs of the Father begetting him to a *new life*, the wiſdom of the Son *building him up in a moſt holy faith*, and the *love of the Spirit of God*, making him to become like unto God." Taylor's Suppl. Serm. p. 91. Of this laſt paſſage I truſt I may aſſert, without exaggeration, that he is deſtitute of piety who is not impreſſed by its devoutneſs; and of taſte, who is not raviſhed with its eloquence.

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