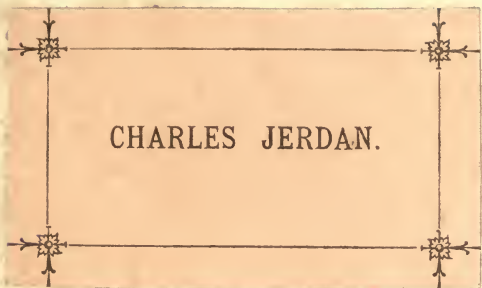




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Of the late REVEREND

Mr ROBERT RICCALTOUN,

Minister of the Gospel at Hobkirk.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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Essays on HUMAN NATURE,

AND

Essays on several of the Doctrines of RE-  
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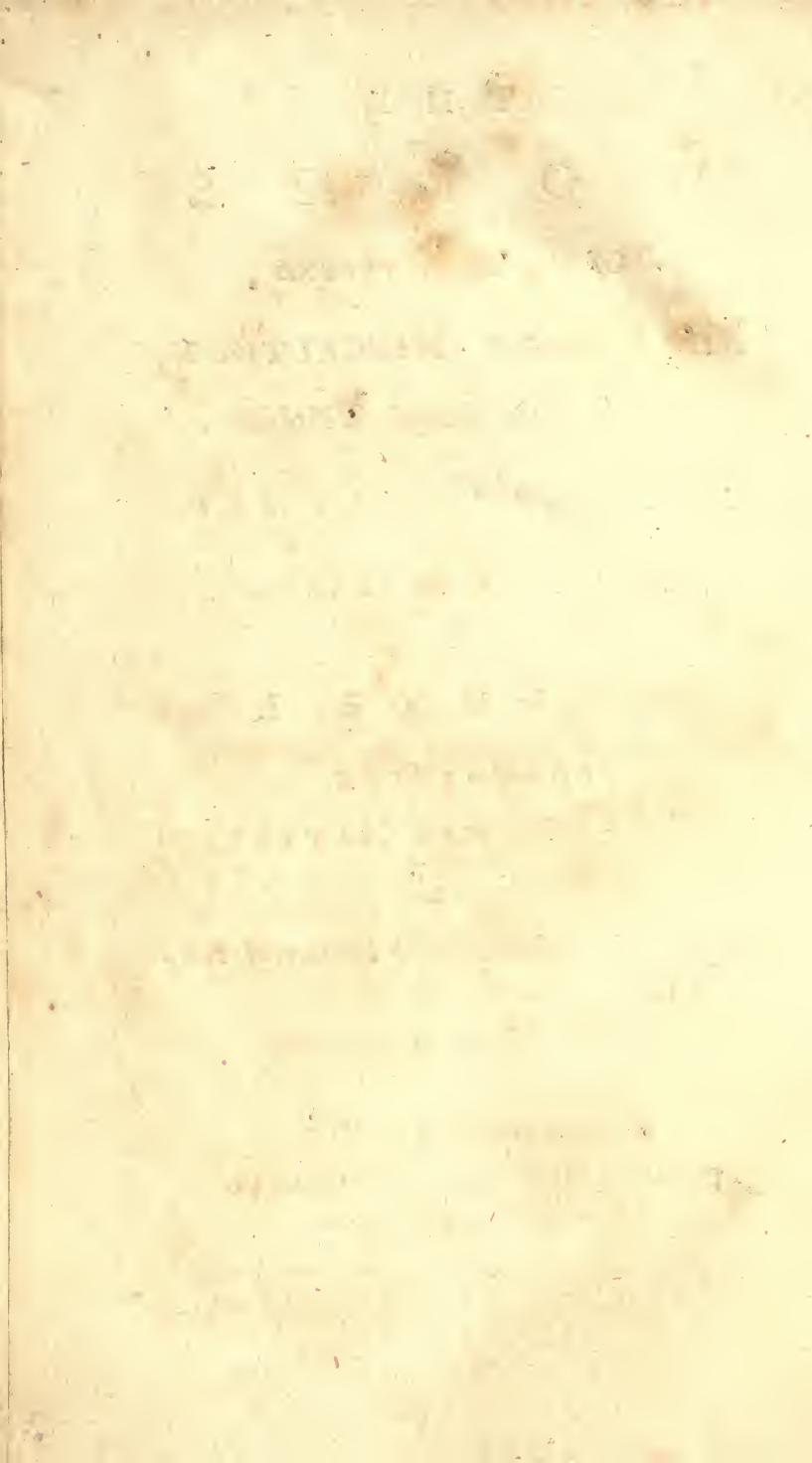
· E D I N B U R G H :

Printed by A. MURRAY & J. COCHRAN.

For the AUTHOR'S SON.

Sold, at Edinburgh, by J. DICKSON, and other booksel-  
lers; and at London by E. & C. DILLY, and A. BELL.

M D C C L X X I.



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### E R R A T U M.

p. 46. lin. 13. *for should read may not*

# E S S A Y S

O N

## H U M A N N A T U R E.

### E S S A Y I.

*Of Happiness and Perfection in general, absolute and limited.*

**H**APPINESS and PERFECTION are words of great significancy: They are in every body's mouth, but understood by very few.

Every man has some pretensions to the latter, and professes to be in pursuit of the former; and certainly is so: but such different roads are taken, and these so wildly inconsistent, that one may with great certainty conclude, that most part know not what they are doing.

The world, both philosophers and vulgar, seem to have been always agreed in the thing, however they differed in the expression, that happiness is something



near the same with being pleased: and to be perfectly pleased, is, indeed, to be quite happy: and accordingly, what contributes to pleasure of any kind, is universally called *good*; and what gives pain, or even abates the degree of pleasure, goes under the name of *evil*.

But as it may happen, that men as well as children may be pleased with trifles; nay, may be so far mistaken as to fancy evil to be good, and good evil; the enjoyment can continue no longer after the mistake is discovered. It is likewise agreed, that pleasure must have some solid and durable foundation, commensurate at least to the capacity and duration of the being who is to find his happiness in it. A failure in either of these, must produce great abatements even in the present enjoyment, and in the end unavoidable misery and distress.

These are good generals; but when we come to look into the meaning of them, and apply them to practice, what a boundless wilderness are we left to wander in! What is good and what evil in the extent of the universe, or even so far as man is or may be concerned, how hard is it to  
say?



say? and yet how necessary to be thoroughly known? But even this is but a preliminary. The several objects which are the materials of pleasure and pain, must be carefully weighed; and their several degrees of moment, one way or other, exactly adjusted. The frame and constitution of man must be narrowly examined, his capacity, and powers thence arising, the relations he stands in to the various objects without him, the purposes these objects are fitted to answer, and how they are to be procured, and improved, for raising and maintaining the highest pleasure, must all be thoroughly understood.

Is this a task for man? What strength of understanding, what accuracy of judgment, what application and industry must be required to succeed but tolerably in it? Enough to discourage any sober man from so much as attempting it; and the more so, that the most exalted geniuses have been employed about it near six thousand years, and, after all their researches, have left the world in greater uncertainty than, we have reason to believe, they were at first setting out.

But there is one single consideration

which greatly overbalances all discouragements; the necessity of the thing. Man is obviously so made, as not only to be susceptible of pain and misery, but to have his feelings very quick and strong: his wants are so many, and his appetites and cravings so keen, that life itself becomes a burden to him if they are not gratified. They who believe that God is good, can never persuade themselves, that any constitution of his was framed on purpose to make a numerous order of creatures necessarily miserable. They must suppose, that some how or other relief is provided, and such relief as lies on a level with every capacity, if men are not wanting to themselves; which they evidently are, if they do not carefully look after and improve all the helps and assistances laid to their hands.

It requires scarce any attention to satisfy one's self thoroughly, that it is impossible for any one man to have the full enjoyment of all the objects or materials of pleasure, scattered as they are through the universe; nay even of those which lie next to our hands, it is but a small pittance that can fall to any one's share. Hence, it may be presumed, philosophers and wise men came all  
to

to agree in the necessity of some one thing, which every man might at all times have free access to, and which singly should be able to afford him perfect pleasure; and thereby compensate the want, and even the loss, of every other thing. A most necessary expedient, could they have put the world in possession of it. But how unhappy they were in their guesses what this chief good, as they called it, should be, appears abundantly, without further examination, from the endless variety of their opinions concerning it: of which a learned Roman is said to have reckoned no fewer than two hundred and eighty-eight different ones; and I believe no wise man will much regret the loss of the particulars.

The two most famed sects of the old philosophers ran into quite opposite extremes. The one, reasoning justly from the abstract nature of happiness, concluded, that it must lie in something which every man must have such a perfect possession of, that it should not be in the power of any being whatsoever to deprive him of it; and thence were tempted, very unnaturally, to set off their wise or happy man as a sort of independent self-sufficient being.

being. The worth of what they called *virtue*, and the self-enjoyment arising from the reflection upon his own excellency and worth, made him, in their opinion, a match even for the gods, and far above every earthly power.

The other very justly concluded, that these sort of flourishes were altogether chimerical, and such as the human constitution could by no means admit of; and observing man to come into and go out of the world much in the same manner as other animals do, they took their measures almost as much too low, as the others did too high; and concluded, that his pleasures must be much of the same kind, bounded at least with the prospects and enjoyments of a present life; and most of them went no further than those sensual gratifications which the mere brute part of the creation possess in greater perfection.

Those who attempted to steer a middle course, having no certain foundations to build on, found themselves involved in inextricable difficulties, and ran into such confusion as obliged them in effect to quit the pursuit, and to resolve all private happiness



piness into the good of the public or community of which they were members. Necessity forced every man to hold himself content with his own share: and the whole business of the best sort of moralists has been, to find out expedients and colours for making men easy in that situation.

The most part, if not all of their mistakes, may be justly imputed to their neglecting, or not being sufficiently instructed, to distinguish between absolute, independent, and every way perfect happiness, and that which is limited, dependent, and reaching only to a certain degree; such as the constitution and capacity of inferior beings will admit of; and the several measures and degrees of the latter, as they approach nearer to or are further removed from absolute perfection. To the first, there is more necessary than the most exalted apprehensions of the sublimest philosophers were ever able to reach. - And under the last, it is evident there must be as many different degrees, as there are different orders of limited and dependent beings.

To

To take the measures of absolutely perfect happiness at the lowest, it is evident there must be absolutely perfect possession and enjoyment of complete and absolutely perfect good; that the matter, the possession, and the enjoyment, must all be perfect, and absolutely so, to make out a happiness of this kind: the least remission or abatement in any of these, must produce a proportional diminution of happiness, and bring it down so much below perfection.

It scarcely needs any reflection to assure one, that the matter of this kind of happiness, or what raises and maintains the constant flow of pleasure, satisfaction, and delight, wherein the very nature of happiness lies, must be absolutely perfect in every view; and therefore must be such, as not only doth not admit, but most effectually excludes, every degree and every tendency toward evil, of what kind soever; such as shall furnish out, and actually maintain, in the highest degree, and with infallible certainty, complete finished pleasure, satisfaction, delight, and continue for ever to do so; and, at the same time, support the happy being in the possession  
and



and perfect exercise of all possible powers, equal, and always the same, without decrease, intermission, or end; as nothing can be more evident, than that a failure, the least failure, in any of these, would make a flaw in the enjoyment.

That there must be at the same time an absolutely perfect possession of this same perfect good, is as evident; and that cannot subsist without the absolute property of it, independent of, and altogether above the reach of, every other being: or, to use the Stoics phrase, The happy being must have it in himself; not in that precarious and loose manner they imagined their wise man possessed of virtue, but that it shall be as essential to, and inseparable from him, as his own being. In one word, himself must be the fund of his own happiness, and in the all-sufficient fulness of his own being, and the unbounded extent of his powers, it must lie.

But, after all, the whole of that pleasure which constitutes happiness, lies in the enjoyment. However perfect the object is, yet, if every thing that is pleasing and agreeable about it is not taken in, and improved

to the best advantage, so much of happiness must be lost: and from what was just now observed, it will be readily allowed there must be perfect *being*. The word is very common, but very general, and applied to every thing that is, or rather that we have any knowledge of. Every body thinks he knows the meaning of it; but when put upon explaining his conceptions, the most learned will find himself quite at a loss; and that indeed he neither hath, nor can have, any proper conceptions of its true import and meaning. The truth is, all our conceptions are formed upon those superficial views we have of the appearances of things; that is, their sensible qualities, by which we come to all the knowledge we have of their existence. But what this same existence or being is, whether the same, or something different, from what we call *substance*, and which is equally unknown to us, I apprehend we have no possible way, in our present state at least, of attaining any information. It appears evidently above the level of our capacities; and perhaps it is the prerogative of the perfect being alone, who is the sole proprietor of it, to understand its nature.

There

There is another, and which is reckoned a more full and distinct conception, of what should qualify any being for enjoyment, and which goes under the name of *life*. Some of its consequences and effects are well and familiarly known by us; but when we come to look into the origin and cause of these, which is properly what we call *life*, we will find it just as much a secret to us as the other; known only, as it is fit it should be, to him who has life in himself. But weak and low as our notions of *life* are, it is from these that the highest conceptions of *perfection* we are capable of, are formed. We have no other way of conceiving of things so much beyond our reach, than by applying to them what we know of similar, or any how analogous, effects, and the powers we are thereby led to suppose necessary for their production, and removing, so far as we are able, every imperfection.

It is thus that, even under all the disadvantages of our present condition, we are naturally led to conceive of life, and the powers of it, as including every thing necessary to make out a capacity for every enjoyment. In its lowest degree, it ap-

pears to carry in it the power of perceiving the objects that fall within its observation; of which there must be an endless variety, according to the different measures of strength and weakness: nor can the perfection of it be imagined, without the most thorough comprehensive and instantaneous knowledge, and that in the most direct and intuitive manner, without any of those round-about ways which we find ourselves obliged to take, even with such things as lie next to our hands.

From the same views of life we readily conclude, there must, in the perfection of it, be found a perfect taste, relish, or what shall we call that pleasurable perception, of the beauty, worth, and every excellency of the object; which must, in the same native and necessary manner, produce a suitable delight, complacency, and, resting in the enjoyment, admitting no further inclination, nor any possibility of satiety.

The notion of life likewise necessarily implies in it certain active powers, in opposition to these masses of dead matter, which cannot so much as move themselves, much less any other thing, until they are set agoing by something else; and, even then,



then, are directed entirely as they are acted upon. When life then is conceived at the highest, that is, when in our way, all imperfection is removed, it leads us into the conception of a perfectly free, independent, and therefore unlimited, power; which obviously either supposes, or contains in it, every perfection and excellency; and which cannot subsist without securing perfect and complete happiness, founded in, and arising from, the most perfect self-enjoyment.

This, it is evident, is a sort of happiness not made for man, nor any being whatsoever which is either limited and dependent, or has the materials for maintaining life and happiness to seek from without itself; which, on the most cursory reflection, will be found to be the case of every creature whatsoever; and therefore, when we speak of perfection in any of these inferior sort of beings, it must be understood in a quite different sense. In him who possesses being, and has life with all its powers as his absolute property, it is absolute and boundless, without any limitation or confinement. In all others, it is evidently relative, re-  
specting

specting either such beings whose frame or constitution is inferior to theirs, or such of the same species as fall short of what their constitution might have admitted. And thus all of them, even the most perfect of their kind, are so limited and confined, that they can by no means go beyond the bounds nature has set them.

There are three very different ranks and orders of beings which fall under our observation; man, brutes, and vegetables. These all have life attributed to them, but in very different senses, and of quite different kinds. The last especially is of so very low a nature, as that it can have no pretensions to the name, but on a very remote analogy, founded on the resemblance it bears to the lowest vital functions in animals; preserving their being, and promoting their growth, by taking in proper nourishment, and propagating by their several seeds.

Among animals, as the very lowest of them are by their fabrick and make sensibly distinguished from the most perfect of the vegetable kind, so there is something peculiar to every species which distinguishes it



it from the rest. The inhabitants of the air, earth, and water, those above and under the earth, are each of them formed for their own way of living, and incapable of another: nay, among those of the same element, there is a surprising diversity; and what is life to one, is death to another.

Though many of these have excellencies and perfections in their kind, acuteness of sense, strength and agility, &c. much above what man can pretend to; yet what would make the perfectest brute quite happy, the highest enjoyments they are capable of, would make but very indifferent entertainment for a man. And as we have more than probable reason to believe, that there are numberless orders of beings above as well as below us, some of them perhaps lodged in more perfect bodies, and others quite disengaged from matter; could we bring them under our observation, we would, no doubt, find the same disproportionate enjoyments subsisting among them.

This difference in the frame and make of the several orders of inferior beings, is what we call their nature or constitution; and which is palpably discernible in material

rial beings ; where the different contexture of parts, and the manner in, which they are put together, point out to us how they are to be accounted for, and how they are fitted for receiving the impreffions, and anfwering the purpofes, they appear defigned for. The fame holds pretty fully in fuch beings as, though themfelves of a fuperior nature, ftand connected with organised material bodies, more or lefs perfect, and exert their operations in and by them. When we attempt to afcend higher, our ideas and proper conceptions quite fail us ; and yet we cannot help imagining there muft be fomewhat analogous to, and fome way refembling, this, which we likewise call their nature or conftitution, though we know not how to make a diftinct account of it.

And hence arifes what we call the capacity of any fort of being, the higheft approach toward perfection their conftitution will admit ; or, which is the fame thing, their fitness to take in and improve proper objects for the fupport of their being, and the enjoyments of life, according to the different meafures and degrees of thofe vital powers which belong to that fort of beings,

beings, and beyond which they cannot reach. And hence, as the most perfect vegetable, with all the care and culture that can be bestowed on it, will never become an animal, nor a mere brute a man, we judge accordingly of their different capacities; but yet, by proper care and tending, one individual may be brought greatly to excel his fellows left in the wild state of nature; and some kinds of animals more than others.

Of all beings known to us, the human constitution admits of the highest improvement. There seems to be much greater difference between man and man, than there is betwixt the most perfect brute and the most despicable insect. Hence a strange variety, or rather different degrees, of capacity, and thence of pleasures and enjoyments. What quite pleases one class, appears childish and trifling, airy and notional, or perhaps quite unnatural, to another.

Hence the great difficulty and fallacy in judging what is natural, and what otherwise. Compare a child, or even an untaught man, with a great genius, cultivate and improved to the best advantage;

how immense the odds! and how like different species! And yet we cannot say the one is more natural or unnatural than the other; but that the one is purely natural, and the other acquired; not as plants and animals acquire their bulk and stature, but by a sort of culture peculiar to the human constitution.

To fix then the true standard of any inferior being's capacity, especially that of man, in which we are most concerned, it must be perversely wrong, under a pretext of following nature, to fix on any of the lower degrees of improvement: we must take it at the highest, that is, as high as the constitution will admit of; and therefore there will most frequently be found a very great odds between what pleases and what should please, or what they call contentment and happiness. The former may be found in the very lowest measures of improvement, and perhaps even in wild nature; and when it rests there, is so far from being a virtue, that it is really the most pernicious vice, as it effectually marring one's happiness, by hindering his advancement toward such degrees of perfection



as should have made one qualified for the enjoyments of it.

To find out the original, and assign the cause, of this necessary imperfection, so observable in the most perfect beings which fall under our observation, exceedingly perplexed the old philosophers, and led them into absurdities, not worth any one's while to recount in the light wherein we now stand. Nor may this be constructed into a disparagement of their great abilities; as I am well satisfied, the acutest of our natural theologists would have acquitted themselves not one jot better, had it been their unhappiness to lie under their disadvantages. Those who are commonly reckoned the most absurd, were perhaps the most rational of all, and undoubtedly the honestest; making thereby a fair acknowledgement of the vanity of all the attempts that had been made to account for these sort of appearances, and the impossibility of doing it on any *data* they had to reason upon.

The modern pretenders to reason, who resolve all into what they call nature, are nothing so excusable. Had they been so honest as to have told us what it was they

meant by that name, some judgement might have been made concerning it: but then it would have appeared either pure amusement, without any meaning, or that very constitution we are inquiring about; which it would be very absurd to make the cause of itself; unless they mean, as some of the old philosophers did, that the matter of the universe being eternal, and though under the management of a plastic mind, a spirit pervading the whole, and disposing it to the best advantage; yet the nature and essence of every thing being eternal and unalterable, he was obliged to take it as he found it, and make the best of such materials: whence they conceived all the weaknesses and imperfections in the universe to take their rise, and to continue without any remedy.

How much more easy and rational is it, in all respects, for one formed as we are, from the visible appearances of boundless wisdom and power in the structure of the universe, and all the parts of it, and the good assurances we have of the interposal of the same power on proper occasions, inverting and controlling the established course of nature,

to



to believe the tradition which has been in the world ever since there were any men to receive it, that the whole owes its existence, as well as disposition, to the immense power and boundless wisdom of the first and original being, now acknowledged by every body who has any pretensions to thought or reflection.

It must be indeed acknowledged, that creation out of nothing, or giving being to what before was not, is as much above all our natural ideas and conceptions, as it is beyond the compass of any power known to us. Nor is it at all likely, that ever it would have entered the mind of man, had it not been discovered to them, and the memory of it continued in the same manner that other facts are. And, by the event, it appears, that even then it would have been totally lost, as in effect it once was to the far greatest part of the world, had it not been from time to time supported, and mens minds raised to a capacity of believing it, by an analogous power put forth as occasion required in the government of the world. But when mens minds are thus prepared, many things cast up which would have been overlooked; and almost

almost every thing one meets with, has a native tendency to establish this great and fundamental truth.

The natural and necessary consequence of this must be, an absolute and entire dependence of all inferior beings on their great author and creator. It is certainly no affected way of speaking, but the very truth of the thing, that every creature is originally nothing; and a very little attention will satisfy any one, that the very best of them stand but a very few removes from it; infinitely nearer at least than they are to perfect being. Whatever measures or degrees of being or powers they have, is only by the free gift of their maker; and it is impossible for them ever to acquire a property in these, otherwise than by his gracious indulgence. When they have acted up to the highest their constitution will admit of, they have no pretensions to merit; nay not so much as requiting their creator for what they have received. It can never rise higher than bare innocence; and the least failure must be criminal.

As the being of all created things is at best but borrowed, so it must be absolutely precarious, and the continuance of it depend

depend entirely on him who first bestowed it. No one moment of their duration has any necessary connection with another; as they were raised at first, they must be continually supported, by almighty power; which, perhaps, is that very mysterious thing, so commonly talked of, but so little understood, under the names of *being, life, substance, &c.* And the withdrawing of this must needs leave them in their original state of nothing. Hence, to talk of the natural immortality of this sort of beings, is really to talk contradictions; unless they could have life in themselves, and become proprietors of their own being and powers. This would establish an independency inconsistent with the very notion of a creature, and put it in that very state the Stoics absurdly imagined their wise man. They may be indeed assured of their eternal duration another way; but that must be just as much the free gift of God as their first creation was.

The existence then, and duration, of the most perfect creatures, being thus in the hand of God, the exercise of all their powers, and all the actions arising from them, must be likewise owing to him; and  
to

to him belongs the honour of all the good that ever was or will be in the world. But it must be remembered, that they are only those sorts of actions which are founded in the constitution as he has established it, we thus speak of. But if any of them will abuse the powers he has intrusted with them, not he, but they, must answer for the consequences.

From all this it must follow, that as none of these dependent beings have any thing of their own to value themselves upon, much less to boast of, they can never be the object of happiness to themselves, but must seek it from without; so that of all vices self-enjoyment must be the most monstrous and unnatural. This is evidently the prerogative of an absolutely and independently perfect being; and can no more be communicated, than that perfection which alone can support it. The happiness, as well as being, of every creature, is in his hand; and by the same constitution according to which he has founded the several capacities of his creatures, he has bountifully provided, and so laid to their hands their proper fund of enjoyment, that they can never want an adequate happiness, if they



they live up to the powers which one way or other he has furnished them with.

It is here, then, we are to look for the true standard of created excellency, viz. in the extent of their capacity; what objects their constitution admits the enjoyment of; in what manner, and to what purposes, they are taken in; and how they are improved. And this leads us to take some general view of the objects or materials of creature-happiness, both in themselves, and their proper worth; but especially in the relation they bear to the several orders of creatures, whose happiness they are designed to minister to.

In the first view, it is but a sorry account we can make of the several objects of enjoyment; as there are few fall under our observation, and it is but a very superficial knowledge we have of those which do. And yet, as we may be very certain, that spirits, or beings possessed of active powers, greatly excel dead inactive matter; and the great creator, the father of all spirits, infinitely excels all created ones; we may hence very justly conclude, that those sorts of constitutions which admit of no pleasure but what arises from the application of



matter, are greatly inferior to such as are fitted for the rational pleasures of society; as those likewise who are capable of relishing nothing above the creature, must, of course, fall as much short of those which are made to take in the beauty and glory of the sovereign being, and to find their pleasure in the intercourses of friendship and communion with him, in whom all fulness dwells. There is no doubt a very great odds among created objects, and the enjoyment of them; which may make as many subdivisions in those lower ranks of beings which live only on the creature; but we do not chuse to stand upon them here.

It is in the several relations that the objects without bear to the creatures whose happiness and enjoyment they are subservient to, that they are most properly to be considered, as being the most natural and interesting view, where all things appear evidently made for one another. Whatever they may contribute toward this purpose, some more, some less, they all go under the general designation of *good*, and their contraries *evil*; and thus naturally stand in certain ranks and classes.

The

The first, and most obvious, are such as contribute to support life, and maintain the borrowed precarious being in a proper plight for the business and enjoyments peculiar to the constitution. This is familiarly known under the animal life, by the name of *food* and *nourishment*. And with this stand connected such things as though not strictly necessary for subsistence, yet contribute to the ease and comforts of life; such, viz. as ward off, or relieve from, pain and uneasiness in body or mind, or whatever may mar enjoyment in any degree. That there must be something analogous to this in the life of spirits, will easily be allowed; though the little intercourse men have with that sort of beings, except such as stand connected with animal bodies, makes most men incapable of so much as guessing wherein it lies, or what is the proper support and nourishment of unembodied spirits; though we may be sure, in the general, it must be something that keeps them in the friendship and favour of God; by whose power they subsist, and in whom their whole fund of pleasure lies.

Next come to be considered such things as contribute toward the improvement of

the creature, and raising it as high toward perfection as its particular constitution will admit of; and thereby enlarging its capacity, so as it may, with ease and pleasure, take in the best and most valuable enjoyments that fall to its share. The improvements we hinted at before, which men, and several other animals, are capable of, and of which we have new instances before us every day, abundantly explain the importance of this class.

But what has in a manner ingrossed the title of *good*, and are by most men looked upon as the only fund of happiness, are such as, by the proper application of them, administer immediate pleasure, whether it is of the sensible or spiritual kind. And as pleasures are just of as many different kinds, as there are different constitutions, spiritual, animal, or mixed and compounded of both, they come to be naturally distinguished by the several senses and inlets of pleasure in the animal life, and the several powers of spirits,—if there are indeed any different powers in the simplicity of the pure spiritual life, or if they are not rather imagined such from the imperfect models from which we form our conceptions  
of

of them; that is, every man, from his own mind, involved in, and often overpowered by, the animal sensations.

Hence the several objects, and the importance of them to happiness, may be very justly determined by the several purposes they answer, and what they contribute towards its subsistence, improvement, and actual pleasure. The first, without the last, is so little satisfying, that many have chosen to throw away their lives when disappointed of the pleasure they had in view. Nor is pleasure simply of any account, unless it is such as becomes the being which enjoys it. In many cases it rather sinks, debases, and destroys, than contributes any thing to true and solid happiness. The first is the foundation and ground-work on which the whole fabrick is built; the second fits and qualifies for proper enjoyments; and the third furnishes out the proper materials, and applies them to answer their several purposes.

By this, then, we may judge what are the proper objects of happiness; such, viz. as suit the constitution; not one part of it separately, which, in compound beings like ours, may often hurt the more noble;  
but



but the whole taken together, and improved to the highest pitch of perfection it will admit. What suits any lower degrees only, it is evident cannot be the proper happiness of that creature.

And hence it will follow, that nothing can be the proper object of enjoyment, except what is every way commensurate to the capacity and duration of that being whose happiness is made to consist in it, so as at the same time to satisfy all the wants, cravings, and desires, the highest improvement the constitution admits of, and to continue at least as long as that shall stand. If any desires or wants are left unsatisfied, it embitters all other enjoyments; and if the object of enjoyment is lost, the misery is insupportable.

It appears likewise, that no object, however otherwise qualified, can furnish out such solid satisfaction as is required to constitute any thing near happiness, without an entire property in it, and such possession of it, as one can have free access at all times to the enjoyment of: And as there is but one object in the universe of beings that can admit multitudes partners, without diminishing either the interest or  
enjoyment

enjoyment of every individual, the happiness of those sorts of beings must be very low and precarious, who, either from the necessity of their constitution, or a very ill-judged choice, are led to pitch upon any thing below the favour and friendship of the all-sufficient being. Every creature we know of, unless it is the light of the heavens, is capable of being ingrossed by a few; or at least must be divided, and so parcelled out, as that one shall want just as much as another possesses: and as they are but small parcels of sublunary goods that can fall to any one's share, the attainment will scarce balance the labour of the pursuit; and the uneasiness arising from his wants, will more than outweigh what he possesses; and thus, by marring the enjoyment, destroy his happiness.

## E S S A Y II.

*Of the Human Constitution and Capacity, arising upon the proper improvement of it.*

**T**O make any thing near a just estimate of human happiness, one must be,  
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in the first place, furnished with the proper knowledge of his capacity and power, what sort of objects he can take in, and what advantage he can make by them; or, which is nearly the same, what measures of perfection he is limited and confined to by his frame and constitution: and therefore the first step one has to take, who proposes to do any thing to the purpose in these inquiries, must be, to acquaint himself with the human constitution, and the several degrees of improvement it may admit of. That is the first part, and the very foundation of that knowledge of one's self, which has been allowed by the wisest masters the proper business of mankind; and without which, it is impossible to make any thing of the most useful knowledge, but error and confusion.

There are only two direct ways of attaining this necessary piece of knowledge; an immediate intuitive perception of every thing belonging to the constitution itself; or, where that cannot be had, such a narrow examination of those qualities and powers which fall under our observation, as may lead us up to the best views we can attain, of the springs from which they flow.

flow. The first of these is so much above our present abilities, or at least goes so short a way, and the other so laborious, and requiring so much accurate observation and attention, that few are able to make any thing of either. Whence the bulk of mankind are driven, either to quit the pursuit, or betake themselves to a third; which is commonly reckoned by philosophers an indirect way, that of authority and testimony: and perhaps even those who value themselves most on their impartial inquiries, are more influenced by it than they are willing to own, or perhaps themselves believe. A wise man will make use of all the helps he can call in; and as the most extensive genius cannot pretend to take in every particular with infallible exactness, one much below him may possibly discover, and even rectify, some of his mistakes, without any affront to his superior understanding.

There is one thing, I cannot help observing, has contributed very much to discourage ordinary people from this useful study: It is that mysterious air of learning, and profound science, which speculative and scholastic writers scatter over their



performances on these subjects, as if they scorned to say the most common and familiar things in a way that any but philosophers should understand. Certain it is, that there is not any one thing in the subject itself, but what falls as directly under the observation of a man of the plainest understanding, as of the profoundest philosopher, abating perhaps some refinements, which no man living can ever comprehend. We propose, therefore, as much as possible, to avoid every thing that lies out of the common road; and endeavour to point out what every man may, by a little reflection on himself, bring to the only test of truth, observation and experience; and from these attempt to gather up such an account of the human constitution, as may satisfy any plain man where he is to look for his happiness.

Man is evidently a compounded being, made up of a great variety of parts; and these of very different natures, and suited to produce very different effects, and accordingly to answer very different purposes. All these have been long reduced to two general heads; known, or rather talked of, under the names of *body* and *soul*,

*soul*, or *matter* and *spirit*. These united, as they are, in the nearest and closest manner, so as to act on and by one another, produce what we call the human constitution; by which man is distinguished from all other ranks and orders of beings, both such as are above and such as are below him: and in the knowledge of these component parts, and of their mutual dependence on, and subordination to, one another, in their uses, actings, and operations, consists that knowledge of ourselves we have in view.

Our observations naturally begin at the outside of the man, his body, and the several parts of it, united, as they are, in such a manner, that even his outward form has been thought to carry in it the marks of his superiority over other animals. However that may be, it is certainly wrong to talk contemptibly of it, as it is suited to answer the purposes of that life which he is designed for, and wherein his true dignity lies.

But what we can perceive on this superficial view, however adorned and set off, is no more but the case or outward cover of the man. Those who look farther, dis-

cover under them a curious variety of parts, different in their make and texture, but all wonderfully adjusted to answer their several purposes ; and so united into one machine, that each of them contributes to the support and preservation of the whole, without the least interfering, or marring the peculiar operations of any of them.

These are all of them found reduced into three very distinct systems, for answering so many distinct purposes in life ; the first adjusted in all points for taking in and distributing proper supplies, for supporting and maintaining the several parts of the animal machine in their proper degree of bulk, strength, or whatever other purposes they have to answer, each of them in their proper place ; the second, consisting of the surprisingly curious, and even amazing, apparatus of the several senses, for giving the proper and necessary notices of the things about us, and by which the several impressions made by external objects are received and conveyed ; and the third, a combination as curious, of instruments and organs, by which the man exerts his active powers.

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It is an obvious observation, but of great importance on many accounts, that the operations of the first of these systems, that, viz. which regards the animal œconomy, is not at all under the man's direction; the second, but very little; whereas the third is almost wholly, if not altogether: and therefore he is very justly reckoned wholly accountable for these last; and no further for the other two, than he has, or may have, a hand in vitiating or improving the organs or powers concerned in conducting them.

The structure of the general system, where we find these three so closely united, so as none of them can subsist or act separately or independently on the other, and particularly the notices of external things, for the most part necessarily conveyed by the senses, and their organs, compared with the apparatus of the executive powers, very naturally lead us to some ruling principle within, for receiving the one, and managing the other; and that with such strength of reason, that one may venture to say, the thing has never been seriously questioned by any one person in the world.

But



But long before the most diligent observer can get at this same inward ruler, the bodily machinery runs into such subtle and seemingly intricate mazes, as elude the eye, with all the assistances it can procure; and thereby leaves room for a variety of conjectures; from which have arisen those perplexed, and many of them unintelligible, disputes, concerning matter and spirit, their nature, properties, and powers.

It is not easy, nor indeed possible, for such low beings as we are, to say, with any appearance of certainty, how far, what all are agreed to call *matter*, may be refined and subtilized, what curious systems it may be formed into, and what it may be made capable of, when under the management of boundless power. Our irremediable ignorance of the nature of what we call *being* and *life*, the internal essence and very substance of matter, makes us utterly incapable of forming any certain judgement concerning it, or the precise difference between it and what we call *spirit*; neither have we any way of forming any notion of it, but by the properties and powers of those sorts of beings  
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which fall under our observation. And among these we are necessarily led to conclude, that some are altogether inert and inactive, incapable of putting either themselves, or any thing else, into motion, any further than they are impelled and driven on by something else. Others, again, we are in the same manner led to conceive of, as possessed of some principle of activity, which, though we cannot give a distinct account of, yet we give it the name of *power* too; a thing very easy to apprehend, as it lies in nature; but when run up into its latent causes, which lie quite out of reach, altogether unintelligible. The first of these we call *matter*, and the other *spirit*.

This has been the prevailing notion in all ages, and the characteristic made use of to this day, among the men who are not accustomed to philosophical reasonings, as they have been practised in these latter ages. Whatever either really was, or was imagined to be, the spring and principle of motion of any kind, life, action, vegetation, or any alteration whatsoever, either in earthly or celestial bodies, was ascribed to what they called *spirit*. Hence  
arose

arose the notion so universally entertained, not only of a spirit pervading the whole, and managing the whole machinery of the universe; but of certain inferior ones, whose province it was to take care of every part. All the writings, both of their philosophers and poets, are full of instances. Nor did it ever enter into their heads, that those invisible springs of life and motion were of a nature so opposite to what they knew to be purely passive, as not to occupy space, nor to have any amplitude or expansion belonging to their essence. So far from it, that in all languages, we find the appellation of *spirit* given, as it is to this day, to many things which are sensibly material; the wind, the breath of animals, and others, which though not so sensibly so, yet are universally allowed to be matter in the strictest sense.

The great refinements of the moderns, and accurate distinguishing between proper spirit and the most subtilized matter, have not perhaps more advanced human knowledge, than the metaphysical quirks and subtilties it has been attended with, have embarrassed mens minds, and by putting them to form abstract conceptions,  
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or, as they will have them called, *ideas*, of pure spirit, above the utmost stretch of human powers, the true, easy, and distinguishing notion of a spirit, is not attended to; and while they reach at what they can never attain, they lose what might have fully answered their purpose. As it is impossible, even by the most hypermetaphysical abstraction, to separate the idea of any being whatsoever from some relation to space, and consequently some kind of extension or amplitude; so long as these are made the essential properties of dead inactive matter, and appropriated to it only, men may amuse, but will never be able to satisfy, either themselves or others, of the being of any thing else. The man who can be content to be thought ignorant of what no man can possibly know, the very essence, or even the inward frame and constitution of things, may well satisfy himself with that obvious difference; which, as it lies open to all, in so many familiar instances, can be easily apprehended, and fully answers all the purposes of the human life, in its highest improvement, and utmost extent: Every body, the plainest labourer, is thoroughly satisfied of the



difference there is between those sorts of beings which are endued with life and activity, and senseless inactive matter; and will readily own, there is as great an odds in their worth and excellency. And what can the acutest philosopher do more, after all his troublesome speculations and conclusions?

There are only two sorts of active powers known to us, viz. those which produce thought and motion; if indeed these are two different powers, or rather if the last is not more properly the effect of the other, as there are more than probable reasons to persuade us it is. We know that parcels of gross matter may, even by such low measures of skill and contrivance as man can attain, be so put together, as shall form a machine, which shall not need the maker's hand so much as to put it in motion, far less to continue it. Neither does any body doubt, that the bodies of plants and animals especially are such, though formed with a contrivance as much superior to man's, as their maker is wiser and more skilful than he; to say nothing of the truly stupendous mechanism of the heavens, by which all in this our world,  
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and, we have good reason to believe, every where else through the universe, is managed. But had it not been for the thought and contrivance of the great artificer, none of these, neither the great nor smaller machines, could have subsisted; and the whole matter of them should have continued in the same condition in which we find many of them, when their constitution is dissolved, and mouldered down into as inactive matter as any in the universe.

As it is certainly very hard, or rather utterly impossible, for man to distinguish where thought and motion are united, and where motion subsists alone, with any degree of certainty, there is the utmost danger of mistaking, if that can be called danger which concerns our happiness so little. Until experience and observation convince us of the contrary, we are apt to imagine something of life like our own, where-ever we discern motion, without perceiving the impulses and impressions which occasion it. This made many of the ancients, who were no more fools than we, to imagine, that the sun and moon, with the other heavenly bodies, were animated beings; and to find, in every foun-

tain, stream, and shady grove, some spirit possessed of certain unknown powers, which filled them with a superstitious kind of veneration toward the most insensible objects.

Whether the brute part of the animal world is possessed of any properly active principle, such as we call *spirit*, and the power of thinking; or if all the motions and effects which to us seem only producible by such a cause, are really owing only to the proper organization of suitable kinds of matter, so formed as to produce them all by the different impressions made upon them by the objects they are encompassed with,—seems impossible to determine with any thing like certainty in our present state: nor would it ever have been worth any one's while to have made the inquiry, had it not been for the consequences that have been tacked to the decision on either side, very nearly affecting the subject we have under consideration. If brutes are concluded to be possessed of an active principle, or proper spirit; whatever argument concludes for the immortality of one, must hold of both; or rather, as it is universally concluded, that the souls of brutes  
perish

perish with their bodies, it is pretended a just conclusion, that the souls of men should do so likewise. On the other hand, if brute animals are mere machines, and all those things we call their actions, so similar to the human ones, are no more but the effects of mere matter, one part impelling another, there can be no reason assigned, why a finer organization may not account for all those we call actions in men; whence it will be inferred, with great appearance of reason, that the whole business of the moral, as well as material world, is carried on in the same necessary course; that it is impossible any thing can be otherwise than it comes out to be. Which would put an end at once to the whole of our inquiry after happiness: The whole of what is called improvement and perfection must be vain and whimsical; and, upon the whole, every man must take his fate what he is to be and do.

But however superficial men may please themselves with these, which it is likely enough they will reckon very smart turns, there will no manner of hurt be done by them, whichsoever side of the question one chuses to take, unless they are allowed  
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to assume some yet more groundless position. It will indeed, I think, be acknowledged by every fair reasoner, that the first supposition, viz. that brutes have a true and proper spirit in them, will effectually destroy the main argument for the natural immortality of the human soul, taken from the spirituality or immaterial nature of its constitution; unless any one will venture the absurdity of allowing the souls of brutes the same privilege. But it will by no means follow, that the great proprietor of being should indulge one order of spirits with the gift of immortality, while others, not only of an inferior, but even of the same, nay, and of a superior kind, are left to perish. And, on the other hand, though all the appearance of action in brutes should be resolved into mere material mechanism, it will follow indeed, that all the similar effects in man may be accounted for in the same manner; but, at the same time, if men will put themselves into proper circumstances for observing it, it will be found, that there are such visible and undeniable evidences of proper activity in what we call *the human mind*, and so much above what there are any vestiges of

of in brutes, that there is no manner of foundation for the pretended conclusions. I said, if men will put themselves into proper circumstances for observation; because, it is very possible, some may live in such a manner, that there shall not be found any thing about them which can reasonably infer any superiority above their fellow-animals of the brutal tribe; and both, perhaps, as mechanically as the cabbages grow in their gardens.

As there is, without question, a very great similitude between what we call the external actions, and even the internal frame and bodily constitution, in both, the same kind of organs producing the same sensible effects; so there is not any one of these which may not, with great appearance of reason, be resolved into that peculiar kind of mechanism which we call the animal frame or fabrick, common to both men and beasts. And as this makes one great part of the human constitution, we cannot propose to make out any tolerable view of it, without considering these somewhat particularly.

To begin then where nature seems to do, with that part of the general system  
which

which serves to take in and distribute the proper nourishment to the several parts of the body: We find every organ exactly similar, unless, perhaps, in the fineness or coarseness, strength or weakness, or other such, adapted as they are to the several sorts of food on which they appear designed to subsist: and no body doubts that the human body is maintained in its strength and vigour, and carried on to its proper bulk and stature, precisely in the same manner that those of other animals are; which the active principle in man has no more power either to hinder or forward, than if there was none at all there; unless by withholding the proper nourishment, or employing in thought and reflection some of those parts which should have been assisting in digesting, or otherwise distributing the aliment: yet it never was pretended, that the effects of this system were any other than purely mechanical.

Our observations, it is true, can go but a short way in the other two particular systems; extending only to some few of the more gross and external parts, while the springs, or whatever it is that immediately plays

plays the bodily machinery, are quite a secret to us. But so far as we do observe, the several organs, and component parts, bating the above-mentioned circumstantial differences, are pretty near alike in all perfect animals, at least of the same kind; which gives more than a presumption, that what lies inward, the more subtile, and, as we are apt to deem them spirituous parts, are so likewise.

And here it is allowed by every body, that even man, with all the advantages he has about him, in the first impressions and impulses which are made on the external organs of sense, is altogether passive; and that indeed the whole is no more, through all the variety of the several sensations, as we call them, than one parcel or system of matter moving another. It is evidently so in those paintings which light, striking upon the eye; makes of those objects which lie within its compass. The vibrations, and little bounces of the air against the ear, varied into an almost infinite variety of sounds; the little particles striking on the fine fibres or ramifications of the appropriated nerves in taste and smell, however small and subtile, are still confessedly material;



terial; much more those coarser feelings, excited by grosser matter in the collection of sensations which go under that general name. And however the pleasures and pains occasioned by external objects may be, as they certainly are in rational beings, mixed with the actings of a higher principle; yet the rise and original of them is no more than one part of matter impelling and moving another, according to their several natures and constitutions, in as necessary and mechanical a way as a clock strikes, or one ball drives another.

If we look further into the effects which the several impulses thus made on the several appropriated parts of the animal system, if not regulated by some active mind, naturally produce there, and the manner in which the executive system is influenced and set agoing by them, according to their different impressions, we will find very strong presumptions, if not full evidence, that the whole is carried on by a certain subtle, and therefore to us inexplicable, mechanism in man himself, as well as other animals. Certain it is, that the instruments and organs of both systems, not only take their rise together, but

but are so very closely connected in the general system, that one cannot be any how moved without affecting the other. And could we carry our views further, into the more subtle and fine parts, it is hardly to be doubted, the connection would be found yet nearer and more immediate.

It is further to be observed, and will not be refused by any one who has at all considered the rise and springs of human actions, that what we call the passions and affections, are the immediate movers in all those, without exception, which are performed by the body; and that they have more influence on the mind itself, than any one can imagine who has not carefully observed it. Whether these are different names only, or express things really different; when they are not under the command of the active ruling principle, they certainly command the whole man: and cannot so properly be said to determine, as to make or create what we call the will; and accordingly employ every power and organ.

It is not for nothing that these bear the name of *passions* and *affections*, as they are produced by the several impressions and impulses on the material parts of the

constitution, at least as naturally and necessarily as could be done by the most established laws of motion and mechanism. This is most discernible in children and wild men; even more than in the tame sort of beasts; where, by human skill, the passions are brought under some such restraint as they are among civilized men. But in all wild animals whatsoever, the sensation makes its correspondent affection or passion with as much certainty and uniformity, as the impression produces the sensation itself. And if it is further considered, how, even in the most civilized part of mankind, on sudden surprisings, passions are raised, which the greatest strength of mind cannot restrain, that hurry the best reasoner into a course of action which occasions the quickest and most lasting remorse, it cannot be doubted, that they are more owing to the strength of the animal mechanism than to any other cause whatsoever.

If we add further, what, on a very small degree of reflection, every one must feel in himself, that every affection and passion is always attended with certain peculiar movements of the fluid and more subtile parts

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of the system, appropriated to each of them, and producing very sensible alterations in the body itself, we may discover much of the true cause of the strength and impetuosity of our passions; and find reason to conclude, that what we call their attendant is really their cause. This is much more observable in some of them than in others; but there are none, even the lowest degrees of affection, the most refined of them, which will not, on due inquiry, be found to owe a great part of their strength, and their very being, to some particular movements of the animal system. Anger and fear are among the most remarkable, and which mutually destroy one another. On many occasions, it is evident, they are no more under the direction of the mind, than the animal digestion, or the circulation of the fluids in his body are. Shame and self-approbation have as sensible feelings, though of another kind, always attending them. Nay, love and hatred, the radical and leading affections, down to the lowest inclinations and aversions, have so evidently their roots deeply spread in the animal mechanism, that the heart, about the seat of which these



these passionate feelings are most discernible, is in all languages put for their very seat; and to love or hate with all one's *heart*, to be *heartily* angry or pleased, &c. is the strongest and most usual expression of the highest degree of them.

And from this may be gathered a further illustration of what we were observing, of the passions and affections being the immediate springs of human actions. Whatever it is that is meant by the heart in these cases, that is universally allowed to be so; and whenever it comes to be understood, will be found to be no other than that very modification of the animal system we were speaking of; that is, the machinery, so set and wound up, as it were, to the pitch proper for producing such a series of actions. Whether this is done by external impressions, or the inward agency of the active mind, makes no odds in the present case; but until the system is thus formed, the mind, with the utmost efforts of the rational powers, may indeed produce faint velleities, or ineffectual wishes; but until the heart is engaged, i. e. the animal mechanism right set for  
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the purpose, no permanent course of action does, or can follow.

I will not stand to observe particularly how this must be the meaning of that so very common expression. It is sufficient to evince it, that all the constructions that were, or indeed can be, made of its meaning, necessarily run into this: The heart is the principal part of the machine, at least by which the whole is maintained in its proper plight for action. Hence it may be constructed to signify, the most inward, the most effective part, and thence the whole man without any reserve; which cannot be without the immediate powers, whether principal, or only instrumental, which must produce the effect in view.

The same dependence of human actions on the disposition of the animal mechanism, appears with yet further evidence, by the effects of intoxicating liquors and drugs, of the bodily constitution in idiots and madmen, of diseases producing deliriums and doings, &c. It is evident, these can operate no otherwise than mechanically; and yet it is as evident, how thoroughly they command the executive powers

powers in the unhappy persons who are under their influence.

The great influence which custom and habit has on the conduct of life, leads strongly to the same conclusion; how men fall into them many times insensibly, and without any design, by repeated acts, as occasion offers; how easily they go on in the same course; how uneasy when restrained; carried often so far, as to bring a sensible distress on the body; and how hard to be overcome and eradicated, even where one is thoroughly persuaded of their pernicious tendency, and, upon the whole, impossible, until contrary habits are induced by a contrary course of action. Whence can all this proceed, and much more to the same purpose, but from this, that the secret springs of the machine are formed into such a course, as to go so easily and naturally there, that they cannot, without a sort of violence, be determined another way? The instincts of animals, as they are called, by their invariable course, plainly lead to the same cause: Which will likewise account for such as, approaching so near some of the most noble human powers, has induced many to imagine, they

they were possessed, not only of some inferior degrees of activity, but even judgement and reason: A conceit not a jot better founded, than what we use to laugh at in children, who imagine every thing feels just as they do.

Could we reach the mystery of that very common, and yet most astonishing thing, called *sleep*, so natural and necessary to every animal, we might be able to say something further on this subject; how all the powers of the mind, as well as body, languish, until recruited with that rest, which nature, or, to say more justly, the great author of it, has prepared; how all the labouring powers gradually languish away into an absolute rest, except such as must be kept constantly going for preserving the constitution; the unconnected images which mostly present themselves in dreams, occasioned, as would seem, by some half-felt impulses, or the impressions made by former ones; the lively vigour healthy persons feel after a sound sleep. What shall we say? Is the immaterial spirit wearied out? or can it not act without the material machinery of the body? In either case, it is evident, mechanism must



bear a very great sway in our constitution.

But whether the animal soul, the principle of what we call *life and action*, in brutes, be the mere result of this mechanism, or something possessed of a suitable degree of activity; it may not be refused, that man is possessed of it; and whatever he is more, he certainly is a perfect animal; which yet he cannot be without the essential parts. Nor may it be imagined, that the want of it is supplied by a more noble principle, the rational spirit, in man. For however plausible this may appear on a cursory view; yet, as it is assumed without any foundation; so that rational mind being a principle of quite another nature, can never answer the purposes of the other, nor produce the effects peculiar to it, which every one does or may feel every day, by any other way than acting upon and by it, so as a man may become perfect master of his own actions. As this appears to have been the constant and fixed principle of the men of the first ages, and the belief of the first Christians, evidently supposed by the Apostle Paul in all his writings, and expressly mentioned in  
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some of them ; so it is notoriously known to have been expressly acknowledged by all, or at least the most eminent of, the Gentile philosophers ; and by which they endeavoured to account for those palpable contradictions so obvious in the human constitution.

But at the same time that man is allowed the possession of every thing necessary for the management of the animal mechanism in his constitution, if he had not more, it must be granted, that if he is not among the lowest species, yet being, as he naturally is, the worst provided against the accidents of life, he must be the most miserable of them all. For, to say nothing of the advantages many of the brutal tribe have, by their superior strength of body, acuteness of sense, agility, and such other qualities, hardly any of them are known to want a sort of constitutional sagacity, which we call *instinct* ; by which they are unerringly determined, both to their proper food and way of living, and all the ends of life ; such as they appear to have been designed for by the author of their constitution : whereas man, born as he is, must be in the most deplorably helpless circum-

stances, and incapable of chusing for himself; without any means of knowing what is good or bad for him, until he acquires it by experience and observation; and a hundred to one if he did not destroy himself by his heedlessness, ere he had observed enough to warn him against the most obvious evils. These, and such other considerations, furnish a strong presumption, that there must be something in his constitution to compensate the manifold disadvantages he labours under, and balance the numerous dangers he is exposed to.

But there is no occasion for having recourse to presumptions and probabilities, when every man has in himself a full proof, and such as comes nearest intuitive evidence, that man is possessed of an activity in the most proper sense, such as no mechanism whatsoever can approach to, and effectually distinguishes him from the most perfect and most improved mere animal. This goes under the name of the *human mind* or *spirit*; and is likewise called the *human soul*, in contradistinction to the *animal*, as it either is, or ought to be, the spring of human actions; and is indeed the  
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only thing that can distinguish them from those of brutes. It is true, indeed, this same spiritual or active part of the human frame, cannot be brought under the notice of any of our senses: but this is no more a prejudice against the reality of its being, than the subtilty of the far greatest part of the matter of the universe is. Neither can the most penetrating philosopher, or improved genius, ever reach a direct view of its substance or essence: but in this respect likewise it is no more inconceivable than the grossest matter. The most that can be made, even of such things as fall most fully under our observation, is some circumstances with which we find them constantly attended; whence we gather up such of them as are the most considerable, and call them *essential properties*. And sure we may say very positively, that there is no being whatsoever we have such opportunities of being thoroughly acquainted with, if we will but attend to those operations and actings of the mind, which are, beyond comparison, more intimately near us, than such as are only under our eye. We are, or may be, conscious of every movement or tendency toward action, its  
strength



strength and weakness, of every property and every power belonging to it, in a more certain manner, than we can pretend to know any other being whatsoever, not excepting our own bodies.

That consciousness the mind of man necessarily has of its own being, its actions and powers, with whatever impressions or impulses are made on every part of the body, is the first view that naturally casts up to us, when we turn our observations this way. Whether this is any peculiar action of the mind, or rather the natural concomitant of all its actions; as it makes the proprietor inexcusable if he does not make the proper advantage of it, so it leads us even singly into such conceptions of its nature, as sets it quite above every the most subtle mechanical power, and even the most perfect animals; and gives such a tincture of thought and reflection, even to such sensations as the mind is purely passive in, as makes the effects of the animal machinery frequently pass for thought and reason, and charges the mind with what it has no further concern with, than barely being aware that they are doing; and by this means makes  
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it very hard to distinguish between the effects of the active and merely passive parts of our constitution; and perhaps quite impossible to do it with any exactness and certainty, so as to say precisely, where the mechanism ends, and proper spiritual activity begins. Both however become very evident in their further removes.

To begin with that which is the lowest degree of activity, simple perception, or apprehension of the objects about us, or rather of the impressions they make on the animal system, which is the only way they can be perceived by creatures of our constitution; not as if we were to imagine this ever subsists alone, without some reflection or judgement given concerning it, unless perhaps in very early infancy; but because no judgement can be given on any thing until it is perceived, nor any distinct well founded one, until it is perceived clearly and distinctly: They are very justly conceived as different actings and operations as they are called; and as there are as many different perceptions as the material organs can be differently affected by the objects about us, so, when the organs of sense are any how disqualified or  
disproportioned

disproportioned to the objects about us, however near they may be, there can be no perception at all. The same thing happens where the impressions are too weak and faint, which begets only a confused apprehension of something which they cannot distinctly perceive. Thus it happens in all those cases where the objects are either too minute and subtile, or at too great a distance, &c.

All these perceptions would vanish with the object, except perhaps so far as it influenced the animal mechanism, so as it should take the same turn whenever the same, or a similar object, was perceived; but during the intervals they would be of no use, and the present perceptions would ingross the whole of our attention, were it not for that power which is called the *memory*, where the several perceptions are registered, and, as it were, kept in record. How this is done, and what part of it belongs to the mind, what to the body, men have attempted to guess; but as they know nothing of that part of the bodily machine concerned in it, they are not worth minding; nor would it be of any use to us if we did, any more than to know how the  
gross

gross aliment is converted into proper nourishment. In both cases, the thing is done without, just as well as if we had, an intuitive knowledge of every movement. Experience and observation may lead us to all that lies in our power; and any thing further would trouble instead of satisfying.

These perceptions thus recorded in the memory, are what learned men call *ideas*, and the old philosophers *species*; both much of the same import, and taken from those paintings which light makes on the eye by external objects, and thence improperly applied to the impressions which are made by them on the other organs, and by which they are distinguished from one another. Much has been written about the nature, origin, and seat of them, to very little purpose; and, I am afraid, will be found to have more perplexed and embarrassed, than promoted true and useful knowledge. The whole mystery of them may, easily, and without any trouble, be resolved into this simple natural view of the thing, that men can know nothing about any thing without them, but what they have some how or other perceived, and remember to have done; nor any further



than their conceptions were, and are remembered to be, clear, adequate, and distinct. Hence these perceptions, of whatever kind they are, must be the materials of all knowledge. Neither is it more possible to make new ideas, than it is to remember what one never had any perception of; or to amend them, but by trying to make our perception more perfect. Were every question kept to this simple point, it might be hoped an end might be put to that chicane and intricacy which has over-run all science; though, it is true, it would bring philosophy and science almost quite down to common sense, and set the professors of it more upon a level with the vulgar. But to return :

We observed before, that the most simple perceptions never stand alone in the human mind, being, besides that consciousness which attends every action, always accompanied with some reflection or judgement upon it, which cannot be done without comparing them with something or other. The first and most natural is, their relation to, and the effect they have, on the constitution, especially as they are attended

attended with pleasure or pain, and may be extended to all the consequences of these; and, if they are considerable enough, are registered in the memory, with their proper marks and characters of good or evil; and the like consequences are concluded to attend them, whenever they are applied in the same manner.

But the mind does not stop here, but goes on to compare both the sensation, and what has occasioned it, with all other things it remembers to have perceived. I say, with all other *things*: for it is not the ideas and species, or whatever one pleases to call that remembrance they have of what they have formerly perceived, but the *things themselves*, as they have appeared, or now do, to them, by their sensible qualities, or by whatever other observations have been made of their latent powers, that the mind thus compares, and gives judgement upon. It is indeed but by the appearances of things we judge: but by these we judge of the things themselves, and form those conceptions of their nature and powers, that is, of the effects or consequences they produce, either as they stand in nature, or are applied by art, and

the whole of their relations one to another, in which all our knowledge of them lies, and by which we are informed how to use them so as to make our advantage of them in every particular case.

As there are many things either too subtle or remote to fall directly under our observation, which yet we may be very nearly concerned in, and their effects very obvious; in like manner, there are many things so situated, that we cannot compare them immediately and directly, so as to form any correct and immediate judgment concerning them. This gives occasion to another instance of the mind's activity, called *reasoning*, the distinguishing character of the human species; whereby the several circumstances are adjusted by similar ones in other cases; so that by comparing one thing with another, such as are unknown with such as we distinctly perceive, we come at last to form some suitable conceptions of what otherwise could never have fallen under our observation. It is evident, however, that at the same time that this is one of the highest instances of the mind's activity and excellence, it is no less an instance of the imperfection of our constitution; as we should

should have had no occasion for it, could we have brought every thing we want to know directly under our observation.

Upon these is founded a further instance of the mind's activity and penetration, in classing the numerous huddle of objects, as they were perceived at different times and occasions, as they appear to agree and differ in their properties, powers, or qualities, of whatsoever kind, either in their outward shape or known effects; and assigning every tribe its proper characteristic and mark, by which all the individuals belonging to that rank or class may be distinguished from those of another. Hence general names, and what they call *abstract ideas*; concerning the nature and formation of which, strange things have been said, and a sort of powers attributed to the mind, of doing what none of mankind could do, or so much as conceive possible to be done; whereas, we are sure, the thing itself can be done as readily by the meanest peasant as by the profoundest philosopher.

In all these, and such other instances, wherein the mind works only on material objects, and the feelings raised by the ministry



nistry of the senses, there is only a display of some lower kind of powers, and foundation laid for more noble as well as more profitable employment. We observed before, that there was something of consciousness attending every impression made by outward objects, where yet the mind was as passive as the body itself. This is much more evident in the workings of the mind on the perceptions of these, and the several objects which occasioned them; and affords a direct and intuitive knowledge of the whole of the procedure to every man who has patience and attention enough to observe it. There the mind becomes her own object; and, by the intuitive consciousness she has of her actions and operations, she comes to know, or rather feel, her own being, and those perfections and powers she is possessed of.

These are the objects which commonly go under the name of *ideas from reflection*, to distinguish them from those which certainly take their rise from the senses; which, without all question, they are as different from, as the mind is from the body. And so far, indeed, they may go under the same name, as the remembrance  
may,

may, and should, be more distinct of what passes in the mind. But when it is considered, that the perceptions the mind has of her own operations and actings, are not raised by the mediation of any, either external or internal, bodily organs, but the things themselves are directly and immediately the object, it is evident there can be no such thing as ideas or representations of them; and indeed these actings being always at command to call up when one pleases, there can be no occasion for any thing to supply their place: it must therefore be very wrong and inaccurate, to jumble them, by a common name, into the same class with things of so different a nature. It is true, indeed, that the mind, however pure and perfect a spirit it may be supposed, yet in all its operations acts not only in but by the body: its purest actings are always attended with certain corporeal motions, which produce feelings equally sensible as internal ones are; and which will be registered and recorded in the memory along with the mental actings they are connected with. But here they are only attendants; while in the other they are the principal, or rather stand alone; until, from these, and the

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the mind's improvement and management of them, we form the complex notion of thinking in general, with all its different modifications, perceiving, judging, reasoning, willing, &c.

This leads us to consider another power of the mind, the native issue of that improvement we just now mentioned, of her perceptions of external objects. By comparing one thing with another, and all together with herself, the impressions made on the several senses are tried and adjusted, the measures of pleasure or pain balanced, and hence *judgement* is given concerning the true worth and value of the objects without us; by which new motions are raised in the animal system, new passions and affections excited, many times directly contrary to those occasioned by the first impressions; and by which the active mind assumes the command of the whole man, and attempts at least to make the man master of his own actions; unless he chuses rather to continue a slave to blind passion and affection, and thus to live at random, driven, like his fellow-brutes, by every impression that happens to be made on the material system.

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That there is such a power in man to control the native issues of external impressions, to suspend and regulate the blind course of the passions, and even to raise and manage contrary ones, so as to command the whole animal system, must be allowed by all who are not willing to have man degraded into something even below the most part of animals; and greatly more miserable than any of them; both as he is much worse provided, having hardly any of those salutary instincts which we find inlaid in the very constitution of most of them; and especially, that they are not at all exposed to those keen remorsees, and the bitter anguish, we find so frequently following human actions.

These same remorsees are certain indications that the man is conscious of a power inherent in him, which, if duly exerted, might, and would, have prevented those actions which give him so much distress. And to this alone can any appeal be made in these sorts of questions. The powers of the mind can never be perceived but by the mind itself; nor will any man ever charge himself with what he could by no means prevent, any more than he can be



justly charged by another. And however a man may be *certainly* determined by a certain set of motives, rooted affections, and inveterate habits, he can never, with any tolerable propriety, be said to be *necessarily* so; while he has it in his power, by applying the proper means, to overbalance, and even reprobate, these motives; to extirpate these affections and habits, and plant in their place such as shall lead to a course of action directly opposite.

Without such a power as this, all the rest we have mentioned must be entirely superfluous; as, on the contrary, the whole course of the mind's agency naturally leads to this single point; which, if it is not attained, the whole labour of the mind, all the perceptions, comparisons, reasonings, and judgements, that industrious and painful classing of things that affect us, and careful registration of them, must be something worse than lost. But, indeed, lost they cannot be: for just as naturally as the mind, by these previous steps, prepares the proper objects, the pleasure that attends them engages the heart, excites the proper affections and passions, and commands the whole executive powers; so that in time the  
man

man comes to pursue this new course with as much pleasure and delight, under the influence of these new views and motives, as ever he did the highest gratifications of sense. But of this we shall have occasion to speak more fully afterward: what we have advanced here, is mainly designed to give a general view of the two great constituent parts of man, the animal system, and the active ruling mind.

Whether the spirit which is in man could have subsisted, and acted, separately from all matter, we have no light to enable us to determine peremptorily, whatever reason we may have to believe that it may do both, without such gross bodies as ours are: but during the continuance of this present state, we are well assured, that however it is the principal part, yet it is but a part of the man; and both body and soul are equally necessary to make up what we call the human constitution.

We are as much at a loss to give any account of the nature of this union, how it is made at first, and by what means it is maintained and kept up, any further than that it is necessary the animal system be complete in its internal frame, espe-

cially the more subtile and fluid parts, and that proper food and sustenance is necessary to keep it so. One may be tempted to think, that matter receives here the highest refinement it is capable of, for fitting it for the human soul, the lowest order of spirits, to unite with and act by. Nor will this appear so whimsical to such as allow different kinds and degrees of purity and perfection among spirits, as there certainly are in matter; though all the degrees, both of the one and the other, may agree in some certain properties and powers.

But however the union is made, and perhaps it will be wisest, as it is certainly safest, to rest it on the inexplicable wisdom and power of the great creator, the fact is most undoubtedly certain, and such as every man carries the witness of in himself, in that mutual dependence which they are found to have on one another, both in their being, and in the exercise of all their powers.

When we propose to consider the mutual dependence of the soul and body, with respect to their being, we must not be understood to mean the matter of the body, or the very substance of the spirit. The  
matter

matter which composes the animal system, no body doubts, was in being before there was any union with the active mind; and when that is dissolved, there is not one atom of it annihilated. And however the substance of every soul may be supposed immediately created, though even that is what there is nothing can give us sufficient assurance of, it is yet more unlikely that it should be destroyed by the separation: but however the substance continues after separation, yet both must undergo such changes, as that they shall no more possess the properties and powers which subsisted during the union. The animal system, we know, is entirely dissolved, and its curious mechanism absolutely destroyed; and though we cannot say what alteration is made in the spirit, yet, even allowing that it carries along with it the most refined and subtile parts of that matter it used to act by, it is still but a part of man, separate from its fellow; and therefore subsisting and acting in a manner very different from its former manner during its union with the body; a state evidently violent and unnatural.

The mutual dependence of the mind and animal system, in their actings and operations,



tions, during the continuance of their union, as the knowledge of it is of more use to us, so of it we have much more certainty. As the body without the spirit would be but a dead lump of matter, or, at best, when fitted up into a system, a mere brute; so, on the other hand, as the mind thinks, and exerts all its powers, not only in, but by, the body; were it not for the notices it receives by its organs, we have great reason to believe it would have nothing at all to think on; and as it has no direct intuition of its own substance, nor can know any more of its nature than can be gathered from its operations and actions, it must continue in a state of stupid inactivity, without so much as being conscious of its own existence.

Certain it is, that man, in his first infancy, appears evidently a mere animal, and many degrees below most of them; minding nothing but what the animal instinct, a result of his constitution, puts him upon. Nor is there the least appearance of thought or reflection, or any other evidence of a reasonable spirit within, until the organs are strong enough to receive and convey the feelings of external impressions. On these

these the mind begins to work, and in the same manner is continually supplied with materials. It is not until very late, that one can entertain so much as any apprehensions of such a being as a spirit, and yet later ere they can form any tolerable conceptions of its nature: and when it is considered, that we have no original impressions, nor any thing to form them upon, but what we can gather from the actings of our own minds, the model being so imperfect, a taint of material imagery runs through our most refined notions, which no abstraction whatsoever can divest them of, unless we could form an idea of thinking without any object to think on.

But however that is, the sensible evidence we have of the mind's most perfect actings depending on the body, and the right constitution of the animal system, puts the matter quite beyond doubt. We gave some hints before, of the influence which the several dispositions of that system have upon the passions and affections, and thereby upon the external actions, and conduct of life. Those who will be at pains to observe it, will readily find it extending

tending further, not only to the memory, but to the judgement itself, and all the rational powers; and thereby affecting the mind, in the exercise, at least, of her highest endowments. The several tempers, dispositions, and habitual inclinations of mankind, will all be found owing to the same cause; nor can they possibly be altered, without altering the disposition and movements of that part of the system which occasions them.

But nothing puts the mind's dependence on the body in a more conspicuous and glaring point of light, than the case of those who, from their birth, or very early infancy, have been destitute of any of the organs of sense. Both reason and experience join to assure us, that no means whatsoever can enable the mind to form any conception of the objects which would have been easily perceived by their ministry. What then should be the case of a man, if such a man can be supposed, who never had any feeling, either external or internal? or wherein would he differ from a mere vegetable?

The influence of the mind on the body, though as hard to be accounted for, is every

very way as real and obvious. For however some parts of the animal system perform their proper offices, without any interposal at all of the mind, or so much as any consciousness that such things are a-doing; yet every one knows he can move or restrain his tongue, or his hands, for instance, and employ them as readily at pleasure, as he can think of any thing: nay, even the most spiritual actions of the mind, and such as are most remote from any thing material, yet affect the body in a very sensible manner, mar digestion, exhaust the spirits, and produce a weariness and indisposition in the whole fabrick, even greater than the most toilsome labour, and in time wear it out more effectually.

We have another instance of this same dependence, though less obvious, yet rather stronger than that just now mentioned. It is taken from the influence which the affections of the mind have upon the body. I say, the affections and passions of the mind; not as if that was their proper seat, or that they ever can properly be called by these names while they continue there, and until the latent powers which command the executive system are put in



motion: but however in multitudes of instances these secret springs are touched by the mechanism of material impressions and impulses, it is not always so; and we find the very same symptoms produced, where no such impression could have been made, but by the intervention of some conclusion the mind had formed. Thus certain words and actions, which pass unregarded by the man who understands not the meaning of them, shall raise another who does, to the highest degree of furious rage, more effectually than the smartest blows would have done without them. Nor are there any of the more refined affections, which confessedly take their rise from the mind, that are not constantly attended with their proper corresponding motions in the animal system.

There is another instance we have had frequent occasion to hint at, wherein the power of the mind over the animal system appears in its full strength, viz. forming and altering at pleasure what we call *habits* and *customs*, on which the whole of what is styled *the manners of men*, and every part of their conduct, almost entirely depend. This will easily appear to be much  
above

above its having the command of some particular actions. Custom or habit carries in it, not only a certain ease and facility in acting, so that the thing is done without any pain or reluctance, but such a proneness toward some particular way, that the man, as it were, naturally, and without thinking, falls into it. This is very apparent in common habits, such as concern indifferent things; and, with some few exceptions, the whole business of education, good manners, civility, and politeness, nay, almost of all callings and professions, stand on the same bottom. Whence the old true proverb, That custom is a second nature. Nothing is more common among men, than to alledge, they cannot bring their mind to this or the other thing, while yet they see, and readily acknowledge, it would be much better for them if they did. But the true cause will, in this case, be found to lie, not in the mind, but in some contrary habit; the whole animal system is set another way, so that the heart is engaged in it; nor is every man master of sufficient strength of mind to reform, and turn it into another channel: and yet till that is

done, though it may be overpowered in some particular instances, yet it will readily return to its usual course.

This whole affair will be better understood, by comparing the mind and animal system in another view, viz. in the point of superiority. And this again may be considered with respect to their excellency and natural worth; their authority and just power; and the actual power and influence they have over the human constitution in the conduct of life.

The slightest reflection that can be made on what has been observed, concerning the nature and actings of both, will leave no room to state a competition, in point of excellency and dignity, even when our notions of the one are taken at the lowest, and the other at the highest, unless they are absurdly jumbled and confounded into one.

There can be as little dispute on the point of authority and just power; as the grounds on which it is, or can be, founded, meet together in the mind; a superiority of nature, fitness to command, and, what is equivalent to the most solemn investiture, the good order and government, nay, the very being and happiness of the whole,

whole, depend on the due subordination of the animal life to the direction of the mind.

We need not spend words on the natural superiority of the active spirit in man, as it follows necessarily on that natural dignity and worth we were just now speaking of; founded, as it is, in the activity of its nature, and the power it is possessed of, not only of continuing, but beginning, both thought and motion, and varying and modifying these at pleasure. And if we carry our thoughts but a little further, to take in that thought and design with which its whole procedure is conducted, the corrections and improvement it makes on the intelligence received by the senses, and the purposes it either does, or would, if it was not opposed, apply them to, for regulating the whole conduct of life to the best advantage, we shall hardly make any doubt of its fitness to command, and even that the good of the whole depends entirely on the absolute submission of all the inferior powers to its decisions.

These, it is evident, carry in them something above the strongest presumptions; and plainly enough declare the intention of  
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of the great author of our constitution. But if we will still have further evidence, we need only turn our thoughts to another kind of dependence, viz. that which every man has on things without, whence he must be furnished with all the materials of enjoyment, and where his whole fund of happiness lies; and upon an impartial survey it will appear, that the mind is indeed, and must be, invested with all *rightful* power and authority; but in the point of *actual* power and influence, the competition is so strong, as not only to bring it to a question, which shall rule, but perhaps, in most instances, the lower system carries it; the animal commands, and the man serves.

Man, with all the advantages his composition gives him over other animals, is yet the remotest that can well be imagined from a self-sufficient being. As he came into existence without any concurrence, or even consciousness of his own, in a manner he knows not how, and by the contrivance and operation of certain powers he can give no account of; so, when he enters upon his existence, he has nothing about him to support it so much as a single moment,

ment, until it is borrowed from abroad: so that, considered in himself, the best account that can be made of him is mere emptiness, a creature made up of wants; yet so made, as that all these wants may be relieved, the emptiness filled, and by this means the man grow up from the lowest and most despicable beginnings, to such a degree of perfection, that there is not an order of creatures so high that he needs to look on it with envy, and at the same time none so low, as that he can justly look upon it with contempt: and thus his lowest state of want and indigence, becomes not only the occasion, but the proper means, of his perfection and glory; and is the only root on which they can be grafted, so as to arrive at any pitch of maturity. It is that very thing we call his capacity, which is larger or narrower, just in proportion to the feeling he has of his wants, and the largeness of those appetites and cravings of proper supply.

At the same time it is to be observed, to the glory of the great author and contriver of the universal system, that as, throughout the whole, one part exactly answers another; so, in relation to man, there is abundant provision made of every  
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thing necessary for his relief, and supplying every part of his emptiness, to the utmost extent of the most enlarged capacity; and these laid, one way or other, so within his reach, that he may apply as much as he has occasion for; and which he will be found, on just inquiry, to be exactly made for.

The numberless wants of mankind are all naturally reducible to two general heads, founded in the two constituent parts so often mentioned, the mind, and the body, or rather the animal frame: and as these are so different in their nature, they must have each of them their proper supply from their corresponding objects, of very different kinds; and therefore they are equally the concern of the whole man, where both are so closely united. Each of these may be properly subdivided into such as are necessary for their subsistence, their improvement, and for providing a proper fund of pleasure and enjoyment; by which the perfection and happiness of the whole man may be carried on together.

What is necessary for the support of spirits, how they improve, and wherein their proper enjoyments lie, we are but ill able

to judge, so long as we are such strangers to their nature. We may be very sure indeed, that all must be done quite in another manner, and by another sort of means, than such as are subservient to the animal life; and if we may judge by the analogy there is between the two, it must be something of the same nature, some spiritual thing; and whatever notion we frame of it, it will be found to lead up to the great father of spirits, the author and supporter of our beings. But until the human spirit is, by due culture, improved to such a degree of perfection and capacity, as shall be in some measure proportioned to objects so much above its natural pitch, these will be looked on as unintelligible speculations; or, if there is any reality in them, so remote, that few will think it worth while to mind them.

What concerns the animal life, as it lies much more obvious, so, on many accounts, it engages our attention more readily; and not without reason, as these things are not only absolutely necessary to the support of the constitution, but likewise the only possible means of improvement, as it is from thence materials are taken in,



and the foundation laid, for the most sublime and spiritual exercises to which the mind itself can ever be raised. But, in the mean time, how to obtain the most agreeable nourishment for supporting and improving the animal system, and what are called the comforts of life, how to ward off pain, and to purchase as much pleasure as these sorts of objects can supply, make up the main business of life.

As man is a compound of flesh and spirit, united in the nearest and closest manner, there arises from this union another sort of wants, and enjoyments of a mixed kind; such as a spirit disengaged from matter could have no relish of, and which yet no mere animal can possibly come up to. Of this sort are all the vestiges of design and contrivance, in the beauty, order, and harmony, of the works of nature, and especially the whole fabrick and furniture of the moral world, mens conduct and behaviour toward one another, with all the actions and passions of spirits dwelling in flesh; from which the far greatest part of the pleasures and pains of a present state take their rise: And these are the pleasures, and of this kind the business,

finest, that are, by the bulk of mankind, reckoned the most refined and spiritual man can rise up to; who, if they can acquit themselves tolerably in the affairs of society, conclude they have fulfilled all the duties of human life.

And here there is one thing deserves our particular notice, that as there are multitudes, even of those things which man is very capable of taking in, and improving, for his sustenance and pleasure, which yet may escape his observation; so long as they do so, the want of them gives him no manner of trouble, however ill provided he may be otherwise even with the bare necessaries of life; as we have daily instances, not only in infants, and the wild nations, but in all those who have not yet learned to extend their wants of body or mind to such boundless heights as they are carried in polite and learned societies. But take the most contented savage, or common peasant, you will need do no more to spoil his contentment, than let him see what he wants; or, which is much the same thing, increase his knowledge. Certain uneasy feelings immediately arise, which either are, or imme-

diately produce, appetites, cravings, and such importunate desires, as give the man no rest until they are satisfied.

The state of mankind, and the advances he makes, from his early infancy, throughout the several stages of life, if carefully observed, would set the whole of what we have been pointing at in a very obvious light. The child cannot subsist a moment without air to breathe in, and but a very little while without proper food and sustenance: when the calls of nature, those feelings which go under the names of *hunger and thirst*, are answered, all is easy and quiet, unless some impression happens to be made on the under system which occasions pain. It is not until the organs of sense grow up to some measure of strength, that he discovers any taste of pleasure, or fondness, for such things as afford it; but whenever these are observed, they are sought after with great eagerness.

Thus, for a long time, pleasure and pain are taken in only by the outward senses; nor has the young thoughtless creature the least notion of any other: and all this while the spirit is no more than a servant to the animal; and, in multitudes of men, continues

tinues in that subjection, perhaps, through the course of a long life, without ever engaging in any other, even those of the mixed kind, any further than they can be made subservient to some sensual gratification: and the whole business of the active principle is, to refine upon them, and, by varying and interchanging, to keep up the relish of life, as much as can be done by such low and inadequate objects. Nor can there be so much as a competition, until the mind is sufficiently instructed to exercise its proper authority, and can form such a judgement of things, as shall make some kind of balance against sense and feeling; and thus claim the command of the man, and the direction of his conduct.

There are two cases, to which I believe all the rest may be reduced, wherein this competition can happen. The first, when there are two or more objects of different value, though both of the sensual kind, and the lowest, as very commonly happens, proves most grateful to the animal system. The other, when the mind sets up for itself, and promotes the pursuit of its own proper gratification, at the expence of some sensual pleasure. And even among the  
proper



proper pleasures of the mind, some are more nearly allied to those of the animal; others, and these the most noble, are more opposite to them. It is easy to see, in either case, what immense advantage the animal powers have over the rational: The heart is engaged; habits formed, and deeply rooted; the whole mechanism of the system is formed upon the sensual way; and the mind, with all its activity, cannot command so much as a free thought, until the whole is turned a contrary way, and the affections and passions engaged on the opposite side.

As these same affections and passions are of so great moment in the human constitution, it will be necessary to take some more particular notice of them. We observed already concerning the rise and spring of them, that they are no more than certain internal feelings, raised and carried on by some particular and appropriated movements in the more subtile and refined parts of the animal system, tending, some with more, some with less violence, but all of them tending to immediate action. Nor does it make any odds whether these movements are excited and maintained

maintained by the mechanism of the external organs, or by the inward agency of thought and reflection; only the last are usually more calm and sedate; though, even in some of these, the mechanic powers break loose from under the direction of the mind, and make no small confusion. A short view of the several kinds of them, and of the manner in which they are or may be managed, so as to preserve due order in the general system, or state of the human constitution, will answer our present purpose.

As these two names, *affections* and *passions*, are commonly used promiscuously in our language, I know not whether it might not be deemed a superfluous affectation of accuracy, to distinguish them; so as to appropriate the first to denote the original movements excited directly by the objects, which either immediately produce, or give the prospect of pleasure or pain, to the improvement or detriment of the constitution; and thence reckoned good or evil, tending to happiness or misery: and by the *passions* to denote those occasional movements made by the interposal of other things during the pursuit, which appear either to hinder or forward the main design.

figh. It is evident, however, that the first are primary and direct; the other only secondary, and bearing some relation to the primary ones; without which there would be no place found for them.

Of the first sort it is evident there can be no more than two; as there are only two sorts of objects that can make any impression on us, viz. such as appear good or evil, advantageous or hurtful; or, to say all in one word, such as please or displease: for if there are any perfectly indifferent, they make no impression at all, but pass by without being at all regarded, or producing any affection whatsoever. These, in their perfect state, are well known under the names of *love* and *hatred*; but both admit of many degrees, and a multitude of different circumstances; whence arise as many different movements. Some of them have particular names; others, though really different, have none, but are reckoned in with such as have. But all of them, no matter what the objects are, further than as they please or displease, from the lowest inclinations and aversions to the highest pitch of delight and abhorrence, will be found to run into one or other of these radical ones.

The secondary affections, we took notice of, are most properly passions, arising most commonly on unexpected and unforeseen opposition in the course of the primary ones; and answer very great purposes in their proper place. The principal of these is anger, in all the degrees of it, which is a violent effort of nature to remove the opposition; and accordingly puts the whole system on the utmost stretch for that purpose, and were it not balanced by fear, raised by the appearance of danger, chilling the spirits, and weakening the powers of the system, the world would be but one scene of confusion. Anger disappointed settles into resentment; which is no more than that original passion, balanced with fear, and hid until an opportunity offers for revenge. Much of the same kind is ill-will, envy, &c. When a person steps between one and the enjoyment in prospect, or when it is apprehended he will do so, anger begets jealousy, emulation, &c. and the several degrees of these, according to the degree of eagerness or coolness in the pursuit.

There is another class of those commonly reckoned among the secondary affec-



tions, viz. the movements occasioned by the mind's reflection on the issue and event of her pursuits; and all of them attended with their distinct feelings in the animal system. A probable or certain prospect of success, creates that state we call *hope*, naturally attended with longings, expectations, &c. On the contrary, a probability, or even a possibility, of a disappointment, begets fear; not that fear we formerly spoke of, but such a concern as puts one upon all proper precautions for preventing the danger. If the disappointment is certain, or apprehended to be so. it produces despair, and supercedes all further endeavours. Success in the pursuit and the possession of the desired good, begets joy, delight, complacency, &c.; until the enjoyment cloy, and ends in satiety, coldness, and many times aversion and hatred. If before satiety the enjoyment is lost, then hope disappointed brings sorrow, grief, anxiety, and perplexity. There are no doubt many other circumstances and corresponding movements, and many degrees of these, which have no names: nor is it material whether one knows them or not. The main thing we have to attend to, is  
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the strength of the impression they make, and the influence they have on the animal mechanism, determining the course of the man's actions and behaviour.

There is another division of the affections very much insisted on by the masters of morality, taken from the relation they bear to, and the influence they may have on, society, viz. into the private and public, or the selfish and benevolent kind; very well calculated, indeed, for answering certain purposes they have in view; but, at the same time, they do not appear to have any the least foundation in nature. Not that the public or benevolent affections are not as much founded in the human constitution as the private and most selfish ones; but, for this very reason, there is not, nor can be, any natural foundation for making a distinction. It is true, indeed, what concerns one's private and peculiar pleasure and happiness, presents itself first and most directly to the affections; yet where-ever the interests of the public appear more desirable, and there are many ways of making them appear so, the man pursues them precisely on the same plan of pleasure, and is acting just as selfishly as he

did when he minded nothing but gratifying his taste, or filling his belly. The object of his pleasure is changed; and that is no more than happens every day: but until he finds his pleasure in the thing, whatever it be, it neither is, nor can be, the object of his pursuit; and, on the other hand, whatever it be, or whence soever it comes recommended, whether from the animal feelings, or the dictates of the rational mind, if the impression can be made strong enough to please, so far as it does so, the heart, that is, the whole man, will certainly be engaged.

It is, however, in these natural inclinations, and the strong connection that subsists between the several affections and passions, with their proper objects, that the great strength of the animal life lies. And for this reason especially, the masters of the Stoic morality, finding them so troublesome, and despairing of bringing them into a proper subjection to their ruling principle, proposed eradicating them altogether, and substituting in their room those rules of wisdom dictated by the superior mind; which they conceived were  
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the only maxims whereby an intelligent being ought to be directed.

Nothing can be imagined more extravagant than this piece of philosophical knight-errantry, as it is commonly understood: for besides that these affections are as natural, and as much a part of the human constitution, as the most calm and deliberate judgements of the most exalted mind, they are, in their own place, every way as necessary. The wisest and best-concerted determinations must prove abortive, unless the heart is engaged; and were it possible a sense of duty could effect that thing, yet a man without affections could have no taste nor relish of any thing, and consequently no happiness, even in the most exquisite enjoyments.

But though they cannot be extirpated, yet regulated they must be; and perhaps this was all that was meant by their hyperbolical expressions: and indeed these natural movements, when authorised and directed by the mind, may, with greater justice, be called *actions* than *passions*; the informations given by the senses being only the lowest, grossest, and most worthless objects in view; and these, very commonly,



monly, much misrepresented. What is pleasing and delightful to sense, may be very hurtful, and even destructive, to the man; and such objects as appear the most horrid and frightful, may, upon the whole, be infinitely more eligible. It is the mind's province to examine, compare, and judge. Where these determinations are not regarded, as perhaps most frequently they are not, the constitution must be endangered, if not destroyed; and the man consigned to an insupportable remorse, and often a too late repentance: so that indeed self-denial, and mortification of the animal life, are the most natural duties, and absolutely necessary to raise one the least degree above the beasts of the field.

But how these same unruly and tumultuous affections and passions may be reduced to their proper order, and kept in it, is the great question. It will be very evident to those who will be at pains to consider it, both from the nature of the thing, and the general experience of mankind, that there are only two ways of attempting this with any success, viz. balancing the passions, by playing one against the other, or by bribing them off with proper equivalents;

equivalents; and to one or other of these may be reduced all the attempts that ever have been made to any purpose for regulating the conduct of human life. In the first view, the main, and, in effect, the only ballast of the passions, are fear and hope. The fear of consequences chills the spirits, and restrains the immoderate hurry of the animal movements; and thereby makes the pursuit more slow, and leaves more room for calm deliberation; while, in a similar manner, hope guards against the bad effects of grief and disappointment, and keeps the man from sinking into sullen despair. The other is every way as much founded in nature, and we have daily instances of it, in the changes men are every day making of the objects of their pursuit, and exchanges of what is called *the ruling passion*; or, to say the thing more properly, of the objects which ingross their affection, and deaden them to every thing else.

And now that I have mentioned these same ruling passions, it must be observed how much they contribute to the ease and quiet of mankind: For, if all men had the same object of pursuit, there must  
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have been a continual interfering of interest, and scarce a possibility left of getting out of a continued state of war, every man against every man; but now that men are distinguished into certain classes, determined by their stations, circumstances, and tastes, and fixed by the constant character of their favourite affection, they may be friends with all the world besides.

So long as the affection continues fixed on one object, the man's character is likewise fixed; and, from the knowledge of his views, one may say very positively how he will act in any particular case: but yet the passions, every one, even the most violent, may be either balanced or bribed off by more agreeable objects; and by this the whole conduct of the man altered. But it is not every such exchange that gives the mind any advantage. Where the objects either of one's hopes or fears, or the pleasures which induce him to the exchange, are of the same kind, the animal life may continue still in its full strength, as indeed happens in most of these exchanges.

Unless, then, the ruling mind have something to offer which can outweigh all  
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the pleasures which blindly ingross the affections, they will continue their course, in spite of all reason and argument; whatever wishes or remorse may rise on some occasions: *Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor*; so that, in the event, the man will be just where he was. Most men imagine they have done the business, if they can fix their heart on something above sensuality, and enter upon the pleasures of the middle kind; and if they happen to fix on any of those things which give the denomination of *public spirit* or *benevolence*, they are ready to imagine themselves patriots, heroic spirits, and all the fine things that have been said to flatter men into sociableness and good neighbourhood.

But to take the true dimensions of human perfection, we must carry our views above the pleasures of society as well as of sense; and in order thereto, take in yet another and higher dependence every man has on the objects of the unseen spiritual world; and there especially upon the author of our existence, the preserver of our lives, and the great proprietor of all those things we thoughtlessly call ours, and pretend to the absolute disposal of. Nothing can be more



evident, than that if there is such a being, it is something above common folly to propose any thing like happiness, so long as we are in any doubt about his favour and friendship; or so much as to surmise, that any enjoyment that can be found among his creatures may be brought into the lowest competition with what is to be found in him. Until then the mind is furnished with satisfying views of God, and the joys and pleasures of the unseen world; the great, the only expedient, for reducing every affection and passion, must be wanting. An object this, which none can deprive another of, and the whole universe may share in, without diminishing the enjoyment of one individual; in short, the only chief-good, vainly sought after by the philosophers, among his creatures.

When the mind, then, duly instructed and informed, surveys, according to its natural office, the whole compass of objects on which it has any dependence; considers what is good, and what evil; what is to be pursued, and what to be avoided; by what means, and in what order, they are attainable, and how to be enjoyed, and improved to the best advantage; the man either

ther is, or may be, as conscious of the decision, and, we must say, with much greater certainty, than he can be of any of those feelings received from external impressions of any kind. This is really the inward sense of the man, and is the only piece of our knowledge which is absolutely exempted from those sceptical subtleties which may be employed to intangle every other part: for let us be as ignorant as can be imagined of every thing without us, and indeed those who know most are very ignorant, yet when one has carried his doubts as far as they will go, he can never question the truth and reality of his inward feelings; and sensible he must be, on what occasions, and in what degrees, he is pleased and displeas'd, so long as he is conscious of his own being.

And as there is nothing a man can be so certain of, so there is not any thing more natural, and which is, or can be, a more direct and immediate result of the constitution, and more out of the man's power to direct or manage at pleasure, hardly excepting the first and most original calls of the animal œconomy, and every way as essential and involuntary as the

feeling of pain or pleasure. It is true, the mind may be diverted from considering and judging; but so may the eyes and ears, nay, the very natural appetites of hunger and thirst; but without doing violence to the constitution, one can no more avoid the conviction of his mind, than he can avoid seeing light in broad sunshine, or feeling hunger and thirst, when nature calls for proper supplies.

We might add what has been oftener than once hinted, and is a necessary consequence of what has been said on this subject, that until the mind examines, and gives judgement, the man is so far from being master of his own actions, that he is properly no agent at all, but is acted upon, tossed hither and thither, by the animal powers, as mechanically, one may say, as a tennice-ball has its motions directed by the stroke of the racket. And until these convictions are so strong, as to form all the powers of the system upon them, he continues a slave; with this addition of misery, that he finds the bitterness and anguish of his bondage; which, however, though a very bitter sensation, yet is a hopeful symptom, as it gives some ground  
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to expect, he will watch carefully every opportunity that may favour his escape.

But however natural and necessary it is, that the mind should command all the inferior powers; yet when one considers the present state of mankind with ever so little attention, they must see how great the struggle must be, and how impossible, to form the whole system into a regular submission, by one or two, or even a multitude, of faint attempts. This will appear very evident, if we will but attend to the very common case of contracted habits in the most indifferent things; suppose certain awkward and unnatural gestures of body: how hard is it to break them off? and how insensibly does the man fall back into his former way, when he is ever so little off his guard? How much more, when habits, or inveterate customs, are rooted in one essential part of the constitution long before the mind is in any capacity of making the least opposition; but, on the contrary, is disposed to encourage and confirm them: especially when, besides all this, they are so much encouraged and supported by the way of the world about us, that even the mind itself, until better informed, is tempt-

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ed to give them its function, and to conclude them natural and reasonable? What strength of mind, what care and watchfulness, are necessary, and, above all, what diligence, in the application of every mean that may contribute, either to strengthen the mind, or to give weight to its dictates?

This struggle is most discernible, where the inward sense we speak of, and the convictions of the mind, are strong enough to balance the impulses of the animal soul. Where these are weaker, in the same proportion as they are so, the struggle ceases: but remorsees are frequent, in similar degrees of strength or weakness, until they are quite extinguished, being overpowered by the vigorous exertions of the animal or mixed life. When, on the other hand, the man is so happy, as, by proper exercises of the rational powers, and calling in the proper assistances, to have his mind and sentiments raised to such a degree of strength, as can easily overcome all opposition, the struggle abates in the same proportion, until he arrives at that degree of perfection, which enters one upon the calm enjoyment of life, and  
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the happiness which suits his constitution in all the parts of it.

This inward sense of the mind, the impressions its dictates make upon the united system, and their prevailing influence there, producing a suitable series of actions in the conduct of life, though the same power originally, yet as it comes to be applied to different subjects, or taken in different views, goes under different names. When conversant about the regularity, beauty, and order, of material things, whether the productions of nature or art, diction and style, gesture and air, dress and ornament, and, in general, all the subjects of imagination, it is called *taste*, and sometimes *fancy*; when applied to the conduct of life, and as it forms the man upon the maxims proper on every occasion and incident, it is very properly called *sentiment*, as well expressing its true distinguishing nature, viz. the inward sense and feeling of the man. When these things are enforced by the authority of the great creator and sovereign, in whatever way this may be supposed to be known, it commonly bears the name of *conscience*, and carries the highest influence; and from the evidence and conviction that at-

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tends it, it is called *one's light*; by which, accordingly, both one's own conduct, and that of others, is justified or condemned.

According then as mens affections and passions fall under the influence of the animal impulse, or the direction of the active mind, their actions are formed upon them, and the conduct of life determined into a certain course, which is called *their manner*; that is, in plain English, the customs they follow: at first but single actions, awkwardly performed, but which, by frequent repetition, become easy, agreeable, and such as one readily falls into, even without thought or reflection, hence called *habits*; which is only another name for inveterate customs: for in that light it appears the first authors of human language considered them; and, by what has been said, every body who understands them will do so still.

Into this, then, the whole business of *moral virtue*, as it is called, must be resolved, namely, That the course of mens actions, i. e. their manners, customs, habits, or whatever they may be called, be conducted into a thorough conformity unto the dictates of the mind; and the sentiments  
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of the heart formed, not on bare appearances, but on true judgement of the real worth and excellency of the several objects upon which the man's happiness or misery depends. And, for the same reason, and with the same propriety of speech, the contrary course might be called *moral vice*; had not custom consecrated certain words and phrases, which those who know not the meaning of them; ignorantly take up; and superstitiously amuse themselves and others with, to the perverting of truth; and diverting their minds from matters of infinitely greater moment.

We only observe, how justly this regular conduct of human life was peculiarly honoured by the men of the first ages with the name of *wisdom*, and continued to possess that distinguishing name, until the knowledge of the objects without which it could not subsist, being lost, the whole of it was reduced to the uncertainty of conjecture and opinion; and the most the wisest could pretend to, was to be a lover of wisdom. Hence philosophy became a sort of profession, which, hard to say whether from heedlessness or design, has continued to usurp the honours due only to true wisdom,



dom, even where that, in the highest measures of it, was revived and acknowledged.

It is likewise to be observed, that all the foundations of moral goodness assigned by later masters, naturally run into this inward sense of the mind; and however seemingly remote, and even opposite, they may appear, yet all that have any solidity in them, resolve into this, and there amicably unite. Thus we see, that moral goodness is founded in the nature of things; in truth; in the beauty, order, and harmony of the universe; that it is just and right, beautiful and pleasant, honourable and gainful, &c.: but all this we see, not directly and immediately, but by the intervention of proper *sentiment*; the perception and judgement of the mind forming the whole human system upon these views, which could never have made the least impression without it. Nay, *in this*, even the two opposite systems of self-love and public affection, so earnestly contended for, amicably unite, and mutually support and assist each other. While vice, on the other hand, is the native issue of darkness, ignorance; and error; it is folly, madness, deformity; and, in the event, as destructive

structive and ruinous, as, in the whole of its course, it is unnatural and brutish.

It would seem likewise, that this must be the same with what has of late made so much noise in the world, under the name of the *internal* and *moral sense*; as it certainly must be, if these words have any meaning at all: but then they who affect such terms must be egregiously mistaken in their notions, when they talk of this internal and moral sense as something, not only distinct from, but prior unto, all judgement and reasoning; yea naturally implanted in man as a part of his constitution, and a more infallible guide than any observations fallible man can make: whereas nothing can be more evident, than that in the state in which all mankind are born, there neither is, nor can be, any such thing as either taste or sentiment, until they are some how or other formed by experience and observation.

I said *some how or other*; because there are many ways of forming the taste, sentiment, and even conscience itself, besides a true knowledge of things, and a deliberate judgement concerning them. Both reason and experience assure us, that not only children, but the bulk of mankind, may be

brought to love or hate, pursue or avoid, almost any thing, with the greatest force of bigotry; that the impressions of sense first, and then the example and way of the world, are with most the only standard: and when the bulk, even of those who value themselves on their taste and sentiment, can assign no better ground, the whole may be said to rest upon mere caprice and fancy. And, therefore,

Since there may be such things as false taste, wrong sentiments, and erring consciences, as well as those which are true and just; and as the first will produce as quick and vigorous effects of approbation and dislike; nay, for very obvious reasons, much stronger and more violent than the last: it must be absurdly wrong, to resolve the morality, as it is called, or the right and wrong, the good and evil, of human actions, ultimately into any inward taste or sentiment; which, if it has not a standard in truth, and the nature of things, or is not founded there, must be the most slippery, fleeting, fanciful thing, that can be imagined.

If any one wants to be resolved how the mind of man comes by such a sway in the human constitution, as in this manner to  
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form the whole complex system upon its dictates; this, no doubt, is originally owing to the wise constitution of its great author, who has made this the distinguishing characteristic of this tribe of his creatures. But this being supposed, one needs no more to satisfy himself how it is, or may be, effected, than to reflect a little on what has been said concerning the rise and spring of all human actions, viz. the affections and passions; how these are raised and maintained, and thereby the whole united system put into that tendency to action which we call *the will*, by certain impulses and movements on the most inward and subtle parts of it, which naturally issue in the proper effects, and such a peculiar course of action. No body has any difficulty about conceiving how this may be done by material impulses on the organs of sense, which all lead to, and land in these. When it is then remembered, how the mind retains, recalls, and improves, these same original perceptions, and how intimately she is connected with the material system in all her operations and actions, we will easily apprehend how the same kind of movements must be produced. For as that active principle has at

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command all the perceptions ſhe has in remembrance; and, by comparing and conſidering theſe, can form out of them images and representations of what the ſeveral different compositions might produce: ſo ſhe can employ theſe at pleaſure for producing motions of the ſame kind, and directed preciſely in the ſame manner, as the outward impreſſions made by the objects themſelves would have done. And thence it is, that theſe ſort of impreſſions made by the mind's representation of proper objects, of whatſoever kind they are, very properly bears the name of *motives*; calmer indeed at firſt, and not near ſo impetuous, as thoſe excited by ſenſible impreſſions; but by being often repeated, as the mind can repeat them at pleaſure, they come to produce the effect with as much certainty, and in time engage the heart, and form the executive ſyſtem into a courſe of action, which nothing but giving way to contrary impreſſions can break off. All which we may daily find in ourſelves, and obſerve in others, fully exemplified in the changes that are made in mens taſte and ſentiments, or what they call the *ſtate of*  
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*their mind*, throughout the several stages and different circumstances of life.

From what was just now said concerning these movements, which either are the same thing with what we call the will, or immediately and directly produce it when arrived at a certain pitch; and in which the concurrence of the whole man lies, whether the mind engages the material system, or the animal powers overcome and subdue the mind; a question has been moved concerning the force or effect of these motives which set them agoing, and the certainty one may have of success in the application of them. This has been carried so far, that some seem to say, the event in this case is either altogether, or very near, as certain, as the determination of the motion of one parcel of matter is by the impulse of another. What seems to be the natural consequence of this, is, that man can be no free agent, or rather no agent at all, every action of his being certainly, i. e. necessarily, determined into a certain course, which it is impossible for him to avoid. Others will needs have the man possessed of a certain power, by which he can, if he will, act contrary to the strongest

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est and most effectual motives and excitements. Whence have arisen those intricate, and most of them unintelligible disputes, concerning liberty and necessity, the freedom, indifferency, and self-determining power of the will, and other such metaphysical wranglings, of which there is no prospect of ever seeing an end.

Were we able to look into the mechanism of the animal system, and could give an exact account of all the several movements it is capable of; could we exactly compare and balance the several powers and forces of outward impressions among themselves, and all of them with the inward ones made by the mind, with their several connections and dependencies; there might be some hopes of determining the question with some certainty from that quarter. But as there can be no expectations thence, we must content ourselves with such light as plain facts, attested by observation and experience, can afford; and which may abundantly answer all the purposes, even of a perfect intuitive knowledge.

We will not stop to make remarks upon the several kinds of motives; which are, or  
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may be, just as numerous as the things we have any connection with or dependence on; which we have already taken some notice of; how some directly affect the body, others the mind, while there are some likewise that affect the whole system. The weight and moment of them all depends entirely on the measure of pleasure or pain they are capable of giving. The following facts may satisfy a modest inquirer. And, in the first place, we are sure,

That no motive whatsoever has any influence until it is perceived; nor any further than the force of it is perceived; that is, until it has made its impression. The thing may be known in theory; but the difference is as great, as perceiving a sword at a distance, and feeling it pierce one's body. Hence, the strength or force of a motive, that is, its power to produce the designed effect, cannot be known, until the effect of it is felt within; and that can never be done, until the movements are at least begun, and the affections in some degree formed.

It is certain also, that no motive, or set of motives, operate equally on all men; nor even on the same man at different times,



and in different situations of mind, as we commonly express it, but only as the general system happens to be disposed at the time.

For the same reason, it frequently happens, that the lowest motives have their full effect, when the highest and most noble make no impression at all; sense is for the most part too strong for reason; present objects, though not able to bear a comparison in other respects, are generally preferred to such as are at a distance, either in time or place.

It is notwithstanding true, that every motive will succeed, of whatsoever kind it is, unless the force of it is destroyed, and its operation marred, by contrary ones. And, on the other side, the operation of any motive, however far advanced, may be destroyed by a contrary impression, provided it is strong enough to excite a contrary motive of equal or superior force.

From all which, and such other observations, it will appear, that human liberty, the true freedom of man, does not, cannot, lie in his being exempted from the influence of every motive; which indeed is a case that cannot possibly happen. The first perception ingrosses the  
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whole man; and certainly will keep possession until driven out by another. And however one may be indifferent to some things which do not affect him either way, it is impossible he can be so upon the whole; and by the prevailing impression, whether from the mind or senses, he will be determined. Perhaps a way of speaking which has prevailed much among scholastic men, ascribing the will to the mind as peculiarly its province, may have misled some into the other conceit; which will very quickly be destroyed, by a reflection which every thing we meet with will confirm, that the mind not only dwells in the body, but acts by its powers.

Again, let the effects of the several motives be as certain and necessary, as any, or all, the laws of mechanism can make them; so long as they are under the management of an agent, who can balance the overbearing powers of one with those of a different kind, and even destroy their operation altogether, by rejecting them, and substituting others in their room, the freedom of the agent suffers nothing at all; and he is to all intents and purposes answerable for every one of their effects, un-

less, after having used all means in his power for subduing the rebel affection, it proves too strong for him. This, I believe, is a case that never happened with man; but, however, it points out to us the proper inquiry for determining the question, viz. How far the human powers, and particularly the sovereignty of the mind over the animal system, extends? And here, indeed, it will be found, that in most men it reaches but a short way: not from any defect in the mind itself, or of any of its natural powers; but for want of due culture and improvement, and the proper means and exercises requisite to raise it to that degree of strength and activity, which is necessary for the effectual discharge of the offices belonging to the place it holds in the human constitution.

We observed elsewhere, that, of all beings within the compass of our observation, the human constitution is most capable of improvement; and what an immense odds there is between an infant, or even a wild man, and a great genius cultivated to the highest perfection. What the Stoics asserted of their wise man, That he only is free, and all the rest slaves, will  
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be found to hold very certainly, however it has been looked on as a paradox. In all the lower degrees, so long as the mind is intangled and overpowered by the animal feelings, until it has the perfect command of the system, and the whole man is engaged, not only in the pursuit, but also the enjoyment of such pleasures as perfect wisdom will justify, there must be something amiss in the constitution; some rebellion fomented in the inferior powers; something, in a word, the man cannot approve of; and therefore some constraint, bondage, or at least some defect of that freedom and liberty which is necessary to constitute a perfect and a happy man.

Upon the whole, then, we may be able to form something of a just notion of the human constitution; and thence form a true judgement of what is *natural* and *unnatural*; words which have been shamefully abused, to palliate, not only the silliest pleasures, but some of the most enormous villanies. It may be justly enough reckoned trifling to observe, that the constitution of any thing is not any one part, however essential, taken separately; when it is so evident, that it takes in all the parts united; and



and united in that very order and subordination of one part to another, which constitutes this peculiar order of beings, and distinguishes it from all the rest. But is it not as trifling to say, that any pleasure, or piece of human conduct, is natural, because it is agreeable to something that belongs to the constitution, when it is utterly inconsistent with the happiness of the whole, and directly opposite to the natural dictates and tendency of the most noble part, and such as the constitution requires should have the leading? However natural, therefore, it is, that mankind should be first under the influence of animal impressions, which will be found all of them harmless, until the mind is or may be improved into such measures of strength; as to regulate and control them; it becomes the most unnatural thing that can be well imagined, for one to continue in a passive subjection to them; as it would be, on the other hand, for any to indulge themselves in what they take to be the proper business of spirits, to the entire neglect of the other essential part of their frame, and without which they cannot be men, but some different kind of beings.

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The same will hold throughout all the degrees of advancement toward perfection; as indeed they are beyond a possibility of being numbered with any exactness. The most remarkable of them are marked out, either by the objects which engage the affections, or by the different kinds and degrees of the affections and passions themselves. Thence are taken the characteristics of the several classes of mankind, according as the several sorts of animal pleasures, or those of the mental and spiritual kind, viz. sensuality, luxury, ambition, and covetousness, on the one hand; or, knowledge and learning, religion and devotion, on the other, happen, in the several degrees of each, to take the leading of the man, and to influence his actions. To rest in any of the lower measures, short of that perfection which the constitution admits of, and is fitted to rise up to, must be in the same degree unnatural: however justly it may be called natural in another sense, as it denotes the course and way which men most readily fall into, by the prevailing of the animal part at their first setting out in the world.

Hence likewise one may be enabled to account for the many glaring inconsistencies,

sistencies, and even palpable contrarieties, which are to be found, not only in different men, but even in the same man in different circumstances, as the animal or the mind takes the direction; and likewise for what is greatly more unaccountable, that vanity and self-approbation which are so very common among the lower classes of mankind, the native spawn of ignorance and inattention. The great variety of contrary impressions from so many different objects, must render man the most fickle inconsistent being, and at the same time the most miserable, harassed and torn asunder, as he is, by such a multitude of different appetites and passions. Every change promises relief, and feeds his vanity, while he knows no better, with the prospect of rest and satisfaction at last; and thus he goes on, until either death cut him short in the unfinished pursuit, or, which is but a rare case, experience and disappointment drive him into just and proper sentiments, and settle him in the calm pursuit and enjoyment of the adequate object of his happiness; where his restlessness and vanity receive a final and full cure at the same time.

And here it is,—in the justness of sentiment,

ment, and in the perfect conquest of all the powers of the animal life into a thorough subjection to the rational mind, that we are to look for the true standard of human perfection, viz. such as the human constitution will admit of, (which perhaps was the meaning of those philosophers who made the nature of the soul to consist in harmony), when the whole complex system is perfectly united in a due subordination of all its parts, according to their several degrees of dignity and usefulness, and formed into a regular and uniform course of action; and the proper interests of every part secured in the general good of the whole, and the enjoyment of its proper life. This, it is evident, can never be done, until such time as the ruling power is sufficiently instructed to give a satisfying decision of the only important question that lies before mankind, viz. What is that *good* in the enjoyment of which man's true happiness lies? and how is it to be attained? and till it give this decision with such evidence and authority as shall engage the heart, form the sentiment, and thereby the whole course of the affections upon it, so as every other thing shall be regulated and kept in



its proper degree of subordination by it.

By this, then, we may be likewise enabled to judge, what must be the proper culture of such a being as man is; and how he must be raised, if ever he is, to his proper degree of perfection. There are innumerable pretenders soliciting, all of them promising pleasure and happiness; and the most worthless of them, as commonly happens, are the most importunate; and, taking the advantage of our ignorance and prepossession, make the most vigorous attacks upon the heart, and commonly the most successful. On these, even the least and lowest of them, the taste and sentiment may be very strongly formed. Nothing less than a thorough acquaintance with the whole fund of enjoyment, or what one may call *the materials of pleasure and happiness*, at least the best and most valuable of them, can enable the mind to adjust the several pretensions, to rectify mistakes and wrong sentiments, and to give the preference where it is due. The only way, then, to improve the mind, must be, to increase its knowledge, by bringing under its observation whatever may merit its regard.

regard. Every new object we have any connection with, makes us sensible of new wants we were not at all sensible of, enlarges the capacity, and gives a taste of pleasure, which we neither had nor could have before we were acquainted with it. Every step of advancement, by opening and enlarging the mind, prepares for another; and thus keeping it continually on the progress, prevents its settling into any such habit as usually produces an obstinate bigotry; which indeed would effectually put an end to all further improvement.

To trace then the rising mind, from its very low beginnings in the first sensations, when the poor creature is hardly conscious of its own being, through the great variety of external and internal impressions and motives, from objects without, and the workings of the active mind within; the multitude of different movements, affections, and passions, occasioned and produced by these, and the continual struggles between the rational and animal powers; to mark out the several steps of improvement and progress toward perfection; the state of mind, or sentiments peculiar to each; how they are formed and altered,

until they arrive at the proper state for taking in and improving the highest enjoyment: this is the proper employment of man; and which will be found to comprehend all that is worth knowing.

## E S S A Y III.

*Of Human Knowledge, its nature, extent, and use.*

**K**nowledge is to the mind what light is to the eye; and it is equally impossible and needless to attempt a definition of either. Those who have experienced it, need none; and those who have not, cannot, by the most elaborate account that can be given of it, ever be brought to any conception of what it really is. It is indeed the inward light of the mind; and, at the same time that it makes every thing visible so far as it reaches, insinuates itself with a secret, but most discernible, consciousness, enabling the man to order the whole business of life with ease and pleasure,

ture, which otherwise would all lie involved in darkness, confusion, and disorder.

When we speak of human knowledge, we must be understood to mean, not only the measure and degree, but that particular kind of it, attained and managed in such a manner, and by such means, as are suited to the constitution and make of a being so circumstanced; and designed by the great creator to answer such purposes; and by which he is distinguished from all other beings, both above and below him. No body looks for vegetation in a stone, nor local motion in a plant or tree; from the most perfect mere animal, we do not expect thought or reflection: every jot as unreasonable it is, to imagine man should understand, and act, in the same manner that spirits exempt from matter do; or, if there are any such, that act in bodies of a more subtile contexture, or organs different from ours. Every created being is confined to certain bounds, which it cannot pass over without ceasing to be what it is, and entering into another order; and to these all the exercises, even of its most noble powers, must be limited.

And yet no being whatsoever, and man  
least



least of all, has any reason to complain, unless he is displeas'd that he was not made an angel: and had he been so, on the same grounds he would have the same reason to complain, that he was not made a god. His present frame, capacity, and powers, are all suited to his situation, and the place he holds in the universe, with the purposes he is design'd to answer there. Were his body more subtile, his senses more acute, or even his mind more detached from his body, and independent on its influence, one may be very sure he would lose greatly more than he could gain, and become so much less able to bear his present place of residence. As he is, he is fitted to answer all the purposes of life, and is completely provided, in the due use of the powers he has, for attaining such measures of knowledge, and thereby rising up to a state of such dignity, as shall set the highest order of created beings very much below his envy.

But as the whole of his success depends on the right improvement of the powers he is endowed with, it must be of great moment to be well acquainted with the nature and extent of these powers, that he may  
neither

neither spend his strength in fruitless stretches after what is beyond his reach, nor stop short of his allotted perfection, by indulging an indolent despondency; both equally unnatural, and prejudicial to the constitution. This we cannot pretend to make any judgement of, without considering somewhat the objects we have to deal with; the several ways by which we do, or may, become acquainted with them; and how far they may, in such views as man can attain of them, be improved for answering the highest and most valuable purposes in life.

The objects of human knowledge are really past numbering, if they may not be called infinite; as they include every thing that can by any means be brought under our observation, till we ascend even to the immensity of the original being; so that to give any tolerable account of them, may, to an uncultivated mind, seem quite impracticable: and this perhaps is the reason, why the bulk of mankind never so much as attempt to reduce the objects of their thoughts into any tolerable order, but take them at random, as they happen to cast up, or as their present occasions require. By this means, the mind, intangled

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as it is in inextricable confusion, becomes utterly incapable of any regular improvement, and loses all the advantage that might be made of what lies so fairly before it.

This sort of confusion is the more inexorable, that things are not thrown before us in a confused huddle or random heap, but disposed by their all-wise former into the exactest and most beautiful order, distributed into certain ranks and classes; so that however innumerable, and beyond human comprehension, the individuals may be, yet one may with great ease, and without any uncommon measures, either of sagacity or application, attain such distinct views, as may answer all the purposes of human life.

We have already had occasion to observe, how the whole universe of beings may be reduced under two great divisions, viz. such as are purely passive, and cannot so much as move, much less act, in the lowest degree, but as they are moved or impelled, nor in any other manner than that impulse directs them; and such as are capable of beginning, continuing, varying, and directing both thought and motion at pleasure, so far as their powers go. The first

first we call *matter*, the other *spirit*; which are commonly, and not without some foundation, conceived and spoke of as two distinct worlds; the *material* and *spiritual*. Between these, and compounded of both, as they are united in man, we observed the rise of another, distinct from both, and of a constitution entirely different from either of them taken separately, which is well known under the names of the *rational* or *moral world*, and ought by no means to be confounded with either of the other two.

The external material world, as it is the proper object of that sort of knowledge which is taken in by the external senses, is most early observed; and the animal part of the man is so framed, that as it cannot subsist a moment but by the assistance of some portions of it; so, where the senses are entire, it is impossible that it can long escape his notice: though at the same time it will readily be allowed, that many parts of it lie too remote, and much of that which lies nearest us, is too minute and subtile, for human observation: but those which are observed do in a manner ingross the whole attention of mankind.



The whole universe of matter is again divided obviously into two parts; the *heavens* and the *earth*; very unequal indeed in themselves, but not so much so to us, who being confined to this earth as our habitation, have almost all our business here. What can be of real use to us in the remotest part of the heavens, lies obvious enough to observation; and accordingly has been improved, and probably may be yet more, for answering divers valuable purposes: but as man was never designed to be either a maker or governor of worlds, he can suffer no loss by having the secret mechanism of the heavens hid from him. Nor is it any wonder it should, when the animal mechanism of his own constitution is so much so. It is earth, fire, air, and water, that man has most to do with, which lie all at hand; and this perhaps was the true reason why the men who called themselves *philosophers*, in former times, made these the elements of all material bodies. The general division into animals, vegetables, and dead matter, is as obvious. The several kinds of animals, inhabitants of earth, air, and water; the different tribes of plants and trees;

trees; the several species of earths, stones, minerals, &c. with their several uses, make the subject of the most useful, as well as entertaining, study, viz. that of natural history.

The world of spirits will be acknowledged, by all who believe there are any spirits, to be as much above the most refined, and curiously organized matter, as active power, a power to excite and modify thought and motion, and to conduct both with counsel and design, is preferable to the finest machinery; nay, as the great creator and former of all things is preferable to his own work. Those nearest us, and which every man has the best, and indeed the only immediate acquaintance with, are our own minds, the spirit which every man has within him: and however, by that vail of flesh which every man carries about him, he is cut off from all direct and immediate communion with all the other orders of spirits, and closely connected with the material world; yet is he not confined there, but has a way left him by which he may attain the knowledge and acquaintance even of the Father of spirits; and thereby acquire a capacity

and fitness for another way of living, without that dependence on sense and bodily feeling, which we have in our present state, for the most spiritual parts of our knowledge and enjoyments.

The mixed world we mentioned, made up of the actions and passions of spirits dwelling in flesh, is the great, and in effect the only, medium, by which one can be enabled to attain this excellent state of life. It is indeed a kind of low image, that is, an image suited to our present low condition, of the state of the spiritual world; and as it may be, and in fact frequently is, entirely detached from it, or, which is the same thing, from him who is the substance of it; the great author and proprietor of all things, it is properly a world of man's making and managing, and made up of an almost infinite variety of parts. For though all men are originally of the same make and constitution; yet as, among the whole multitude of them, there are hardly found two whose features, shape, and complexion, are exactly alike; so the difference of tempers, genius, way of living, stations, and worldly circumstances, of affections, passions, powers of body or  
mind,

mind, manners, customs, and habits, &c. is yet more various. The several inventions of men, manual crafts, arts, sciences, forming and managing societies, great and small, afford matter of endless speculation; and the more necessary, that there is hardly any one thing, however enormous, or however trifling, which may not be improved to lead forward the mind to the highest and most valuable knowledge, and thereby to that perfection and happiness which it is so much its interest to pursue.

Among all those numerous particulars which compose these distinct worlds, there is not any one falls under man's observation, which does not at the same time put him upon a variety of inquiries about it: How far it resembles, or differs from, such other things as he is acquainted with; how it stands related to them in place, or with respect to proximity or distance; if it is dependent on any of them, or entirely detached from them; what properties or powers it is possessed of; whether peculiar to itself, or in common with others; such as cannot be separated without destroying its constitution, or so loose and adventitious, that their absence or presence makes no alteration there; what



what effects are produced by its different applications to other things, and especially to one's self, whether for sustenance, improvement, or actual pleasure; and how it comes by such properties and powers: in a word, whatever one can want information of, or about which a question can be put, or any doubt moved, are all of them proper objects of knowledge. All these, and the particular inquiries that may be made concerning them, will be better understood by considering the several ways and means by which they are brought under our observation and perception. Whatever lies beyond, goes for nothing, and can no more answer any purpose to us, than what has no being at all.

We may, I think, take it for granted, from what we had occasion to observe on the human constitution, that the mind is so far from being originally provided with any fund of knowledge, either ideas, as they are called, or principles, that it cannot so much as be conscious of its own being, until the impressions made on the appropriated parts of the animal system excite the correspondent perceptions: and  
there

there we must fix the rise and foundation of all real knowledge, through all the steps and degrees of it, up to the highest and most sublime that can be attained by man. And whatever cannot, by proper and immediate connections, be traced back to this source, and unless the impresson and perception can be produced on which it was founded, we may boldly pronounce that it is fantastic and delusive: as, on the other hand, whosoever will make a just estimate of human knowledge, must begin where nature does, and carefully mark out every step that is taken in the progress, without ever losing sight of the very low beginnings whence the highest flights must be taken.

As this, then, must be allowed a fundamental position, That man can know nothing but what has some how or other been brought under his observation, nor any further, nor in any other manner, than it has been brought under it; so, on the other hand, by whatsoever means we can be enabled to perceive any kind of being, or any particulars about it, so far our knowledge may go. But as there are very different ways of doing this, according to the different nature and constitution of the objects we deal

deal with; and all the views and means must be such as suit our constitution, and are within the reach of those powers and organs the author of them has given us; the measures and degrees of our knowledge must be very different, and some things must lie quite beyond our reach.

The first objects that fall under observation are such as are necessary for the support of the animal system; and it is some time before the child regards any thing else: such as affect the eye with their glittering appearance are commonly the next; such as give pleasure, either by relieving some little felt uneasiness, or otherwise diverting, make great impressions; and such likewise as give sensible pain. These have quickly their native effect, make the correspondent movements, and thereby engage the whole attention, and make the whole business of the little creature. As he comes to be acquainted with more objects, especially the actions and ways of men, he more fully exerts his natural talent of imitation, and attempts to make out a sort of images of every thing he sees, until by degrees the mind and body ripen together into a capacity for the common and peculiar

liar business and enjoyments of the human life. — These are children, one will say, and their whole conduct is engaged in childish things; what is that to philosophers and wise men? It is true; but in them, and perhaps in them only, is human nature to be seen unsophisticated and undisguised; and the greatest and wisest man, however his acquaintance with things must be greater, and thereby the circle, both of his pleasures and business, enlarged; yet if he acts naturally, he proceeds exactly on the same plan, the same natural principles, and the same method of procedure.

This uniformity of procedure is founded on something in the human constitution, which deserves to be carefully noted, and kept continually in view, viz. That all the natural functions of the united human system are strictly necessary, such as the man has no more power, either to hinder or forward, than he has over his own constitution. He may contribute much either to cherish or to destroy it, and thereby may render the exercise of its several functions more vigorous or languishing; but so long as the constitution stands, it will affect and be affected, re-



ceive and make impressions and impulses, in the same natural and necessary manner, that we see what we call the several instincts of birds and beasts lead each kind into the same uniform invariable course; that is, according to their several constitutions, and the influence of the general mechanism of the heavens.

That all the animal functions in man are thus even and uniform, common experience, as well as the reason of the thing, makes altogether undeniable. The several external senses receive each of them their appropriated impressions; the eye can no more be restrained from seeing, nor the ear from hearing, on the application of their proper objects, than the stomach, and appropriated parts, can be controlled in digesting and distributing the proper aliment. It is the same in all the other impressions on the several parts of the body rightly disposed; each of them will make its proper movement; and all of them will have their correspondent feelings and perceptions, which the strongest and most active mind cannot help being conscious of, unless, perhaps, in some few cases, where the organs and immediate instruments or means of perception are intensely

tenfely engaged in other employments; and according to the meafure and degree of the feeling and perception, the man muft mind them; that is, judge of them, and remember them, whether he will or not. Not as if a man minded and registered in his memory every perception alike; but according to the force of the impref-  
 fion, and the meafure of pleasure or pain, they will every one of them command their proper room and regard there.

And hence; I imagine, we may be enabled to make fome tolerably confiftent account of that common, yet very myfterious, thing, which goes under the name of *belief*, or *believing*; well known to every body, but which has been found, by the very different accounts of it, to be understood but by very few. All are agreed, and experience determines the agreement to be juft, that it is no more in one's power to believe or not, in any question before him, than it is to feel, or not to feel, the impulfes of external objects, and the impref-  
 fions made by them on the animal fy-  
 ftem: and fo it muft be, for this good rea-  
 fon, that belief is nothing elfe but that  
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whole united system, which is the natural result of all the impressions, perceptions, and consequential movements, internal and external, laid together. As the original impressions are not only different, but often contrary to one another, where matters are regularly and orderly carried, these must all be compared and adjusted by the ruling mind, and a new impression made on the inward sense, bringing the whole system to agree in one, even, uniform movement; which is the true occasion of that inward pleasure and satisfaction which men feel on the clear discovery of truth, on being settled in a firm belief of it; especially after having been confused and distracted by contrary impressions and feelings.

I said, belief was more properly expressed by the state of the whole united system, than by that of the mind, to obviate what, I apprehend, is a mistake, which has brought along with it some very bad consequences, viz. that believing is an act of the pure intellect; which seems naturally to infer, that the animal system has no share in it. This is so far from being true, that, whatever may be the state of the human soul when separated from the body,

so

ſo long as the union continues, there neither is, nor can be, any ſingle action of any kind, exerted by the moſt abſtracted and ſpeculative mind, without either the influence or concurrence of all the eſſential parts of the ſyſtem. It is true, a man may opine, and in his calm moments, that is, when he is free from paſſionate feelings, may perſuade himſelf there is reaſon on one ſide, and perhaps that he really believes the thing; but until the impreſſions are ſtrong enough to engage the heart, and to raiſe and maintain ſuch movements in the animal ſyſtem, as overpower all contrary ones, and reconcile the whole man to all the known conſequences of it, he never will believe.

And hence one may adjust the meaning of theſe common expreſſions of *rational* and *unreaſonable faith* or *belief*; and when it can be ſaid to be either the one or the other; which are not ſo to be underſtood as if reaſon, or, if one pleaſes, the mind, on the appearance of good reaſon, could at all times command belief at pleaſure, or yet that a man could ever believe any thing while reaſon appears againſt it; but it very frequently happens that man acts with-  
out



out any regard to belief at all; very frequently with a sort of half belief, and often in a direct opposition to belief. In all these cases, and, perhaps, these will take in the whole of most mens actions, the mind is in a manner wholly passive, and forced to give way to the tumultuous or irregular movements of the animal system. But there are a number of cases, wherein the mind, not being thoroughly informed, is either seduced by appearances, or bribed into the party by present pleasure; in which case commonly what is wanting in just reason to found a firm belief, is abundantly supplied by stiffness and obstinacy; and as the passions are there thoroughly engaged, and have got the command of the whole system, reason is entirely lost on them, and can make no impression, until the violent passionate movements are somehow abated, or turned into another channel. Nor can belief ever be called rational, until the whole man, and every movement of the system, is formed on the truth of things, and every power regulated by the just decisions and consequential impressions of the well-informed mind. But until the mind is thoroughly informed,

informed,

informed, or, which is the same thing, has perceived and balanced every impression from objects without, in which the man, or the question in view, has any concern, and has strength enough to make a new impression and suitable movements and feelings in the general system, he will either float in a wavering uncertainty, or the ruling passion or movements which have the ascendant, will create belief such as it is; and yet so stubborn, as hardly to leave room for the least feelings of remorse, or any contrary movement.

From all this it will appear, that what we call *belief*, and, in one view of it, *faith*, stands much on the same bottom with other habits or customs commonly acknowledged to be such. But then there will likewise be found a very great odds. Both are founded in certain constant and continued movements in the system; but belief consists in such as are purely and properly natural, and arising so directly from the constitution, that the nearer that approaches its true and regular pitch, so much stronger and irresistible these impressions and movements are, which create that kind at least of it which is regular and genuine, and  
which

which only deserves the name ; whereas all other habits are acquired by repeated acts ; and so far as they are inconsistent with those movements and feelings which constitute right belief, will be destroyed and rooted out by the perfection of the constitution, and cannot subsist any longer than they are supported by ignorance, error, and folly. Custom is, indeed, with great justice, called a *second* nature ; but still it is no more ; and to confound it with what is the direct and immediate result of the constitution, is so to confound all things, that one shall not be able to say one thing is more natural or unnatural, truer or false, than another.

By this likewise we may be able to judge what that evidence is which is the ground of all right belief, and whence it is that it should appear so differently to different persons. As the impressions made by the same objects are more strong or faint, the perception of them must be so likewise ; and therefore just so far as any thing can be brought under one's observation, no matter by what means, so much evidence there will be. And as the means of perception, or by which any thing is brought  
under

under observation, are various and diverse, and all do not affect the constitution with the same strength and vigour, thence arise different kinds and degrees of evidence; and consequently of belief, persuasion, or assurance, in the same proportion.

Man is so made, that no material thing can be brought under his observation, nor can he have any perception of matter, but by the mediation of his bodily organs, which go under the name of *senses*; and just as many ways as matter, or any part or parcels of it, can be applied to these, so many different means or mediums of perception will he have. They are commonly reduced to five, or rather four of them only have particular names, while all the rest, which are vastly numerous, and many of them as different from one another as these, are left under the general name of *feelings* or *sensations*, distinguished only by their effects on the body, as pleasurable or painful, and as they affect the several parts of it external or internal; whence they take their particular denominations. Hence, even on this cursory view, it will appear, that it is not the objects themselves, much less the substance



or inward essence of them, that we perceive, at least in the first instance; but the impressions they make, or rather the feelings occasioned by the several motions of the animal system; by which the mind is at once excited, and furnished with the means of making and obtaining further knowledge of them, and thereby making further advances in all necessary and useful knowledge.

It requires scarce any attention at all to satisfy one, that all the feelings which go under that general name in the several parts of the body, are no more than the natural and necessary consequences and effects of the different applications that are made to them of the different parts of matter about us; and all the knowledge we can thereby have of them is no more than this, How they affect such a constitution as ours? It is true, we take occasion from these feelings to mark the several parcels or systems of matter which occasion them; and to distinguish them one from another, by what we call their *qualities*, hot or cold, hard or soft, &c. and such and such tastes or smells; while it is abundantly evident, we can mean no more than that they appear

pear so to us, and make such impressions on the animal system; while at the same time they would appear quite otherwise to beings of a different constitution, as of necessity they must affect them in quite another manner.

The perceptions we have of objects by hearing or seeing, are yet more remote, as the impressions are not made directly and immediately on the appropriate organs, but by the intervention of other parts of matter, air and light; without which, all the informations we receive by these senses, and by which the greatest part of our knowledge is conveyed, would be entirely lost; and, along with it, all the pleasure arising from the beautiful colours, figures, or arrangement and position of material objects, and the wonderful variety of sounds; by which, not only objects are distinguished, and notice given of their nearness or distance, but the greatest pleasures and most valuable interests of life are carried on.

By this natural view of the origin of human knowledge, it will appear likewise, that no object can be apprehended by one simple perception; but the several proper-

ties, or what we call *powers* and *qualities*, perceived as they are by different means and organs, must be first apprehended separately; and it requires judgement, as well as observation and experience, to lay them together with any exactness: and as it frequently happens, that some one or other of them may be neglected or overlooked, thence arises at best, imperfection, and frequently confusion, in our knowledge, even of such things as lie nearest our hands; nor is there any thing in the nature of those qualities we have perceived to lead us into the knowledge of any other qualities, until an opportunity offers of their making such impressions on us, or on something which we have under our eye, as obliges us to observe them.

It is from this superficial way of judging by appearances, that a great number of things, which might be of great use to us, lie by neglected, and in a manner entirely overlooked, so soon as the short-lived admiration raised by the first impressions, is over. The colours, shape, bulk, of almost any thing, will touch, perhaps very sensibly, while the object is new; but will quickly be jostled out by impressions  
which

which more vigorously affect us, and which thereby appear to be of greater importance to us; and according to the strength and continuance of them, put the man on further inquiries; how they appear in all the different views he is capable of taking them in; how they feel to all the several senses, or parts of the body, where the experiment can be made; how they affect us in the several points of nearness or distance; and what are the consequences of the different ways of applying them to other objects, either as they stand in nature, or may be applied by human skill; their continuance and duration; and how they may be preserved and destroyed; their powers increased or abated; and thus, upon the whole, improved to the best advantage. On these, and such inquiries, is founded, not only the whole practice of agriculture, and the manual crafts, but all that is valuable in any branch of knowledge whatsoever, the profoundest science, and deepest mysteries of philosophy not excepted.

It is in these sorts of reviews, and ordering and sorting the several impressions and perceptions, that man remembers, that the  
natural



natural power of imaging is exerted, which is at once the great mean of promoting and carrying on human knowledge, and gives the true distinguishing characteristic of it; that is, the knowledge of *such beings* as have not, cannot have, any access to direct immediate perceptions of the internal essence, substance, or constitution of any one thing in nature, even of such as are nearest at hand, and they are the most intimately acquainted with, their own minds and spirits, and the matter about them.

There needs no laborious reasoning to instruct the truth and certainty of this assertion; there is a much nearer way, and the only one which can carry conviction in it, viz. that every one make the trial for himself, in that which he fancies himself best acquainted with. He will readily find several distinct and sensibly different perceptions of the different ways he is affected by it, either separately, or as it is conjoined and united with something else; and by carefully comparing, and laying these together, he forms an image of, he knows not what, invested with properties and powers, such as he has from time to time perceived; and perhaps may be led on

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to image to himself the manner how these effects may be produced. But still it is but an image, unless the thing itself can be brought directly under his observation; which, at least in our present state, we are sure can never be done.

I said, the man forms for himself an image or representation of he knows not what; not as if he was in any uncertainty, whether the thing he means to image or represent to himself, has any real existence; the certain and infallible perception he has of its appearances and impressions, and what he feels with the most intimate consciousness following upon them, leave him no manner of room to entertain any doubt about that: but what the thing is in itself absolutely considered, and how it would appear to a being who could by one intuitive view see into its inward constitution, the man cannot say. He knows, or may know, how it affects himself in every circumstance; and further he has no manner of concern with it.

This is evidently the case in all our ideas, as they are called, of substances, or particular beings, and of the several collections and combinations of them, as they  
are

are connected in their natural state, or are so by human art and skill. They are all of them no other than the images of things we thus frame every man for himself; and are as different as the several perceptions of them; and the different ways of laying them together, are in different persons. But this power of imaging stops not here; but by comparing, compounding, dividing, increasing, diminishing, and thus endlessly varying the original images, new ones are framed, which never had, or perhaps never will have, any existence; and by the assistance of these, a sort of images are formed, of such things, as either by their subtilty, or remöteness, lie entirely out of the reach of human observation. Of this sort are all the invisible causes of the several alterations we observe on the face of the earth, throughout the different seasons of the year; the whole business of vegetation, production of animals great and small, metals, minerals, &c. Nay this power of imaging has been often, and perhaps yet is, very unduly extended to the causes and principles of thought and motion, such beings as are truly and properly spiritual, yea even to the Father of spirits, the original being himself;

himself; and is the true spring of all the idolatry and image-worship that ever has appeared in the world.

On the right management of this faculty of imaging, the whole business of what we call *design* and *contrivance* in the management and conduct of life has its entire dependence; and by the neglect of it are occasioned, not only the reveries of madmen, and the many foolish and impracticable projects by which multitudes have been ruined, but likewise all the miscarriages of common life, while the creatures of fancy appear so like realities, that they impose upon the unexperienced and unwary with such powerful and pleasing delusions, that it is the hardest thing in the world to undeceive them, until it be too late; that is, until dear-bought experience convince them they are imposed upon by the creatures of their own fancy, and images which had no being but what themselves had given them through mistake and delusion.

And yet it is to this same power of making images of things we never saw, that the far greatest part, even of our real and most useful knowledge, owes its birth.



Confined as every man is to this earth, and most men to a very narrow corner of it, there are but very few things that can fall under any one's direct and immediate observation, and this defect can only be supplied by information and instruction, whereby all the observations that have been made through the several ages of the world may be communicated, so as any one may make his advantage of them; one of the peculiar excellencies of mankind, and perhaps the highest he has above other animals; the highest, we may well say, that any creature of his make and constitution can boast of.

# E S S A Y S

On several of the DOCTRINES of

## R E V E L A T I O N.

### 1. *Propriety.*

**P**ropriety of sentiment, and propriety of action, are so nearly related, that the one cannot be understood without the other.

What action is, needs no defining. The same cannot be said of sentiment. The word is common, but not so commonly understood; neither can it be, without just views of the human frame and constitution.

To attain this, it will not be enough to *say*, that this or the other affection, passion, or instinct, are found in all mankind, unless it can be instructed that they really are so; nor even then, unless it can be shown, how they naturally and necessarily arise out of the whole human constitution taken together.

This is evident from a very obvious truth, That man is a compounded being, and compounded of very different parts; each of them designed to answer particular purposes. In their union, and subordination one to another, the human constitution consists. And when the sentiments and actions are exactly conformed to this established order, then, and then only, can they be said to be either natural or proper; and when any part or particular system breaks out of this order, and attempts to act singly, or beyond its proper sphere, the sentiment formed upon it, and the action produced by it, must be improper and unnatural.

There are two very different senses in which any sentiment, or course of action, may, with propriety, be said to be natural; either when it results so directly from the human constitution, or is so every way agreeable to the order established there, that it can by no means be eradicated, but is always found equally strong in every man, whatever alteration may be made in his circumstances or situation. And such is the desire of happiness.

When the nature of happiness comes to be distinctly understood, it will be found

to be, I do not say pleasure, but being perfectly pleased. And as mens tastes and sentiments vary, so do their pleasures. And hence arise their different pursuits, while their ultimate intentions are the same.

These sort of cravings and desires are what they call *instincts*; like those of mere animals, all invariable.

It is not barely our life, nor even, strictly speaking, ourselves, that by this instinct we are influenced to love; but the comforts and enjoyments of life: and this may be so strong, that we may properly enough be said to love them better than ourselves.

There is another course which may be called natural, and which takes in every thing, good or bad, which can by any means get strength enough to form the heart upon them; and some of these may arise so naturally, and without any pains or labour of ours, that it may be doubted whether they do not belong to the first.

That which bids fairest, after the animal sensations and appetites, is *sympathy*; which, like all other passions and affections, depends not on our will or pleasure. But as that, as well as all the rest, depends entirely on the sentiments or inward



ward feelings of the heart; and as these are very different in different men, and formed upon the more or less perfect dispositions of the human system, they can never be reckoned among invariable instincts.

Where the sentiment is formed upon the right disposition of the complex human system, it produces that agreeable temper which is called *humanity*; and where it is perfect, produces perfect sympathy. But this is seldom or never found in the present state of mankind. We enter warmly into the joys and sorrows of those we love; to strangers our sympathy is more cool; and superstitious zeal entirely destroys it: and there are numberless well-known cases, where the sentiments may be wrought up to such a pitch of brutal insensibility and savageness, as that the most excruciating tortures of our fellow-creatures give the most exquisite pleasure. Upon the whole, sympathy in all its forms will be found to keep pace with our love to our neighbour; and is either a certain modification of it, or a necessary effect produced by it.

No man can love or hate what or when he will, or so much as regulate the degree  
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of either. He must love what pleases him, and hate the contrary. And according to the degrees of pleasure or pain, such must his love or aversion be; and the degrees are innumerable, but the same necessary passions in every degree.

But men as well as children may be pleased with trifles. With these life begins: and however one object may drive out another, it is but an exchange of trifles, unless one could fix upon what is perfectly good; i. e. such as is fitted to give perfect pleasure: and thence it has been the business of the wisest men to find out what they called *the chief good*, such as could make one happy in the want, and even in the loss, of every thing else; i. e. such as perfectly suits the human constitution, so as to raise and maintain perfect pleasure.

Of the two grand sects of ancient philosophers, the Stoics took it too high, and the Epicureans as much too low. The defect of the first lay in not distinguishing between absolute and limited perfection and happiness; that is, such as the constitution and circumstances of the being who wanted to be happy will admit of.

Being

Being, or life, is but the substratum, the subject on which pleasure or enjoyment is grafted; and is not simply good or desirable for itself, but for the pleasure or enjoyment which may attend it. But on the perfection of life the capacity of enjoyment depends; and hence, so long as there is life there is hope.

## 2. *The Knowledge of God.*

**I**T is a true observation, that all that we can be taught of God, so long as the evidence stands only on metaphysical reasoning, makes but a faint impression; and that to fix and continue it, there is a necessity for such an historical account of his works and ways, as may exemplify to us the powers and perfections which we are taught to attribute to him. It is thus we form the characters of men whom we have never seen; and thus God himself hath taught us to form our conceptions of him.

But when we form our characters of men, we have an idea of a being well known to us, and distinguished from others by a particular name. There are  
men

men who profess to have as clear and distinct an idea of a spirit as of any part of matter. If any have such a talent, sure every one has not. All that we know of that sort of beings, must take its rise from what we feel in ourselves, and the perfections and powers we are conscious of. We feel that we think, in all the different forms of it; and, to a certain degree, we can do what we will. But what this same spirit or mind is which perceives, judges, wills, and exerts these degrees of power, we can conceive no farther, than that it is not such a being as gross sensible matter; and all our accounts of its essence, or of the being which acts and possesses these known properties, consist in negatives, immaterial, invisible, &c.

Did we know what being and life are, we might possibly form some satisfying conception, though nothing that could deserve the name of an idea; and here we are taught to fix our last resource, by the *name* that God hath chosen for himself, and which distinguishes him from every other being, JEHOVAH, which is best rendered by, *He that is*,—the possessor and proprietor of *being*; and, consequently,



of all measures and degrees of perfection. The nearer we can raise our conceptions to this, which always implies life, and all its powers, the nearer will we approach to right conceptions of that incomprehensible being, who hath condescended to give an authentic history of his works and ways, by which he hath discovered himself to us in his true character, and the perfections which belong to him.

However we may be forced to apprehend the divine perfections separately, or in different views, they are all one in the divine essence. Perfect *being* is perfect *power*; and perfect power cannot be conceived without absolute perfection subsisting in the most perfect manner.

### 3. *Faith.*

**F**Aith, as it stands described and recommended in the Bible, is a firm and assured confidence in God, founded in the belief of the testimony he has given us in the history of the Bible; where we have his true character, instructed by sensible documents, his works and ways with men;

men; particularly in the provision he has made, and the comprehensive promise and grant he hath given, of eternal life.

This is rendered credible by the perfection, the faithfulness, and power, of the promiser; but especially by the pledge he has given of his wonderful grace and love to man in Jesus Christ, who is the foundation and surety of the promise.

This security is recommended, as a good ground of confidence, by the Spirit and power of God, and all the fullness of life being lodged in his hand; and as they appear to have been lodged there for this very purpose, that he might convey the promised blessing, spirit and life to us, this finishes the assurance.

Hence it is obvious, that faith, or trust and confidence in God, must begin at Jesus Christ, the sure, and the only sure, foundation on which it can stand. And where faith in Christ is, there naturally and necessarily our faith and hope in God follow upon it.

4. *Views of God.*

**A**Mong all the difficulties we meet with in the matters of religion, the great one, and which lays a foundation for all the rest, is forming proper apprehensions of the invisible being. The character of God we may, with some satisfaction, form, in the same manner in which we form the characters of men, viz. by the reports we hear of them; but these have little effect, unless verified to our observation by facts, that is, by such works and ways as uniformly instruct the character. Thus we may form proper conceptions of what are called *divine attributes*, wisdom, power, goodness, &c.; and even something of the immensity of his being and omnipresence: but after all, these are but modes of being; and though they make a general character, unless we have a determinate substance or person to connect them with, we are at a loss where to apply it. This has been the foundation of all the misapprehensions of the Deity; while men were driven either to fancy him like themselves, or to run into

confusion

confusion inextricable, not knowing where to find him, and worshipping an unknown God. This was in some measure remedied to the ancient patriarchs by personal appearances; but with this disadvantage, that these appearances gave a handle, either to conceive of him as a man, however distinguished by extraordinary powers, or made it hard to distinguish him from an ordinary angel; the creator from the creature.

This was in great measure remedied to the old Israelites by the tabernacle and temple, and the glory which appeared there: by which he was effectually distinguished from every creature; and they knew certainly where to find and apply to him on every occasion.

But these were only shadows of heavenly things: and all difficulties are removed in Jesus Christ alone. Though we can form no proper conceptions of that God whom no man hath seen, nor can see; yet we can easily conceive of his uniting himself to man, as he has done in him: so that where-ever Jesus is, there we may be sure to find God. And thus Christ is at once the temple, and the priest intercessor, by whom, and by whose ministry, we may at all times approach



approach God in as distinct a manner, as if we saw him with our eyes, or he were sensibly present. For he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father; and no man can come unto God, or so much as know him to any purpose, but by him.

5. *The Original and Progress of Knowledge.*

I Know not how it has been taken for granted, that in the first ages of the world men were no better than modern savages; and indeed great pains have been taken to show how they were gradually civilized and polished into the excellent beings they are now found. That savages have been, and still are, will admit of no dispute. But from the beginning, we have good reason to believe, that men were not so. The poets took the matter right; and they were the greatest and most learned men. All agree, that in the beginning there was what is called *the Golden age*: and there they image such a state of mankind as could never have entered into a reasonable man's head, if a foundation had not been given by some old tradition handed down to them;

as the state they describe is almost as unnatural as the supposition of men and other animals rising out of the mud of the Nile.

Moses has given us the rise of this tradition, and his account of the true origin and original state of mankind is so natural, that many, nay most learned men, have taken it for granted, that natural reason could have discovered it; but contrary to all the reason and experience in the world. An experiment indeed could never be made, because the knowledge, or the tradition of the creation, and of God, who made all, has been in the world since ever there were men in it, and subsisted long by tradition before there was any philosopher to reason upon it.

It hath never been questioned, that all the wisdom of the first ages consisted in certain facts, handed down in the natural channel of tradition, from one age to another, which the conceited Greeks called the *barbaric philosophy*; and which their successors, the moderns, have rejected as no philosophy at all, because it stands not on rational arguments and demonstrations, but only upon the authority of those who maintained the tradition,  
which

which is rejected with disdain, as unworthy of a philosopher.

It is a problem worth discussing, What state the world would be in if there were no knowledge left in it but what stands on reason and demonstration? As the knowledge of every fact which does not fall under our own observation must be rejected, and reason can discover none, there would be very little left for the wisest of men to found their reasoning and demonstration upon, and the world would soon be sunk into the abyss of ignorance and barbarity.

How such a foolish position ever came to get footing among men pretending to reason, can be no way accounted for, but by the enormous pride of those who called themselves *philosophers*, and who, as they pretended to discover the causes of every event, despised the way of information and tradition, to which the meanest of the vulgar had as easy access as the most learned; which yet every one must see is as natural, and greatly more so, than what they pretend to. And what makes this yet more strange is, that the far greatest part even of their knowledge stood on facts, which they

they neither did, nor could know any thing of, but by tradition and information.

The Greeks originally had no knowledge among them but what they received from the traditions they gathered up among other nations. It was many ages downward ere they attempted to reason on these points. Travelling was their course of education; and they who picked up the best or most authentic traditional facts were called *wise men*. And by the obscure accounts we have of these traditions, it appears, that there was more religion in them, and of course more perfect morality, than ever the philosophers could make out. But disdaining to receive facts which they could not account for, they tried to reason upon them, and reasoned themselves and their followers into the profoundest ignorance of God, and of what they had either to hope or fear from him. And one who is reckoned the wisest among them, is extolled to this day among philosophers, for bringing down philosophy from heaven to earth; that is, for rejecting religion, and the worship of God, and setting up what is called *morality* in its room.

Thus the primitive facts, and in them



all that was worth knowing, was lost; and so entirely, that the utmost efforts the greatest geniuses could make, instead of enlightening, contributed only more to confound and perplex the world, until the original facts were again revived by the propagation of the gospel.

In the beginning of Christianity, this was done in the plainest and simplest manner, the gospel consisting only in a few plain facts, and their native consequences, which needed neither learning nor genius, until they fell into the hands of philosophers. Then indeed, by their refining upon them, they were served in the same manner as the original ones were by their predecessors; and every fact, and every consequence, must now be tried at the bar of what philosophers call *reason*.

#### 6. *Nosce teipsum.*

THE knowledge of one's self has been in all ages the most necessary, as being of all others the most useful; in so much that it may be said with a good degree of assurance, that all the folly, miscarriages, and disasters of every kind, have been

been owing, either to the want or imperfection of it.

Many attempts have been made, some on one part, some on another, of what is called *human nature*, or *the frame and constitution of mankind*: and in the issue, some have exalted it to such a measure of innate dignity and worth, as should seem to come little short of perfection, excepting only the limitation they are forced to find in point of power; while others, on this necessary limitation, and the narrowness of human powers in every view, have sunk man into a very abject and pitiable condition. Instances enough are to be found on both sides, and consequences charged and retorted of a very interesting nature: And it will be hard to say, though both are dangerous, which of the two are most so.

That enormous measure of self-esteem naturally arising from the flattering scheme, is apt to betray the mind into a contempt, and consequently an utter neglect, of the absolutely necessary means of attaining just notions of such things as men are most concerned to know. By this means, they are betrayed into the most dangerous

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mistakes,

mistakes, and a most ruinous course of folly. On the other hand, the most dangerous consequence of taking our measures too low, will be, the weakening that laudable ambition of excelling in every perfection; while, in the mean time, it leaves the mind open to entertain all the instruction and assistance that may offer themselves. So that one would think this last the much safer, though the least showy and agreeable view.

It might be expected, that a subject, which every one carries the original of in himself, should neither be a very intricate, nor difficult study; that there should be no more necessary than to look into one's self, to see how things stand at home, and compare them with what is to be observed in others. But neither the one nor the other cast up so readily as one might reasonably imagine. We are generally so much interested in what lies without us, that we have neither leisure nor inclination to look within: and the ways of men, though all acting from the same original principle, are so various, that all the observation we can make of them, and the experience we can acquire, are found to go but a very short way.

We enter into this world we know not  
how,

how, in such a low, indigent, and absolutely dependent state, as is enough to hide pride for ever from our eyes. All our attainments and improvements come from without, and are one way or other acquired; so that all we can call our own is a capacity of improvement, and of growing up toward the highest measure of perfection our frame will admit of. And when we have acquired all that can be attained in a natural way, little more can be said, than that we are made wiser than the beasts of the field.

Our animal powers are plainly short of many of theirs: and though we find something in ourselves by which we can perceive, think, and reason, with a consciousness of what we are about, which can only be the work of what we have learned to call a *spirit*; yet we can hardly stir a step without feeling the narrow extent of these intellectual powers. Though we feel ourselves compounded of what we call *matter* and *spirit*, we know not, we cannot know, what either of them is, how they are united, and how they act upon one another in such a perfect concert as we find they do. This is another very humbling consideration;



tion; and which, one would think, should effectually mortify the pride of human understanding; especially when we look about us, and find ourselves incapable of arriving at the thorough knowledge of any one thing, but only that such things there are, and that some of their most obvious properties or powers are perceived by us.

When we come to what is the proper use of reason and understanding, which is, to consider what is our proper business in this world, — what man can carry it any farther, (until he learns it from those who were in the world before him), than the satisfying his constitutional cravings and appetites; or acquiring what may be called an artificial way of living, by imitating his elders; or being instructed by them in what they call *the mistress-science*, the doctrine of morals; which indeed is, or may be, very well calculated for a present world, if they have only as much discerning as to know what is good and profitable for men?

But there is a very different kind of beings, which some how or other have been obtruded upon all the world, to account for the rise and original of which, when  
seriously

seriously fet about, will be found a very difficult task.

That there are certain invisible powers, immensely above the human, will readily occur to any who has but an ordinary degree of reflection. A reflection too will as naturally occur, that we are at their mercy; which cannot but produce a sort of superstitious fear of we know not what, and which we are very naturally led to lodge in those things which we observe to have the greatest influence, the sun, moon, and stars, clouds, wind, &c. And if ever there was a time when the powers of the material heavens were understood, and proper observations made on their natural effects, mens worship and adoration was like enough to rest there; and there it appears to have rested, until that valuable piece of knowledge was lost, and men came to worship, as a great part of the world do even to this day, they know not what.

And hence very naturally arises the fairest discovery that can be made of the weakness of the human intellectual powers. There are but two ways of bringing it to the trial; either by what they have done, or by what they can, or may be rendered capable

capable of doing. The last has been represented as impossible to bring to any absolute certainty; nor indeed is it needful, since the other, as we find it, gives, if not demonstration, yet very satisfactory evidence. It will readily be acknowledged by impartial judges a very wrong way, to take our measures from those people who have the Bible in their hands. It is only in infants or untaught men that we are to look for pure nature. All tradition must be excluded. But we need not insist on this precaution. If we take the world as we find it, how many nations are there of perfect savages, who yet have lived in society many thousands of years? Sure their natural powers must be very low, when in all that time they could not find out how to make their best of what they had among their hands.

But if we should allow that these are hardly men; which yet is by no means the case; for it is found that their capacities, when properly applied, are nothing short of our own: but supposing it to be so, how many nations have been, and how many are there at this day, nothing inferior to the most knowing and civilized,  
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so far as relates to a present life, and this sensible world, who yet, in all spiritual and religious respects, are as ignorant and brutish as the veriest savages? What conclusion can carry more evidence than this, that had mankind been left to themselves, they had never entertained a thought beyond the present state of things as they appear to our senses? All besides must have been involved in impenetrable darkness.

But it will be objected, That all, even the most barbarous and savage nations, have some notion of such a being as we call *God*, and of some state of existence beyond the grave; that there is a substantial difference between good and evil, right and wrong, which we call *virtue* and *vice*; and have accordingly a conscience accusing or excusing. As to the last, it may very well be; nor can it be otherwise when they are capable of observing what is good and profitable to men. But as their notions of this last have been, and must be, very different, according to the difference of their situations, the standard of virtue and vice must be very different; and patriotism, or national interest,



generally has swallowed up all other virtues.

As to their notions of the existence of a God, and of the worship and regard due to the being they called so, and their notions of a future state, it cannot be doubted that they have always been in the world; and so strongly rooted there, that the utmost pitch of ignorance and barbarity have never been able quite to eradicate them. But then the question will be, How they came there? That human reason and understanding never produced them, there is this strong presumption; that the worship, or more properly the means of placating, or preserving the favour of their deities, viz. sacrifices, is the greatest absurdity in the eye of reason that can well be imagined, and was exploded as such by the wisest philosophers. And thence it will be obvious to conclude, that the principle on which they depended, viz. the knowledge of a supreme governor of the world, came likewise from some other quarter.

It is true indeed, beyond contradiction, that man, with respect to the whole both of his principles and practice, is entirely formed upon imitation and example, and really is  
what

what custom and use have made him. And this accounts well enough for that obstinate tenaciousness which is so generally found among men, of even the most absurd and glaringly unreasonable opinions and practices so common among mankind; and would account likewise for these rites, supposing them once to have got general footing. But then the question will recur, How they came there, and by what means they obtained such a general concurrence, and such authority as all the reason and philosophy in the world could not counterbalance?

The only solution that can be given, is, That they were believed to have been appointed by the deity whom they were to worship. In fact, this was the case: But how that persuasion came to be so general? is another question. Of whatever use the belief of a superintending deity might be to politicians and legislators, this way of worship could answer none. It supposes the belief of such powers, and could never take place without some foundation in truth.

This puts us again upon a further inquiry, How this belief came? I said some-

thing of a very natural rise of some blind belief of supernatural or invisible powers. But that could go no farther than it was discovered and enforced by sensible effects. What lies beyond the reach of human perception, can never fall under human observation; and men must have been well advanced in the art of reasoning, before they could gather, from the established order of the universe, that it had an intelligent cause. But even when this point was gained, the difficulty remained, Where to lodge this cause? whether in the frame of nature, or in some superior being, who had the property and disposal of all? The last lies so very remote from human observation, that we find in fact the wisest and most rational rested in the notion of something they called a *spirit* pervading and influencing the whole world, as our souls do our whole frame.

But, then, whether this world, thus furnished, ever had a beginning, i. e. was made, or, as we call it, *created*; or subsisted as it is from eternity, remains to be determined. Men must have been greatly enlightened before such an inquiry entered into their heads: and when it did, the farthest they could go was, to suppose that the materials

materials were lying in what they called *a chaos*, and that God and nature brought them into this order. But that all was once nothing, could never be imagined; because they knew no power adequate to such an effect as that of making any thing, much less such an immense universe, out of nothing; especially when there was no appearance of its having had a beginning, or coming to an end.

And there mens knowledge stopt short, and their religion could go no farther; and consequently wanted the only foundation on which religion can stand, as nothing besides this can give the supreme being that sovereign authority, without which the highest deity can be no proper object of supreme worship and adoration. For unless all are his absolute property, he can have no right to dispose of them. Nor is it conceivable, how absolute property can be acquired but by creation.

As to what they had either to hope or to fear from this their imaginary deity, they must have been, and all the Heathen actually were, absolutely at a loss. But creation, once admitted, a pretty consistent and comprehensive system of religion might have been formed.



ed. Yet until it was certainly proved, that all things were the works of one intelligent and superlatively wise being, no inferences could be made about his character. And even then it must have remained a moot point at best, whether death did not make a full end of the man? The obvious presumptions lie on the affirmative side; and all the arguments for a future state can never be made to rise so high as a fair probability; as might easily be shewn. Nothing but a plain declaration of the creator's mind can insure the momentous point.

7. *The Bible way of teaching compared with the Philosophical.*

WHAT reason could never give any account of, Moses, even abstracting from the prophets and apostles, has set in the clearest light; and that by a method infinitely more proper for answering the end. For should we be even so enormously liberal, as to allow the philosophical arguments all the strength they pretend to, they can be of no manner of use

use to the generality of mankind, unless they were to take the philosopher's word for the truth of his conclusions; which is a sort of implicit faith no man has a right to demand of his fellow-creatures: and even the philosopher himself will find, that his own belief lasts no longer than the force of his demonstrations keeps warm upon his mind; and even then the evidence is too subtle to make an impression strong enough to exclude all the grounds of doubt on the other side. Something grosser, and better suited to our perceptive powers, will be found needful to establish a firm persuasion of what lies beyond our senses and common observation.

Moses has laid to our hands a set of palpable facts, which fully answer the purpose. If his first assertion, that God created the heavens and the earth, startles our understandings at first, and carries us quite beyond the sphere of human observation, and, consequently, of human reason; he reconciles us to it, first by dwelling upon it, and making it familiar to us, by a detail of the six days creation, and particularly the creation of man; and afterwards instructs it by such sensible facts as have  
incomparably

incomparably more weight than all the metaphysical demonstrations, though ten times more and stronger than they are, can ever be made to have, by all the improvements they are capable of receiving.

The particular detail of the six days creation, and the manner in which the order was established, at once brings to our observation a sort of power we were utter strangers to; and is found to be the very truth of, what philosophers have tortured themselves with guessing at, the true system, and the moving powers in this system, we find ourselves involved in.

The manner in which the order of the universe was established, has nothing in it that shocks human reason, unless it is the astonishing ease with which it was effected, viz. by a mere command or volition that things should be so and so. But when we find that every thing is really so as it was then commanded or willed to be, this naturally leads us to the conception of a power infinitely above what the most complete man could ever have imagined; and, at the same time, a power which may easily be supposed adequate to the creation of the  
matter

matter itself, which was with so much ease digested into this beautiful fabrick.

The creation of man, the authority assumed over him in his primæval state, and the consequences of it, even by the short hints which are recorded, bring us yet nearer; and make creating power more familiar to us; all which, we have good reason to think, were fully explained to, and understood by, those who were personally concerned in those transactions. Especially the fixing the permanent state of mankind by a judicial sentence, could be done by none but the creator and absolute proprietor both of man, and of the earth, on which he lived.

But mankind in the first ages were the same foolish perverse creatures they are still: Though they had the strongest documents in their first father's case, that it was impossible for them, or indeed any creature, to subsist any other way than by the mere grace of their creator, and in an absolute resignation to his authority and will; yet in a tract of time they came foolishly to neglect and forsake him; which gave occasion to a sensible demonstration, that he was indeed the creator and absolute pro-



prietor of them, and of the earth, which they had imagined their own, by reducing it to its primitive state, (which could not be done but by suspending all the supporting powers in nature), and by beginning a new origination of mankind.

From the use of sacrifices during this period, which could never have entered into any one's head without a divine institution, it appears, that there was a revelation then subsisting, nearly the same with the Christian, and a life beyond the grave brought to light. This was sensibly instructed, by the translation of Enoch; and by what Noah practised immediately after the flood, with the promises given, or rather renewed, to him on that occasion; especially the setting aside the blood, as an atonement for their lives and souls, with the reasons then given for it.

To say nothing of the separation of Abraham and his seed, where he shewed himself absolute sovereign, or of the destruction of Sodom by his immediate hand; the methods he took with Pharaoh in Egypt to make that proud monarch know JEHOVAH, where all the powers of nature were controlled to answer his purpose, effectually instruct, that he

he was indeed the creator, and consequently the absolute proprietor of heaven and earth. To which might be added, the astonishing manner in which the Israelites were brought into the possession of the land of Canaan, the appearances he made in their favour, and his conduct toward them all along to the captivity. In their history we have not only the fullest documents of a particular providence; but, in numerous instances, the exertion of a power so similar to that of creation, as leaves no room to doubt of it.

And hence we find the prophets, in his name, always making God and the creator synonymous terms; and the God of Israel proving himself the only true God, by his being creator; and his being creator, by declaring not only what was past, but likewise what was to come; which we may say, with assurance, could not be done, unless he had the direction of all in his own hands.

It is from these plain facts that the divine character is adjusted in the sacred writings, and his perfections deduced and instructed, in the simplest and easiest man-

196 The character of the CREATOR, Eff. 8.  
ner, perfectly level to the very meanest capacities.

8. *The character of the Deity as Creator, and the state of the creature arising from it.*

**T**Hough the invisible God can by no means be perceived by men, until he manifests himself by such works and ways as can fall under our observation, nor any farther than he thus manifests himself; yet so far as we can be sure that such works are really his, we may thence gather as much of his real character as is discovered in them, in the same manner as we form the characters of men by their works and ways. And when he is once known to be the creator of all, and that the stupendous frame of this universe was raised by him out of nothing; that is, without any matter to work upon, or instruments to work by; we have the highest demonstration of almighty power that can possibly be imagined. But this must have appeared impossible to every created mind; as it did to the wisest of the ancient philosophers, and must have done so  
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to all their successors, had not their minds been opened and enlightened, as they now are, by analogous facts recorded in the most authentic and best-vouched history that ever was written. For though it may be pretended, that the creation of a finite world will not be a proper evidence of infinite power; yet it is a strong presumption, that there is nothing impossible with God: and besides, as there is nothing in being but what he brought into existence, there can be nothing to limit his powers, but his own perfect wisdom and understanding; by which he must know perfectly what is fit and proper to be done.

I say, his perfect wisdom and understanding, which must bear an exact proportion to his power. Every defect is an imperfection; and every imperfection implies a limitation; and consequently a defect of power: so that, in truth, whatever some minute philosophers have surmised to the contrary, perfect power carries in it absolute perfection of every kind. Nor can it be otherwise: For there is nothing knowable but himself, and the things which he hath made. None who believes the creator to be an intelligent being, can suspect



suspect his want of a perfect knowledge of himself, and his own perfections and powers: and sure he must have the most perfect and thorough knowledge of what himself hath made.

In this comprehensive knowledge is founded what we call *wisdom*; which indeed is no more but the knowledge of what is fit and proper to be done; or, what are the best and most excellent designs, and the fittest and most proper means for effecting them. There have been a set of men, who, in the pride of what they call philosophy, have boldly taken upon them to chalk out the measures of divine wisdom, and to define positively what the creator may or may not do; and if their measures are not precisely observed, to give names to his conduct not fit to be repeated. The sum of all comes to this; That were the creator no wiser, and knew no better, than they, he would think and act as they imagine he should. And pitiable indeed would the world be under such direction.

But we are not left to the imaginations of men in forming our conceptions of divine wisdom. We have it fairly set before us in the frame of this sensible universe; and,

and, by the work, may judge of him who wrought it. But how little can we make of it? Some of the gross outlines which fall under our observation, the wonderful mechanism of vegetable and animal bodies, and much more the stupendous mechanism of the heavens, under the influence of which all is managed and directed, have strangely raised the pride of philosophy: but how unjustly do they value themselves on their pretended knowledge; while the secret springs, by which all is directed, are as much hid from them as from the meanest of the vulgar? These remain still, and are like to remain for ever, the subject of astonishment and admiration of that inconceivable wisdom which erected the stupendous machine, and established every part in such exactness of order, that nothing but ignorance, and its common attendant vanity, can find the least flaw or weakness in it. The man who certainly knows what purposes the creator designed to answer by the order he has established, which men learned to call by the unmeaning word *nature*, and *the course of nature*, may, and he only can, pretend to judge of the works of God.

Perfect wisdom, and perfect power, thus essentially united in the creator, present us with a perfect character; such as an indifferent spectator of any judgement, if there were any such, must esteem, revere, and love. And in these all worship lies. External worship is only the outward sign and expression of them. This perfection of character is the same with what is commonly called *goodness*; a term ill understood, and much mistaken, in forming our conceptions of the all-perfect being. As it is from the model every man carries in his own mind, that all our notions of divine perfections are formed, and as our bias is so irresistibly strong to the preservation of life, and the enjoyments of it; thence we take our measures of good and evil; and imagine nothing can be good but what is good to us, or rather contributes to what we reckon good for us. But real goodness is quite another thing: it is a perfect, constant, and unchangeable love to what a perfect infallible understanding knows to be really good, and an equal abhorrence of all that is evil. What is good or what is evil to God, none but himself can say; or rather we must conceive of his perfection

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tion as absolutely above being affected by any thing without himself, as he must be incapable either of any addition to or diminution of his pleasure and happiness. It is only among creatures that good and evil in this view can be found. What promotes the real happiness of the creature must be good, and what marring it must be evil, in the creator's eye: and of this his perfect wisdom alone can judge. Hence perfect goodness must be the most terrible attribute to an ill being; as he who is possessed of it, must as certainly destroy the evil, as cherish the good.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that the creator of all must certainly be the absolute proprietor of every being; and consequently possessed of an absolute right to dispose of them, and employ them to what purposes he pleases; that is, as his perfect wisdom sees meet and fit. No creature can be possessed of any property in this view, not so much as their own life or being, any farther than as a trust committed to them of pure sovereign grace; and he has a perfect right to call them to an account for the improvement. Hence the fundamental law of nature, No creature



can subsist but by the mere grace and good pleasure of the creator: none of them have, or can ever acquire, any right to plead upon, unless he is pleased to give it by a free sovereign act of grace.

And being thus the absolute sovereign, nothing can be more absurd than to confine his administration to the measures of moral government; that is, to the measures of human wisdom: the highest presumption a creature can be guilty of, unless he had condescended to declare, that he would follow some such measures. What changes he sees fit to make in his world, at what time, and in what manner, are questions the highest order of creatures can say nothing upon. But we are sure he may do what he pleases with his own: and none has a right to ask his reasons; which indeed cannot be comprehended by any understanding less perfect than his own.

These are such plain truths, that it can hardly be imagined, any one should entertain the least doubt of them who believes the creation. But there are many things we have no doubt of, and of the greatest moment too, which yet are so little minded, as not at all to influence us either in our speculations

speculations or actions. We find ourselves some how in possession of what we call *being* and *life*, with certain perfections and powers, which we look upon as properly our own, and accordingly value ourselves upon them, and are very fond of the gratifications we find they bring in to us; while yet we certainly know, that the next moment may, and in a little time death certainly will, put an end to them all. And whether that does not make a final end of our being, who could have said if the creator had not told us? So absolutely is every creature in his hand, that it is astonishing how such an absurd notion, as the natural immortality of any of them, should ever have entered the head of a reasonable man; a privilege no being can have, without being independent on the creator.

9. *Certain Truths current in the world, which could never have entered but by Revelation, and the Creator's testimony.*

OUR modern philosophers, and natural theologians, deceive themselves and their followers. Finding certain facts

generally current in the world, they flatter themselves into a belief that they are naturally implanted in the human mind: and though all the experience in the world is against it, they insist, that they are just as natural to man, and as much a part of his constitution, as instincts are to birds and beasts. But they are far from being so probably accounted for; and will be found to reach no farther than the corresponding animal instincts in man; except what is common to both, a capacity of being formed by imitation and custom.

But the subject of both can extend no farther than can be brought under observation by our perceptive powers. And one of them, viz. hearing, extends to all that has been observed by others. Hence information comes to be as natural a mean of knowledge as any of our senses; and without it our knowledge must be confined to very narrow bounds. Human knowledge can never reach farther than human observation; and whatever exceeds the bounds of that, are to him as if they were not; unless he receives information about them from some superior being who has observed them. And if such facts as  
none

none but the creator and sovereign of the universe could possibly reveal, are found to be received and firmly believed among men, the record and testimony of such facts, where-ever it is found original, without being interlarded with fabulous circumstances, must be a divine revelation.

Creation out of nothing, no mortal ever saw, or could see; nor could they have any notion of a power in any degree analogous to it, until the creator himself was pleased to exhibit it in his after works.

No man can know what is past, unless he himself was a witness, without some record or tradition of it; much less what is to come. Yet the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the writings of the Apostles, are full of such facts, and such predictions of things to come, as could never have entered the head of man or angel to imagine possible, without them.

The original state of mankind, as described by the Heathen poets, under what they call the *Golden Age*, so contrary to what human nature now is, and ever has been since the beginning of the world, could never have entered the most lively imagination, had it not been for Moses's  
account



account of Paradise; and much less such a renovation of it as Virgil describes, plainly copied from the Prophets. But of all things, what could have put it into any one's head, that earth and seas, and the heavens themselves, should at last be destroyed by fire, as Ovid describes it from the current tradition among the Heathen?

Whether death makes a full and final end of man, as is generally allowed it does of other animals, who could say, without an express revelation of the divine purpose? Nothing but an overweening partiality to ourselves could ever have established the negative; as will easily appear from the best reasons philosophy can provide us in to this day. The only thing that can make an after state consistent, is the resurrection of the body: A thing almost as hard to conceive, as creation out of nothing.

Whether a wise and perfectly good creator would pardon a sinner, or exterminate the evil being out of his world, who can say? and yet the divine placability, and forgiveness of sin, have been the general belief of the world from the very beginning: and the way how pardon is to be obtained, and the Deity placated, and rendered propitious,

propitious, by sacrifice, has been as general throughout all ages : The most absurd imagination in the eye of reason ; yet all the efforts of the wisest and most revered philosophers, could never extirpate the notion of its being a divine institution.

The polytheism that was so universally received, could never have had its rise from reasoning ; as the perfect possession of being and life, with all the powers and perfections of it, cannot possibly subsist but in one. Something may be said for the Heathen, after they had lost the knowledge of the creator, and substituted the heavens, and their sensible powers, in his room. But whence could the notion of a Trinity in this Unity arise? Why three, rather than three hundred? and yet the tradition is very ancient. Plato did not coin it, as appears by his blundering unintelligible account of it: and yet his account is not more blundering than those of our philosophical divines, who have attempted it, with the advantage of another sort of light than he had, from obscure traditions only.

That God should have a Son, what mortal could say? and yet the tradition is as  
old

old as Nebuchadnezzar's days: and certainly much older; for it appears then to have been commonly received. That this Son of God should be born of a woman, is yet farther from any foundation in reasoning; and yet the books of the Heathen are full of it; which could never have had its rise any where but in the original tradition.

We need say nothing of the many different methods of purification and cleansing, by washing, sprinkling of blood, &c. as they could never have been thought of any use for purging from moral defilement.

The fabulous appearances of their gods, and their conversations with men; the notion they had of inspiration, as the rise and spring of all great achievements, by what they call *spirits*, their oracles, &c. are evidently copied. And perhaps the devil might take advantage of man's ignorance, and by apeing the operations of the true God, make himself be mistaken for him, and worshipped in his stead; as seems to have been the case with the Heathens before and at the time of the coming of the Son of God into the world.

These and such other sentiments and practices religiously received and adhered to;

to; however absurd and ridiculous they may seem, and really were, as practised among them, who held them only, as one may, say by rote, without knowing the true intent and meaning of them; yet, when run up to their true original, and taken as they stand in the Bible, reason has nothing to say against any of them; and so much for them, that numbers have been deluded into an imagination, that they could have found out many fundamental ones without any farther assistance. But as the case is demonstrably otherwise in all or most of them, the conclusion will come out strong, that none could be the author of these writings but the creator, proprietor, and sovereign, of the world.

10. *The Original State of Mankind.*

I Know not how it has come to be in a manner taken for granted, that the first ages of the world were absolutely barbarous, and men for many ages no better than such savages, or worse, as we meet with in the remote parts of the world; until by length of time, they were civili-



zed by very slow degrees. The first, and most, civilized countries, were Greece and Rome, whose ancestors were certainly such; whence all the rest of the world passed with them for barbarians. And yet it was not, could not be dissembled, that from these same barbarians they had all their knowledge; that is, all the facts which served their philosophers to dispute, and form guesses about. Certain it is, their predecessors were of another opinion; for from them they had those charming descriptions of the golden age, which degenerated by degrees into brass and iron, as they came to be scattered abroad on the face of the earth, and lost the knowledge of the original facts, on which all religion and morality, that is, all the right measures of human knowledge, were founded; and thus degenerated into a course of error and folly. The plain original of that tradition, Moses gives us in his description of paradise, and the state of our first parents there, incomparably beyond what the most luxurious, and at the same time the most correct fancy could imagine. The particulars are in every body's hands who will deign to look at them. It is plain,

plain, that garden was a complete abridgement of the universe, and a collection of every thing that was valuable there; and ranged too, by perfect wisdom, into the most agreeable and instructive order. For thence, without question, man was to gather, or find exemplified, all the works of his creator, which perfect wisdom saw necessary in that station. But how far it extended, is impossible for us to guess by those short hints Moses has given us. He taught him language, and conversed with him in it; he shewed him the things he wanted to know, and directed him to give them names, on which all language is founded; and as it is natural to think they displayed their several natures before him, he had such an opportunity as never another had, of taking in the whole compass of what we call natural history. And those who understand the Hebrew language, and the import of the names he gave, will be surpris'd at his sagacity. We have no account of his giving names to the plants and trees of the garden, nor to the heavenly bodies, which were obvious to his senses; but all these things were before him, and needed not

to be brought, as the beasts and birds were. But here a question naturally arises, How came the first man by all this reason and understanding, so as to be qualified for such a task? By his senses indeed, as his body was at first formed, he might perceive all the material objects about him; as no doubt the mere brute part of the creation do: and many of them we find endued with far stronger, and therefore we may say more perfect, organs of sense, seeing and hearing particularly. But reason and understanding are quite of another nature: they are not perceptive powers, but regulate and improve our sensible perceptions to purposes greatly above what any other animal is capable of. They have feelings such as we have; they have likewise something of memory, by which they are capable of acquiring experience to a great degree; and many of them have a natural sagacity, to which we give the unmeaning name of *instinct*; and all we can say of it is, that it was given them by their creator in a manner we know no more of, than we do of creation itself.

We must have said the same of man,  
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with all his boasted powers and faculties, only founding the difference in the degrees of fineness or coarseness of their different constitutions, had it not been for the hints Moses has left us: which, were they well understood as he has laid them, might carry the knowledge of ourselves farther than is commonly done. Two things he tells us, besides the solemnity used at his creation, viz. That man was made in the image of his creator; and, That God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Now there are two things well known in an image of any person or thing; a likeness, and designed representation, of the original; and where there is no access to the original, as in the present case, it is from the image that we form our apprehensions. In fact it is so: all our notions of the divine perfections, understanding, wisdom, power, goodness, &c. are all taken from the shadows of them in ourselves. It were well if it was remembered that the most perfect man is but an image, and needs more adjusting than the wisest philosopher is capable of making out. And, after all, the divine understanding, wisdom, justice, goodness, &c.

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are really as different from what we call by these names, as almighty creating power is above that faint scantling which we enjoy. However the terms by which the divine perfections, and the exertion of them, are expressed in language, must be taken from ours, or we must be quite silent; yet the analogy is so remote, that it would be very bad reasoning to draw inferences from the similarity.

A variety of guesses have been made about this similarity and likenesses. Some have imagined it lay in the dominion that was given him over the creatures: but by the account Moses gives us, that was a dignity granted to the man after he was completely made. Others, with more probability, place it in what they call his moral perfections; and think they have the apostle's authority to make it consist in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness: but these are rather the result of his constitution and perfect frame.

Moses has told us, that his body was created out of the dust, and the creator breathed the breath of life into his nostrils: which seems to teach us, that we are not to look for this image, either in  
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body or soul separately, as they are commonly distinguished; but in the whole man, as he was created perfect. And accordingly we find the terms made use of by the creator in his addresses to man, are promiscuously taken from both the intellectual and bodily parts of man.

The manner in which the great possessor of being subsists, in the perfect enjoyment of all the powers of life, must be an absolute secret to us, who know so little of our own; nor is it likely that any the most perfect creature, the possessor only of a borrowed and dependent being, can form any tolerable notion of it. And therefore to pretend to reason, from the state of such imperfect beings, must be at once unfair and foolish. And yet as a trinity, in the most perfect and undivided unity, is plainly enough asserted, and every where supposed, in the record he hath condescended to make of himself, under the titles of Father, Son, and Spirit, it might be expected there should be some faint shadow of it in his image.

Those who have but glanced at the mechanism of the human fabrick, must have discovered there three systems, very different,

rent, and designed to answer quite different purposes; and yet all consisting of the same substance perfectly united, subsisting and acting in and by one another; the first for taking in and distributing proper food for subsistence, the second for bringing the objects we are concerned in under our observation, and the third for exerting the animal powers into action.

But those who look further, and take the whole man together, will find a more perfect trinity inlaid in his very frame: The foundation, and as it were the root and spring, of all, is laid in his life and being, with the powers belonging to it; the second consists in perceptive powers, by which the bodily senses are employed, and informations taken in to carry our pittance of knowledge as far as it will go; the third consists of active powers, for accomplishing what the informations we take in, discover to be proper and necessary. To the first of these the first animal system we mentioned is analogous, to the second the second, and to the third the third. Whether this may contribute any thing toward removing the difficulty of a trinity in unity, and which is indeed the  
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only one that we know nothing like, and cannot conceive how it can be, may be considered by such as have ability and leisure.

But the question still remains, How man, a being made out of the dust of the earth, came by all these amazing qualities? The short answer is, By the amazing wisdom and power of his creator. But how creating power operates, who could have been so mad as to inquire, had not Moses told us, that after the body was made, the creator breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul; or more properly, a living frame; as the same word in that language is oftener used to denote the body, than the spiritual part? However, the words are certainly designed to teach us something about the human constitution. The word which our translators render *life* is plural in the original; plainly enough pointing us to the communication of another life different from the animal; and perhaps to a third kind, as much above the rational, by the indwelling and influence of the Divine Spirit. And the original will bear to be translated, "he breathed

" into him, [or inspired him with] the spirit



“ of lives ; and by that, Adam became a living man.” This provides us with a word which seems to express so much, as we find it used, Job xxxii. 8. “ The *inspiration* of the Almighty giveth understanding,” and “ holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” A sensible effect of this we have in the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Which leads us as far into the mystery of the thing, as we are capable of forming any apprehensions of: for how the Holy Spirit works, we can know nothing but by the effects produced by it.

This much however we may learn from it, that the creator can by his spirit raise whom he will, even the most ignorant, to what measures of knowledge and understanding, and the perfections which depend on them, he pleaseth; approaching more or less toward perfection: for even the Apostle Paul tells us, he knew but in part; perfect knowledge being reserved to an after state, when he proposed to know even as he was known. And we need not scruple to say, that every man who lives in the world, is more or less inspired, because that is the only way by which life can be conveyed and maintained. Jesus  
Christ,

Christ, the Son of God, who has the dispensing of this spirit, is said to be the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; though, at the same time, it must be remembered, that there is another spirit which worketh powerfully in the children of disobedience, and by their very different works they are known.

What measure of this spirit the first man had in his paradisiacal state, is hard to say from the short hints we have of his history in that station; which, though short upon the whole, yet seems to have continued longer than is commonly allowed: but this we may say with assurance, that he had as much as the duty of his station required; for it is to be observed, that the good and righteous creator never lays any commands upon his creatures, until he has put them in such circumstances, that every duty arises naturally out of them. Our first father found himself at his first entrance on being, with every thing that could contribute to the most perfect enjoyment of life, and all the necessary powers to make the best of them: he found himself at the head of the new

creation, where there was no mate for him to be found, until his creator bountifully provided him with one: and, which is infinitely more, he found himself honoured with his creator's friendship, and familiar conversation, and instructions. What measures of gratitude and love could answer such benefactions; when, even under all the corruptions his posterity are sunk into, they cannot help loving those that love them, and being sensibly affected with the benefits they receive? Thus was the law written in his heart; and he was, in strict propriety, a law to himself.

Hence we may take a hint toward the decision of that vexatious question, concerning human liberty. No body makes the least doubt, that every man is at perfect liberty so far as his powers go. Nor will it be denied, that he is so made as necessarily to be determined by the most prevalent motive. So far, then, as he has power to weigh and balance the several motives for or against any action, so far he is perfectly free; and where such powers are wanting or defective, so far he is, and must be, a slave to the prevailing power; which in fact is the case with mankind now in  
numberless

numberless instances, where ignorance or inattention gives such advantage to the flattering affections and passions, as to make the most trifling gratification outweigh a crown of glory, and eternal happiness.

This was not, could not be, the case of the first man. His powers extended as far as his duty did, until the fatal trial came; where one cannot properly say his wisdom failed, (for the Apostle assures us he was not deceived); but his passion was so strong, as to make him run into the danger with his eyes open, and perfectly free in all other respects.

And this leads to another consideration, which is not commonly so much minded as its obviousness requires: That notwithstanding all the perfection and happiness of the paradisiacal state, it was never designed to be the permanent state of mankind, but to introduce that which was to be so; as fully appears by the event; unless we can imagine the creator so little acquainted with his own works, as to find his purposes baffled at first setting out; and as some have very unwarily represented him, necessitated by this accident to have recourse to a new remedial



remedial law, which should supply the defects, and thereby set aside the old one, which perfect wisdom had at first seen fit to establish: that is, in plain English, he was forced either to make himself a liar, or to destroy his favourite creature. The laws of the creator are not like those of weak short-sighted man, which must be altered and amended as unforeseen events cast up to him. As the views of perfect understanding can have no bounds, known unto God are all his works from the beginning; and heaven and earth may sooner pass away, than the least jot or tittle of the divine law, any constitution or order of the all-wise creator, until the whole is finished. Whatever plans therefore the wisdom of man has formed for him, which suppose any the least alteration, or, as some call it, dispensing with any part of his law, must be false and erroneous, and a presumptuous reflection on divine wisdom, whose plan is so perfect, that every step makes way for another, until the whole design is completed; many of which, in the detached light wherein we view them, seem to have a quite contrary tendency.

Nothing can be more foolish than to put  
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cases which never did nor could happen; unless it be the making grave inferences from them. Such certainly is the inquiry, What should have been the case of our first parents and their posterity had they persisted in their primitive integrity? Man had no promise of any other life than what he was then in possession of, nor even of the continuance of that any farther than was implied in the threatening, which assured him he should die whenever he should eat of that fruit: but that gave no assurance that the creator never would resume the life he had given, if he saw it fit. So that in every view we can take of their case, it must be at least a very improper way of speaking, that they were to *work* for life by the covenant they were then under; which can have no foundation but on the precarious supposition, that when their state of probation, as it is called, was finished, they should have been transplanted into a higher state of dignity and happiness, something like that which mankind have now a grant of in Jesus Christ. Whereas, in fact, we find, that the continuance of even the life they had, was not put upon *doing* of any kind, but upon

upon the *forbearing* to eat of the fruit of a certain tree; and that was the only event in which they had any reason to fear the death which was threatened.

Of a piece with this, and another part of the same plan, is the construction put upon the threatening, viz. That the death which was thus peremptorily threatened, extended not only to the death of the body, or the extinction of the spiritual life in the soul, but to eternal death; the very same punishment which we find threatened against those who will not believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is surprising how any one could miss of what is the very obvious consequence of this, viz. that it must have been utterly impossible for any of mankind to be saved; as impossible as it was for the God of truth to lie, or any constitution or law of his to be set aside until it had its full effect. This has forced the asserters into such a maze as requires infinitely more metaphysical skill to comprehend their meaning, than falls to every man's share. And such will always be the fate of those who will be wise above what is written. I would not be thought to extenuate the demerit of sin, which is  
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in its very nature the death of the man : but the question is not, What punishment sin deserves? but, What punishment the creator had decreed upon the commission of sin ; an event which he certainly foresaw would happen, and that too in a short time, very precisely known to himself?

The account we have in the record is plain and simple, obvious to every one's understanding ; and the obvious meaning of the threatening appears to be, that man should lose, or that an end should be put to all that life which he then enjoyed ; but it does not say how the creator meant to dispose of him afterward ; whether to leave him there, or to raise him up again to another life, and another way of living. This his denunciation, peremptory as it was, left entirely in his own hand. And in fact we are assured by the record, that he had then, and had from everlasting, provided another head for mankind, for raising them up, and conveying to them eternal life in his blessed Son, that divine person afterwards known in the world by the name of *Jesus Christ* ; of whom Adam in Paradise was only a figure, or a sort of sensible image and representation, for helping us with greater ease to form some proper apprehensions



of him, as the Apostle Paul assures us.

Did we know what life is, and could we talk intelligibly upon it, we would see how exactly the threatening is fulfilled. But though we know not what life is, yet there are two kinds of being, viz. the animal, and the vegetable, where we can perceive how life is supported; namely, by their connection with the material system, and the influences of the heavens. Whenever the sap is no more raised in vegetables, and the animal can no longer breathe, though not an atom of their substance is annihilated, yet they are dead, there is an end put to that state which we call *life*. I know not how we have got ourselves so bigotted in the notion that spirits cannot die. For though it may be true, that they cannot die, as bodies do, by a dissolution of parts; yet if their life lies in their connection with a spiritual system, (and it must either do so, or they must be self-existent and independent beings); whenever that connection is broken, there must be an end put to their life, and they made incapable of that way of living for which that connection qualified them.

We need not amuse ourselves with looking for any other spiritual system, but the  
fullness

fullness and all-sufficiency of the creator. And if the spiritual life is maintained by the divine spirit, as the animal life is by the material; whenever that spirit is withdrawn from man, there is an end of his life and vital powers: his connection with the spiritual system is broken; and the man is, to all intents and purposes, as dead to the spiritual world, as if one of us were totally divested of his rational powers, and sunk down to a mere animal state. The animal would be alive; but we would all say the man is dead.

Here we have reason to expect a terrible cry, raised by our philosophical divines and patrons of moral government: What a horrible view, will they say, does this give us of the sovereign of the universe? Where is the justice, to say nothing, of goodness, to require such duties of the creature as he has no power to perform? What if I should ask, where hath God required any such duties, either of Adam or his children? for I do not think it a good answer to say, We had such powers in Adam. We must certainly take the divine law precisely as God hath laid it in the record: and there I find no duties required of Adam's mere children, that is, such as

have no other life but what they derive from him, but only to deny themselves, to take up their cross, and to follow Christ: and that is no more, than to acknowledge themselves to be, what they really are, dead to God, and very soon to be dead to the world; and fly to the relief their gracious creator has prepared in his blessed Son; where they are assured of finding an infinitely better life, than ever Adam could have any notion of, and of being more closely united to the fountain of life; in the virtue of which, all God's commandments are so far from being grievous, that they are all pleasantness and peace. For the love of God shed abroad in the heart, writes every one of them there, deep and strong, in the one great law of love.

As this was by far the principal part of man's paradisiacal life, when he lost the spiritual life, the threatening was literally fulfilled, in the very day, nay, the very moment, he sinned; when in the very nature of the thing, by turning away from God to the creature, he forsook the fountain of life, and the only way in which a spirit can live. But they carry the Hebrew phrase too far, who make it import any  
more

more than the certainty of the event, without specifying the time when it should be inflicted. Thus it was appointed for all men once to die; and thence it becomes every one's duty to acquiesce in this order, as we find it constructed and enforced by the great judge, who himself was the lawgiver, and certainly best understood his own deed.

But why should the beneficent creator be so cruel, as to give his favourite creature such a transient glance of happiness, as only served to condemn him and his posterity to endless regret for the loss of it? why put the fortunes of all mankind in one man's hand, and punish them for a crime they neither were, nor could be conscious of, far less accessory to? With these, and a number of other such questions, men who would be counted very wise, have puzzled themselves and others. It is really amazing how such puny things as the wisest and most learned of mankind certainly are, should ever have arrived at such a pitch of insolence, as to put questions to their creator; a greater absurdity, surely, than if the clay should say to the potter, Why hast thou made me thus?

Certain



Certain it is, that the present state, whatever it be, is that which the creator has allotted to this order of his creatures. And had none of them ever been in any higher or better, who could have had any reason to complain? It is true, many men of great piety and learning have declared it inconsistent with the divine perfections, and of course impossible, that such a creature could have come out of his hands. But when they are put upon answering a very natural question in this view, How then came he there? no wonder they are greatly embarrassed: and embarrassed they must be, when they are forced to reply, That God could not hinder our first parents from falling, without breaking in upon that liberty which they say was absolutely necessary in a state of probation: for what hurt could it have done their liberty, to have given them as much wisdom as to have counterbalanced the temptation?

But this same state of probation it were much to be wished were better explained than is usually done. The notion commonly annexed to it, that the creator treated his creatures as kings do their subjects when they are put upon their good  
behaviour,

behaviour, is certainly wrong. The omniscient creator knew most certainly what would be the event, and needed not put it to the trial: and we are very sure perfect wisdom does nothing in vain. But probation in another view was very proper; viz. that the creature might know itself; and how impossible it is, even for the most perfect creature, to subsist in the most perfect enjoyment of life, in any other way than by mere grace, and the free unmerited exertion of divine power for supporting it in that condition. Greater advantages cannot be imagined than our first parents enjoyed; nor easier terms proposed, than, in the midst of an infinite variety of fruits, to forbear the eating of one: For sure, if they could not do that, they could do nothing at all.

And hence arises another lesson, of equal importance and use; that such a treasure as life could never be safely trusted in the hand of any mere man: A truth necessary to be adverted to, as it is in effect the only mean which can effectually recommend the unspeakable goodness, and indulgent care of the creator, in lodging life in a hand where it  
could

could not possibly be forfeited, the hand of his own only begotten Son.

And this opens to us a reason for introducing the permanent state of mankind in this manner; namely, as was before hinted, to provide us in a figure or image, by which we might be enabled to form some proper conceptions of *him*, who stands at the head of mankind in relation to the spiritual and eternal world, as the first man did in relation to this present perishing one. Adam was intrusted with all that life which was ever to be conveyed to his natural descendents; and through him it will be derived to the latest posterity, in the course of what we call *natural generation*.

To him the terms of life were given; and by his failure in the observance of them, the fate of all his posterity was unalterably determined, by the judgement which was passed upon his fall: A state in which it is glaringly impossible for any of Adam's race, falling into the original error, to flatter themselves with the hope of eternal life by any other means, than the free grace of the creator, who can, and who alone can, raise the dead, and bestow what  
measures

measures of perfection and happiness he pleases.

We may yet add another consideration of no small moment. Had man never known of any higher and happier state than the present, he would naturally have rested here, as the station the creator had allotted him; whereas the account given us of the paradisiacal state, while it causeth us to regret the loss we have sustained, has a native tendency to open the heart for relief. And we have there such a fair figure of the heavenly paradise, that many have stumbled into a very wrong notion, that we have nothing more to expect from Christ, but a restoration of what we lost by Adam.

Moses's account of the seduction on which the transgression was founded, has occasioned a great profusion of loose wit, which might all have been spared, had the narrative, and the circumstances in which it was written, been considered with any degree of attention.

Eve's character is marked with a great deal of honest unsuspecting simplicity. The temptation, every body must own, was conducted with the utmost stretch of subtilty. The serpent's subtilty we



find marked by a greater than Moses. This Eve might know; and finding the serpent busy about the fruit, its speaking and reasoning gave great colour to the temptation, and made it much easier to believe the effects it might have upon her husband and her. But to those for whom Moses wrote, it was strong evidence that a higher and more subtle being was concerned. The only fault that can be found in the narrative is its conciseness; but it is more than likely the whole was then so familiarly known by tradition, that there was no need of being more particular. And for after ages, we have it sufficiently explained by the epithet of *the old serpent* affixed to the tempter.

I only observe further, that however currently the title of *the grand apostasy* is by most men affixed to the fall of our first parents, it is never applied so in the whole course of the record, but always denotes mens falling off from that state the creator graciously entered them into, when they were driven out of the earthly paradise.

But the immediate consequences of that first transgression, the horror and anguish which must have seized our first parents when the hurry of the temptation was over,  
cannot

cannot possibly be imagined by any being, even the most rational, who has not had the experience of the pleasure and delight which they found in the intercourses of friendship with their creator. An honest mind, wheedled into an act of rebellion against a most gracious sovereign, to whose friendship he owed the enjoyment of the most perfect earthly happiness, and who had a numerous beloved family depending upon him, and exposed to beggary, and all the misery consequent upon it; the remorse and anguish of such a person may give some faint image of their distress; but as much fainter than that of our first progenitors, as there is no sovereign like the creator for worth, nor any who can show such friendship, and confer such favours as he had done. What then must they have felt, now that all was lost, and, so far as they could judge, irretrievably lost.

I say irretrievably lost; for in this light it must have appeared to them. Nay more, had all the creatures been called upon to give their verdict, they must have been of the same mind. The law was express, without any limitation or salvo. If justice should be mellowed into mercy, still the truth of God, who

cannot lie, bound the criminals to suffer what he had positively said should be the punishment of their transgression.

No room was left for transferring guilt, or for any vicarious punishment; and yet less, if possible, for fulfilling the law by a substitute or surety: for indeed the law which brought them under death, was of such a nature, that it could never be fulfilled at all when once it was broken: it was not upon perfect obedience to the whole will of God, but upon that particular command, to forbear the forbidden fruit, that their life or death was made to depend. So that, upon the whole, there was no hope for the offenders but one, which no creature could entertain, viz. that the creator, in his free sovereign grace, should raise them from the dead; that is, create them anew, and enter them into a new life, and a new way of living suitable to the nature and design of it; as we find hath been done in Jesus Christ the mediator.

Accordingly their case, as represented by Moses, appears a dismal reverse of their former state. The voice of their creator, which was wont to fill them with pleasure and joy unspeakable, now filled them with terror; and all the poor relief they had,

was

was to keep themselves out of his fight. And had not he, in his wonderful condescension, fought them, they had been forever cut off from him who is the fountain of life, and dead to all intents and purposes, but those of the poor animal life; reduced to live, as the beasts of the field do, merely on this outward sensible world. And that is all that any of their posterity are capable of, until they be created anew in Christ Jesus.

However *we*, their thoughtless posterity, who know no better, may please ourselves with these low gratifications, it must have been impossible for *them* to have subsisted in the circumstances wherein they found themselves: and accordingly their merciful creator did not leave them long to languish in such uncertainty. They were immediately called into judgement. What was to be in all time coming the state of mankind, was then unalterably fixed by the great sovereign; and in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent, a door of hope was opened to the criminals, and the memorial of the promised seed of the woman kept up, in the antipathy which then commenced between the instrument of seduction and the ordinary descendents of the transgressors. And



as the sentence of death is literally fulfilled in all the descendants of Adam, that alone carries along with it a strong confirmation of the bruising the serpent's head, or, as we find the Apostle John explains it, destroying the works of the devil, viz. *sin*, and *death*; and consequently of the bringing in of a new and unperishable life. And hence the notions of the divine placability, of immortality, and of life after the body is dissolved to dust, have obtained in all ages and nations of the world; which never could have entered the heart of man any other way.

### II. *The Character of Jesus Christ.*

IT is common with our history-writers, to give characters of the principal persons concerned in the transactions they relate. But unless these are true pictures drawn from the life, of the conduct and behaviour of the man in every case, they are only the opinions of the writer, and are very little regarded by wise readers. To get then at the true character of Jesus, it will not be sufficient to know what this or the other man said or thought of him, but

but what the whole tenor of his life shows him to have been. We have his history given us in the most authentic manner ever any was ; and with many advantages no other ever had ; which it is not our present business to consider, but to take it as it lies before us in a record made by the peculiar direction and influence of the spirit of truth.

The history of his life is not like that of other men, from his birth to his death ; but extends a great way backward before he made his appearance in the world, and forward after he left it ; which indeed are the principal parts, as his appearance in this world was so mean and unsightly, that those who judged only by this world's measures, could perceive no form nor comeliness in him wherefore he should be desired. He was long before described in prophecy as a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs ; and at last condemned and crucified as one of the basest malefactors ; and had it not been for what followed, he had been at least reckoned, as the learned Jews said he was, a deceiver of the people. However it may seem at first sight, the most advantageous situation for taking a complete  
view

view of Jesus, will be found at his cross: and the more attentively we consider that kind of death, and the circumstances which attended his death in particular, the more clearly will the transcendent beauty and excellence of his character shine forth to our observation.

Mean while the first and most obvious question which naturally occurs, is, How he came there? and what were the crimes for which he was condemned to such a barbarously cruel death? Upon the strictest inquiry it will be found, that he lived with such perfect innocence, that he was not afraid to challenge his most inveterate enemies to convict him, of ever having said or done any thing amiss, during the whole course of his life: and that is more than can be said of any other man, from the beginning of the world to this day. They charged him indeed with many things which they called sins and blasphemies, but which were indeed the brightest parts of his character. The sum of their charge was, That he charitably healed the sick and diseased on their sabbath-day; and said, which was a great truth, that he was that Son of God who should come into the world; and whom those  
those

those very men who charged him with blasphemy on that account, pretended, at that very time, to be daily expecting and looking for: that is, they charged him with blasphemy for saying those very things which their Messiah, whenever he came, must have said.

But however amiable a part perfect innocence makes of a character, it is hardly possible it can be maintained, without the exercise of benevolence and beneficence throughout the whole course of life. Or, in other words, perfect innocence cannot subsist without perfect love to God and man; nor that without the natural fruits, exercises, and actings of it on every proper occasion. And there it was, that this Jesus shewed himself to the greatest advantage. He passed indeed the first, and greatest part of his life, in a very low and retired station; without any extraordinary show, excepting only his conversation with the doctors and learned men in the temple when he was only twelve years of age, which filled every one that heard him with astonishment.

But from the time appointed for his manifestation, and entering on his proper



buſineſs, which only commenced at his baptiſm, his whole life was ſpent in going about doing good; healing all manner of diſeaſes, giving eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, limbs to the maimed, and, which is infinitely more, life to the dead, on ſeveral occaſions. Never did any apply to him, however deſperate the caſe was, who went away without their errand; and in many caſes, he freely diſpenſed his favours to ſuch as neither aſked, nor ſo much as thought of applying to him.

But however kind he was to the bodies of men, it was with their ſouls his main buſineſs lay. He proclaimed the goſpel of the kingdom, thoſe good news to a perishing world, which angels begun at his birth, when they thus ſaid: “Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.” And this he did with ſuch power, that not only ſtorms and tempeſts, but the devils themſelves, were forced to give ready obedience unto his word of command.

The number of miracles performed by him was very great; and the loweſt concluſion that can be drawn from theſe aſtoniſhing  
inſtances

instances of divine power, is that of Nicodemus, viz. That he must be a teacher sent from God. And accordingly, to these we find himself often appealing. This conclusion, simple and natural as it appears, is very comprehensive. Whatever he spoke in that capacity, had all the authority of a divine oracle, and demanded submission, as the words of the living God.

This carries his character very high. He said he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world; not such a favour as they who had gone before him, by whom God had wrought wonderful temporal deliverances; but the author of eternal salvation to all such as obey him, and the judge of the world, by whose final sentence the eternal state of all mankind shall be determined.

He carries his pretensions yet higher, even to such an oneness with the only true God his Father, that whosoever sees him sees the Father: nay more, that whatever the Father does, he does also, even to raising the dead, and quickening whom he will. And his disciples, who knew his mind

perfectly, assure us, that he was so far from beginning to exist when he was born into this world, that he was not only before Abraham, as himself said, but even before the world; and that all things were made, not only by him, but made for him; and, in one word, that he was that very person of whom Moses and the prophets wrote; and accordingly he directed his hearers to search the scriptures; For, said he, those are they which testify of me.

Great pains have been taken, and much wit, and what they call learning, has been employed, to bring down the meaning of many descriptive prophecies of the Messiah, and to apply them to persons and things which have no relation to him. But after all their learned labours, enough remains to answer the purpose. They are indeed very various, and so conceived, that until they were fulfilled in the person of Jesus, it was the hardest thing in the world to reconcile them to each other. Sometimes he is described as a child born, a servant in very low and abject circumstances, and in the end brought to a disgraceful and untimely end; at other times, again, in all the  
pomp

pomp and majesty of a triumphant conqueror, at the head of an universal monarchy, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. The carnal Jews, who had no notion of any spiritual bondage, salvation, or kingdom, grasped greedily at this last part of his character, and overlooked the other; and yet, had he not been thus meek and lowly, despised and rejected of men, and in the end died as he did, he could not have been the person of whom Moses and the prophets wrote.

This carries the character of Jesus to a stupendous height. Creating power is the highest that can be conceived; and indeed the highest and most distinguishing character of true, proper, incommunicable Deity, that himself assumes and insists on throughout the record; and the highest pitch of religious acknowledgement the most enlightened saint ever made; so high, that those who would sink him either to a mere creature, or to an inferior degree of Deity, have no resource left, but that very precarious one, that the supreme God could make a creature who might be able to create worlds. But Jesus

himself



himself has said, (and he never said any thing but what was perfectly true), that whatever the Father doth, he doth also. And we find, further, the essential name JEHOVAH attributed to him; and it is attributed to him in more places of the Old Testament than commentators have observed. When therefore he is expressly styled, *The Lord*, and *King of Israel*, what authority have we to make him a substitute in any other way than that to which he has condescended to humble himself? And is not this more absurd and unintelligible than what they would avoid by it, viz. a trinity, distinguished by the names of *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*, of the same divine substance or essence, subsisting and acting in and by one another?

Thus we are taught, that the *eternal* Word, for whatever is before the beginning of time must be eternal, the same who is called the *Son*, was made flesh; and by assuming the human nature into personal union with his divinity, made the nearest approach the creator could make to the creature, and in effect united himself to it. So that we have, in strict truth, the same assurance, that this divine person is the creator, as that the being called *God* is; and

and the same evidences of divine power and wisdom, with all other perfections; and the same means too of ascertaining our belief, and helping our conceptions, by the analogous powers he exerted in the mighty works which he did; many of which approach so near to creating power, that they at least imply such a command of all the powers of nature, as none but the creator could possibly exert.

And this leads to the astonishing event; how such an excellent being came thus to condescend to bear the form of a servant, and thus to be despised and rejected of men? None will be so foolish as to imagine the Deity was changed into Humanity, or the Humanity into Deity: but it is easy to conceive, that the invisible Deity might, if he so pleased, hide his glory under this mean appearance, as we are told Jehovah, unquestionably the true God, frequently did in the early ages of the world. But, at the same time, there must be some proportionable end to answer by it. And it is here that the distinguishing character of Jesus Christ displays itself in the strongest colours. And, to say it all in one word, it was *love* to mankind, and to give the most convincing evidence

evidence of the truth of what the Apostle John tells us, that *God is love*. To convince mankind of this, labouring as they are under the misrepresentations of an evil conscience, and thereby to reconcile them to God as the proper object of love, is the whole design of the gospel, the record God has made concerning his Son.

But this is not to be effected without what is properly called the *spiritual discerning* or *perception*; nor can that subsist without spiritual life, of which it is the leading power; nor yet can that life subsist but by restoring to man that spirit which Adam lost by his falling from God; by which all communication with the fountain of life was stopped, and man became a mere animal: rational indeed, and that sets him above the brutes; but reason cannot move without something to work upon, and therefore can extend no further than his perceptive powers go, which reach no further than a present world. Whence the Apostle calls all those who have not the spirit, *sensual*, as they have no other guide but their senses, until they come to be better informed, as blind men are of light, and its properties and effects.

Many

Many have thought, that the creator might have raised mankind to this new life by a mere act of grace, without any more ado. And in effect he has done so. But by the primeval law, the life we have from Adam must be destroyed; and, that sin might be fully condemned, men must believe and agree to the condemnatory sentence, that the wages of sin is death, and that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. But, above all, man must have a strong foundation laid for the belief of such a very unlikely thing, as that a righteous and holy God, who, from the perfection of his very goodness, must perfectly hate and abhor sin, and destroy it out of his world, that such a God should not only pardon and forgive the sinner, but raise him up to a state of such dignity, perfection, and happiness, as Adam's paradisiacal life was but a very faint image and figure of; and, finally, that this happy life should be secured against any new forfeiture, which it must have been continually exposed to through the weakness and folly of man, had it been lodged in his hands without any better security.

As this is, in the strictest sense, and



without any metaphor, a new creation, by which men are introduced into a new world, and a new way of living, they are accordingly provided in a new head, such as Adam his figure was in the first creation. To him the grant of life-eternal was made; and by uniting the man Jesus with the eternal Word, all the fullness of life was actually lodged in his hand; and so lodged, that none can have any share in it, or enter the spiritual and eternal world, but by deriving it from him, and partaking of his spirit, in what is properly called *regeneration*, or *the new birth*. To him the terms of life were given: and they were severe ones; that he should be obedient even unto the death; that he should take upon himself the burden which sin had brought upon mankind, overcome every temptation, and, by making himself a sacrifice for, and condemning sin in the flesh, should open a way for destroying sin and death; and thus effectually bruise the serpent's head, and destroy the works of the devil. These terms he completely fulfilled; and thus made out a perfect right to the promised life. So that the grant comes free, as the freest gift to mankind; only with this natural and necessary consequence, that

that they deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him; that is, in other words, that they acquiesce in the original constitution, and give up to death and destruction the life they had from Adam, renounce all pretensions to hold by the first creation-grant, rest in the gift of grace in Christ, and hold all by his right; as himself has stated it, As the Father hath given to me, so do I give the kingdom to you.

Thus, then, the complex character of Jesus Christ unfolds to us all the very different, and seemingly inconsistent, accounts that are given of him: God condescending to dwell with men upon earth in the man Jesus; and the man exalted into the perfection, the glory and dignity of God, with all the fullness of life, and its most perfect powers dwelling in him; all wisdom and understanding, almighty power, and the perfection of goodness, exerted in and by the wonderful man, chosen and appointed for these high purposes; the true priest intercessor standing between the creator and his creatures, and the great and only mean of communication between God and man.

From the whole of his history laid together, arises the most amiable of all characters; a perfect image of the invisible God, without any defect or abatement. His perfect disinterested love was tried and approved by all the tests which love can be put to; when, instead of the joy that was lying before him, and his natural right and due, he humbled himself into the very lowest of what is called the misery of mankind, absolute poverty and contempt, the utmost contradiction of sinners, and malice of the great and mighty; he endured the cross, despising the shame. And this is recommended by every circumstance which can be imagined to endear the tenderest and most affectionate love: and all the recompence he had to ask of his heavenly Father for all the sorrows and sufferings he had undergone throughout his faithful service was; to be glorified with that glory he had with him before the foundation of the world.

That glory he began to enter upon at his resurrection from the dead; by which he appeared to be, what never another man was, the absolute proprietor of his own life; who had power to lay it  
down,

down, and power to take it up again. Thus he abolished and triumphed over death, destroyed the works of the devil, set life and immortality in the fairest light, and laid, for all his followers, a strong foundation of faith and hope of being made like him in his resurrection and glory.

He continued on earth a considerable time after, but no longer than he judged it necessary to confirm his disciples in the full assurance of his resurrection: he then ascended into heaven in their sight, entered into his glory, and soon after gave full proof of it by such an exertion of power and authority, as none but God could give; fulfilling the promise he had made them before his death, that he would send them another comforter, who should lead them into all truth; and fulfilling it in a manner that one would think must have convinced the most obstinately prejudiced unbeliever. And thus we have him presented to our faith in a state of dignity infinitely above what the most pompous descriptions of the prophets expressed, every way worthy to be trusted with the most assured confidence, for making good every part of his general character,



rafter, as surety of the new and better covenant to convey the promised blessings, and to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

But yet there is another part of his character which it concerns us much to keep continually in view; that as all power in heaven and in earth is given into his hand, and the whole weight of government laid upon his shoulders, so all judgement is committed to him; particularly that final one, at the day which God hath appointed, when we must all appear before his judgement-seat, and have our eternal state of happiness or misery fixed by his unalterable sentence. And sure it concerns us much how we treat him now, when he comes, as he does in the word of the gospel, with all the attractions of redeeming love, to save us from our sins, and the snare of the devil, and the dreadful bondage in which we are all of us so deeply involved, that nothing but the mighty power of God in his hand can relieve us.

12. *The original state of Mankind after the entrance of sin.*

THE original state of mankind, is a point of which those whom we call *ancient writers* have nothing to say. The eldest of them are the Greeks, who knew nothing but the traditions they had of the barbarous condition of their ancestors; from which they very foolishly concluded, that all the rest of the world were such. Moses is incomparably more ancient than the eldest of them, and had advantages, such as none of them had, or could have. I will say nothing now of the authenticity of his history, but take the account he has given as he has laid it.

When our guilty first parents concluded, that their hitherto munificent creator was now become their irreconcilable enemy, from whom they had nothing to expect but death and destruction, the only expedient that occurred to them was, to keep themselves as much as possible out of his sight; and had he left them to themselves, they and their posterity must have

have sunk into a state of greater and more wretched savageness than any of them have ever yet been found in. But he left them not long to languish in such dismal anxiety. The great sovereign and judge of the earth sought them out, called them into judgement, and, by his wise and righteous sentence, fixed what was to be, and has been ever since, the permanent and unalterable state of mankind. By which it appears, that the paradisiacal state, with all the perfection and happiness which attended it, was never designed by perfect wisdom, otherwise than as a proper introduction to another. It is here, therefore, that we are to look for that divine constitution or law given to mankind; the declaration of his eternal counsels and purposes, what measures he was to follow, what should be their duty in all time coming, and what should be the event and issue of all; by which only mankind can know what they have either to hope or to fear from the hand of their creator.

Man is evidently so made, as to be strongly connected with, and dependent on, the material system, for the support and maintenance of this shadow of life  
which

which he possesses in a present world. I call this a shadow of life, because it appears plainly, that he is capable of a way of living incomparably preferable to it; a life, by which he is as strongly connected with, and dependent on, the spiritual and eternal system. Hence, to take any thing like a just view of the state of mankind, his situation with respect to both these systems must be attended to.

With respect to the material system, and his condition in the present world, he was evidently a great loser by his transgression. The original law bound him under death; and accordingly sentence is pronounced, that he shall return unto the dust, from which he was taken; and thus all hopes of the continuance of all or any of those pleasures and gratifications we are so fond of, are utterly extinguished. And it becomes the vainest thing that can be well imagined, to set our hearts upon any of them; and the most egregious folly, to value ourselves on such short and precarious enjoyments or possessions, as a present perishing and precarious life can admit of.

Nor was this all: The now unhappy man was deprived at once of all the pleasures and



comforts of life which he had formerly enjoyed in paradise, and was driven out to till the *earth*, from which he was taken. And this, by the way, suggests to us a truth; I am afraid, too little minded: Man was not made *in* paradise; nor was that the natural state of man, even in the height of his innocence and perfection, but a gift superadded of free sovereign grace: God planted and furnished the garden, and put him into it, without any merit or co-operation of his.

But neither was the earth, which he was sent to till, left in its original condition. Many fine things have been said of the superlative fruitfulness of the antedeluvian soil; but how any came by the knowledge of it, is hard to say. This, we are sure, they learned not from Moses; for he gives it as the express words of the sentence, “Curst is the ground for thy sake: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth:” the great occasion of that toil and labour which Lamech complained of, because of the ground which God had cursed, and which he promises himself relief from by his son Noah. Accordingly we find a promise made after the deluge

deluge to this same Noah, that he would no more curse the ground for man's sake. And thus every thing was made to help forward the execution of the sentence, the labour and sorrow which was to attend the human life, and to make him earn his bread by the sweat of his brows; which has been the case of the generality ever since, however some have fallen upon methods to exempt themselves from it; but whether to their real advantage, is at best very doubtful.

As the woman had the first hand in the transgression, she had her share allotted to her of the punishment; the sorrows of conception and child-bearing, which her daughters feel to this day. Besides, there was a sort of subjection on her part, and dominion over her given to the husband, such as the perfect love which subsisted in their innocent state could not admit of. But, after all, that the sentence of death was not immediately put in execution, was a gracious indulgence they had no reason to expect.

But however great man's loss was in his connections with the material system, and a present world, we have no reason to say so with regard to the spiritual. So far from it, that by the constitution of

grace, (I cannot call it *new*, for it was established from eternity in the unchangeable divine purpose, and only then first revealed to mankind); by this divine constitution, his connection with the spiritual world was incomparably closer, and established on another sort of firm foundation, than what he had in paradise; and his prospects enlarged in proportion to another kind of happiness; and the enjoyment thereof secured against all events to endless eternity.

The account which Moses gives of this new revelation is very concise, but abundantly sufficient for those for whose use the record was made. The Israelites had it sufficiently explained in the blessing of their father Abraham, and the law given in the wilderness, where they had nothing to do for forty years but to hear and learn the mind of God; and after ages, by the later prophets, and the writings of the disciples and apostles of Jesus: and yet, if the account Moses hath left us, of what was spoken, and what was done, by the creator on that occasion, is rightly understood, we will see it was the same revelation which was published to the world by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Of what the creator said on this occasion, Moses has recorded no more than is contained in the sentence on the serpent, viz. That the woman should have a seed that should bruise his head. Though the curse is pronounced in terms which apply literally to the instrument of seduction, yet no person who considers circumstances can doubt, that the bruising the serpent's head strongly expresses what the Apostle John makes the Son of God's errand into this world, *to destroy the works of the devil*. The works of the devil are sin and death; and when these are destroyed, nothing remains but pure life; and thus destroying the works of the devil is of the same import with that saying of our Lord, that having life in himself, he came to give eternal life unto all that would come and receive it at his hand.

That Adam took it thus, seems pretty plain, from the name he gave his wife upon that occasion. She was to be the mother of *all living* before she got her name; but now that she was to be the mother of that seed who had all life in himself, and from whom it was to be conveyed to those who were dead in trespasses and sins, she was constituted the mother of *all life*, as the original



original word imports; as it is by him, and him only, who raises the dead, that the man, who certainly must die, can live for ever.

But when we further consider what God is said to have done, we cannot help thinking, that all this was more fully explained to our first parents. His driving them out of paradise put an end to their first creation-life, and brought them into such circumstances, that live they could not, but by a new grant; and that, we are well assured, could not be given but under a new head, and that by free sovereign grace, and a power equivalent to creating, raising them from the dead.

We are further told, he made them coats or garments of skins to cover their nakedness. They were naked in paradise, and were not ashamed so long as they were innocent; but so soon as sin entered, shame came along with it: A fair intimation that their nakedness lay in their souls. It is natural to put the question, What skins were these? Supposing, what yet is denied by most, that they fed on flesh, could so many be killed for Adam and Eve? But if we suppose, what indeed must be admitted,

ted, that God revealed to them his grant of eternal life, and the conduct required on their part; which is what our translators call making a covenant; of which solemnity a sacrifice was an absolutely necessary part, as is clear from the case of Noah, Abraham, and the Israelites, not to mention the more private and particular ones; then covering their nakedness with the skins of the sacrifice, was a fair emblem and representation of that covering for sin which God had provided for them, and all who would be prevailed with to renounce their fig-leaf coverings, and put on the Lord Jesus. It was on this great foundation that the constitution of grace, and the grant of eternal life, were then established, and ever since have stood. Nor is it conceivable how the butchering of beasts, shedding their blood, and formally burning their flesh in a fire prepared for the purpose, could ever have been set up as a piece of divine worship, on any lower authority than that of God; nor even on that, without explaining the design of it.

Moses tells us further, that God placed at the east of the garden, cherubims, to keep the way of the tree of life. The  
cherubims,

cherubims, we know, were, of all others, the most sacred piece of furniture in the tabernacle and temple; and no body doubts of their being emblems of something very sacred. They were, without dispute, designed a sensible representation of that exhibition of the divine glory which Ezekiel saw in vision, and which he knew to be the cherubims. In them, or between them, was the throne of God, the throne of grace, the symbolical representation of his dwelling with men; and thence he gave his oracles and responses to those who consulted him. And thus they were a sensible representation of the whole frame of the constitution of grace. There was indeed no small danger, that man, once seduced, might fall into the like error, and imagine some virtue in the material tree of life. Very properly, therefore, and in great mercy to him, he was expelled the garden, and directed to another object, the true tree of life in the paradise of God.

On this obvious view, no body could have doubted, that the cherubims set up on the east of Eden were of the same kind with those which the prophet Ezekiel saw, and designed to answer the same purpose with

with the model of them in the tabernacle and temple; which appears to have been so well known in Moses's time, that the workmen made them without any direction, except that they were to beat them out of the same piece of gold whereof the propitiatory or mercy-seat was made. And all would have been plain and easy, had not translators thought they met with a flaming sword brandished or turning every way, in the original of Moses: and comparing it with what was given as the reason of turning Adam and his wife out of paradise, they imagined this was a guard of angels brandishing a sort of flaming sword to scare them from returning.

I will say nothing of this notion, but that the original gives no countenance to it. The Hebrew word is indeed often used by Moses, and the other sacred writers, for any killing or destroying weapon; and a sword among others. But one needs only turn to any of the common dictionaries of that language, to be satisfied, that this is not the natural and original meaning of the word; but drying, scorching, consuming, all which are the effects of fire and flame;



whence it is by an easy analogy transferred to denote every thing which has such effects. And thus we shall have nothing left us but a flaming fire, the ordinary symbol of the divine glory, resting on the cherubims; and so like Ezekiel's fire, involving itself, or blazing every way, that one can hardly help believing they were the same.

Upon the whole, it must be acknowledged, that the state of mankind complexly taken, was so far from being made worse, that it was greatly bettered by the fall of our first progenitors. For, besides the unexceptionable security, and the unspeakable superexcellency of the new prospects, there is one circumstance which vastly enhances the pleasure, and lays the foundation of the warmest gratitude and love, deep and strong as can possibly be imagined; and that is the relation established between man and God's own Son, the new head of mankind.

The grace of the first creation, and the peculiar favour shown to man above the other animals, called for suitable returns of gratitude. The favour was most sovereignly free; for when all was nothing, there could be nothing to raise one creature

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ture above another, but the absolute will and pleasure of the creator. Nor could man's love and gratitude be ever carried so high as the favour deserved. But as he had never known, much less felt, himself in any other condition; he might easily have been tempted, as some have been, to look upon all as his creation-dues, and accordingly have valued himself upon them. But when, after the humbling intimation, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," he found himself on the very brink of eternal destruction; while his own conscience tormented him with the remembrance of what he had lost; what a sweet surprize must the prospect of pardon have given him! and how could he ever be thankful enough! Especially when he found superadded to this, (and strongly secured to him, in the new head provided in the promised seed), a grant of all the perfection, glory, and happiness of eternal life. Surely nothing could equal the raptures of love and gratitude he must then have felt, but the Apostle's expression, if even that can come up to it, "a joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Where the heart is thus formed on the sovereign, condescending grace, and love,

and kindness of God to man, no commandments of his can be grievous: nay, the harder they feel to flesh and blood, the more pleasure it gives to obey chearfully, without asking questions. The royal law of love is written on the heart; and all the commandments of God are no more but the native exercises and actings of it. So that it is quite astonishing how it should ever have entered any one's head, that the doctrine of free sovereign grace should have any malignant aspect on the practice of holiness, when indeed it is the only sure ground on which gratitude and love can stand. And perfect love is perfect holiness. Where love is wanting, all is darkness in the soul, except the terrors of incensed majesty, and almighty power, which an evil conscience, in the least awakened, will set in a most dreadful light: and no motive is left to obedience, but that very base and slavish one, the fear of punishment; which is utterly inconsistent with that *glorious liberty* of the sons of God; which is the privilege of those who are raised to the high dignity of being heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son.

Thus

Thus happy, thus ravishingly happy, must the first pair of finners have been on the very unexpected revelation of the constitution of grace, and the comfortable prospect opened up in the promised seed. And thus happy might all their posterity have been in the same prospect, had it not been for that woful thing they call *liberty*, which the world has been so madly fond on; and which yet is the great imperfection of human nature, and the inlet of all the evils which have infested human life, and of that dreadful apostasy which involved the whole world in utter destruction. The foundation of it is laid in ignorance and folly; the want of that wisdom which should keep one firm and steady to his *true* interest; and in that tendency, so deeply rooted in our constitution, to pursue what to us *appears* to be our interest.

This is no arbitrary thing, nor is there any choice left to us here; we can no more believe or disbelieve, love or hate, by barely willing it, than we can walk in the clouds, or ride on the wings of the wind. In spite of ourselves, and all we can do to the contrary, we must believe what appears



pears to us to be true, and doubt of what does not. We must love what appears to us lovely, and pleases; and must hate, in some degree, or at least be cold and indifferent to what displeases, or appears hateful. So long, then, as the wonderful grace of the creator, in the astonishing prospect of pardon and eternal life in the promised seed, was known and believed, the heart continued firmly knit in the pleasant bands of love and gratitude.

The evidence of this was clear and strong to those who received this unspeakable consolation from the creator's own mouth. But those who had no more but the tradition, were not in the same advantageous situation. The tradition had indeed such advantages as made it worthy to be received and believed; but might be overlooked and neglected then, as well as the written tradition is now. The world, with all its allurements and affrightments, hath free access by the flesh and external senses: spiritual and eternal things, however infinitely more excellent, are unseen, and thence readily imagined to be remote; so that there is nothing to balance the heart against present sense and feeling, but  
faith,

faith, the belief of the tradition; which, in its very nature, gives evidence and subsistence to such facts as are unseen, and subsist only in hope; and as this is weak or strong, such in proportion will be the strength and weakness of the impression made by the things believed on the heart and affections; and such must be the sentiments and inward feelings of the believer.

One way by which the original tradition, or, which is the same thing, the divine law, establishing the measures of grace, and the duties arising from them, is violated or broken in upon, is, when the sensible pleasures of a present world impose so far on the unguarded mind, as to take possession of the heart, as most worthy of our pursuit; by which the heart is so cooled toward God and his grace, as insensibly to lose all regard to what we have either to hope or to fear from him. This is the consequence of our natural ignorance

This is a state so much below a reasonable creature, that it is not conceivable how it can hold, unless we can suppose the original tradition altogether lost, and  
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men left absolute atheists; a case, which, by all the information we have, never happened. Wofully corrupted it has been, and religion degenerated into the most silly superstition. But that, instead of destroying, greatly increaseth the occasions of remorse; when the man, reflecting on his own conduct, discovers, by the light of tradition, that he has offended God; and finds reason to suspect, that this great being is become his enemy, from whom he has nothing to expect but evil. Then God appears no more a proper object of love; but, on the contrary, of dread and terror; and by this the seeds of enmity are deeply rooted in the heart.

Numberless are the methods that have been tried by men to placate the divine anger, and, by recommending themselves to his favour, to quiet a guilty conscience: but there is only one that can answer the purpose effectually; namely, the revelation of the grace of God in Christ, and the firm belief of the promise of pardon and life through him, as perfect wisdom has laid the plan, in the eternal constitution of grace. Where-ever, therefore, any plan is set up in opposition to this, as many  
have

have been set up by the fanciful wisdom of men; in all these numberless cases, there is a plain apostasy from the original state the creator designed for fallen men. The chief of them is that plan of moral government, whereby man is left to stand or fall on his own bottom; on which all the different methods of working for life, and serving God, as they call it, are grafted.

As all these, and indeed the whole plan of moral government founded in our notions of what we call *justice*, and so far laying a foundation of resting on our own merits in some shape or other, must be in the same degree deviations from what God has declared to be the measure of his government, viz. his sovereignly free grace and mercy in Christ; according to which, the only way a sinner can live to God, is by the grace lodged in the Redeemer's hand; therefore every attempt to recommend one to the divine favour, or to live by any other means, is the most direct and affrontive rebellion against our creator and sovereign; and, in reality, a madly insolent attempt to enter upon the possession of life, whether God will or not.

Whatever was the first apostasy of the antedeluvian world, all flesh had in fact cor-



rupted themselves to such a degree, that we find the creator declaring, that he *repented* of having made such a creature. It is easy to see, that such a being as God is, not only the possessor, but absolute proprietor of perfect knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, could never do any thing which he should wish had not been done; an essential property of repentance among men. But when the creator was about to undo what he had done, by destroying mankind, and the earth which they had defiled and polluted, human language had no word to express the sentiment by, but *repenting*. But where that corruption, which spread so wide, took its first rise, is not so easy to be discovered. We may indeed say, with good assurance, that it could not happen until the love of God was extinguished in the heart of man; nor could that be, so long as the knowledge of the true God continued there. But whether this knowledge was lost by his being swallowed up in the cares and pleasures of a present world, or by mistaking something which was but a creature, for the true God, and thus transferring the properties and powers of the creator to an idol of their own imaginations, we can-

not

not positively say. This last seems to have some countenance, from what God said of the imaginations of man's heart, that they were all of them "only evil continually." From what may be seen in the progress of the present race of men, it seems most likely, that they went hand-in-hand, and forwarded and supported one another.

Children, for a number of years after their entrance into the world, subsist in a state of absolute dependence on their parents, and those under whose care they are put; but are quite insensible of it. They have no notion of property; but think themselves injured if any thing they take a fancy to, however hurtful, is detained from them; yet are very fond of those who are kind to them, and appear to love them. To strangers, however deserving, they have an aversion; and a small matter increases it to hatred. And thus, so long as their wants are supplied, they look no further, nor mind any of the other numerous dependencies they are under.

In time, by observation and instruction, they come to discover their connection with a present world; and that there is something they have to hope or fear both

from the men and things about them. What pleases them in both, they continue extremely fond of. Those who help them forward, they love; and often with great warmth: those who stand in their way, they have an aversion to, and are ready to hate as violently. Hence their great business is, to recommend themselves, and engage the esteem and friendship of all about them. And thus, I am afraid, the bulk of mankind spend their days, seeking honour one of another. Any higher powers they hardly think of, except when alarmed with what threatens danger, or unless they have been taught something about invisible powers; but even that seldom goes farther, than superstitious fears of they know not what, and wishing to be kept out of their hands.

The men of the first ages were better taught, and lived too long, to rest in such a childish ignorance, and way of living. The tradition of a creator and supreme governor, to whom they were subject, and to whom they owed all their pleasures, was fresh, and, in a manner, recent, down to Noah and the deluge. But who, and what kind of being this creator might be,

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was not so easily perceived. Swallowed up, as men very naturally are, in the cares and pleasures of a present world; in the enjoyment of these they as naturally place their happiness; and the greater improvement is made by the fine arts, the sources of pleasure are proportionally increased, and the more are the hearts of those who feel that pleasure, knit to the objects which raise and support it. This cannot fail to deaden the heart to all other enjoyments; to those especially of the spiritual kind, and that honour which cometh from God only. It was not until Lamech's sons brought in their improvements of these sorts of pleasures, that mankind came to be corrupted to such a height as brought upon them the deluge.

In this state of mind, it followed of course, that they should pay their adoration and homage to that being on whom all their pleasures were supposed to depend; and who had, or was imagined to have, the bestowing of them. No body who knows the creator will doubt, that it would have been easy for him to have supported man in being by the same immediate power which gave him existence, without any  
means



or under-agents; but as man was incapable of perceiving such power, this great evil might have followed, that he might be in a manner naturally led to imagine him-himself independent, and thus to cast off all regard to any superior whatsoever. Man was therefore very wisely so connected with the material system, the influence of the heavens, and the fruits of the earth, that he could not miss to feel very sensibly his dependence upon them. But hereby again he was insensibly betrayed into the imagination, that these mechanical under-agents, the powers of the heavens, were the only superiors on which he had any dependence. These, he knew, not only regulated the times and the seasons, but likewise produced all the materials which were the fund by which the pleasures and enjoyments of life were maintained. Accordingly the heavens, or some one or other of their powers, were the sole objects of the idolatry of the ancient nations; until, by the loss of that branch of knowledge, they sunk, in the latter times of Heathenism, into such profound ignorance of the nature of the gods whom they served, that they really worshipped they knew not what. It continued, however, in such credit down to the Babylonish captivity,

tivity, that the Jews themselves, the best instructed nation on the earth, were then madly fond of it.

The great creator was not wanting, in every period, to give substantial evidence, that all these were no other than his instruments, by which he exerted his almighty power. How long the exhibition of the divine glory in the cherubims was continued, one cannot say: but as sacrifices certainly were continued down to Noah, it is very likely there were some sacred symbols of the divine presence, before which that solemn piece of worship was performed. And it is not improbable, that what is called *the glory of God*, like the pillar of fire and cloud among the Israelites, might be abused so far as to be worshipped in place of God. We read nothing of the creator's conversations with men after that with Cain; though it seems almost certain that they did continue, by the case of Noah, where God's conversation with him concerning the flood is mentioned in the record as a thing of course. Enoch's walking with God seems likewise to suppose it. But however that was, it is certain Enoch had the spirit of prophecy; and that he,

as well as Noah, was employed to warn, and, if possible, to reclaim, a careless thoughtless world; and when God took him to himself, before he arrived near the middle of the then age of men, it was a sensible evidence, that there was another and better state than the present one, with all the advantages that could be made of it.

But when nothing else would do, Jehovah effectually showed that he himself was the creator and sovereign of the universe; and that all those things which the folly of mankind had set up against him, were no other than his ministers, which he could employ for what purposes he pleased: as he then did employ them for the most awful purpose, even the utter destruction of those very men who were so foolish as to worship them. The powers of the heavens, whose ordinary business it was to keep every thing in the place and order the creator had put them in, appear to have been either suspended, or employed in such a contrary way, that the waters returned upon the earth, much in the same manner as before their first separation: so that we need be at no loss to find water enough, not only to overflow, but to dissolve, the earth into its original chaotic state. And the

the reforming it again by the same means, exhibits a power perfectly similar to the first creation, so that no room is left for doubting, but that he who brought on and removed the deluge, was most certainly the creator, and absolute proprietor, of the universe.

This, it might have been thought, should have ended the dispute for ever. From this dreadful æra mankind took a new beginning, and, in some respect, a new condition. Noah became as much the common parent of mankind as Adam was. By the account we have of his way of making his acknowledgements to God, and God's way with him on that great occasion, we are led more fully into proper views of what was the state of mankind before, and what has been so ever since that time.

When Noah was directed to make the ark, he was commanded to take of every clean beast and fowl by sevens, and only the male and female of the rest; and at his coming out, we are told, that he took of every clean beast and fowl, and offered them as whole burnt-offerings, on the altar which he reared for that purpose. It



is obvious from this account, that the distinction between clean and unclean had not its first rise in what is called *the ceremonial law* given by Moses; nay, that it had been established from the time that sacrifices were ordained a piece of worship. Men, it appears, were not left at liberty to offer what they pleased, but what they were directed of God, any more than they might devise for themselves the terms of pardon and acceptance with him. This persuasion continued strong down through the darkest times of Heathenism; where every Deity was supposed to have chosen some particular kind of animal, and could not be rightly propitiated by offering any other.

We have the effect of this sacrifice strongly marked out to us. God smelled a *sweet* favour, say our translators; a favour of *rest*, say others, rather more properly. What could there be in the smoke of burnt carcases of beasts? And with the same propriety it may be asked, What was there to give rest or pleasure to such a being as God, so as to make him say to himself, that he would no more destroy the earth for the wickedness of man? Surely  
nothing

nothing in the beasts, or in the smell of their burning: but there was enough in what they represented, the sacrifice of his beloved Son, in whom he was always perfectly well pleased; and in whom, and his perfect obedience unto the death, all his counsels and purposes concerning man are founded.

But however firm and unchangeable the divine purposes are, they can have no effect on us until they are declared. And thus God *blessed* Noah and his sons. The blessing of God is common in every one's mouth, but the knowledge of the true import of it is not so common. As it is certain it cannot stop in mere words, or good wishes, as mens do, it therefore can be no other than the exerting the divine power for them, so far as the blessing is intended to go. The blessing of Noah was having *God's covenant established with him*: for thus the phrase is commonly rendered. But when we come to consider the terms in which it is expressed, there is nothing like what we understand by *a covenant*; nay, so far from it, that it is established in the same terms with fowl, cattle, and every beast of the field; which, surely, entered

into no mutual agreement with him. And after all, it comes out to be nothing else, but declaring the purpose he had made in himself, that all flesh should no more be cut off by a flood.

But the blessing on Noah and his sons extends further. The order given the first pair to increase and multiply is repeated; and something very like the dominion they had over the creatures is given to him and his sons, as these are said to be delivered into his hand; and now, for the first time, they are given unto them for food, as the green herb and the fruits of the earth had been formerly. And in all this, God shows himself the proprietor of all; that man has no right to any thing, nor can have any, but by his sovereign free gift.

But all this relates purely to a present life, and their comfortable subsistence in the flesh: and it would be very strange if this formal blessing extended no farther; as farther it cannot, if what follows has no further import than translators have commonly given; that is, only a restraint laid on them from eating blood, and a prohibition of murder, with an order to avenge it; which perhaps has induced some learned men to pitch upon this as the sole  
reason

reason of the prohibition of blood, lest it should inure them to cruelty, and shedding the blood of one another.

But on a serious consideration of the terms in which blood is forbidden here, and comparing it with the reason given for the prohibition in the Jewish law, the whole will appear to have a much higher intention, and to carry a repetition of the original promise of the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, more fully expressed. The reason given in the Jewish law why they should not eat blood is a good one, that God had set it apart for the altar, to make atonement for their lives or souls. And thus it was very proper to say, that he would require the life of man at the hand of every beast: and in what other sense it can be said with any propriety at all, is certainly very hard to conceive.

And this gives the key to what follows, as something infinitely higher than a prohibition of murder, and a threatening against the murderer. However the institution of sacrificing beasts, and the promise of pardon annexed, was a sufficient intimation for the sinner to rest his hopes, and even his assurance, upon; yet was it certainly

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ly true, that the blood of bulls and of goats could by no means take away sin, and therefore left the faith and hope of the worshipper to rest solely on the promise. But when God sent his only and beloved Son to be the saviour of the world, and to make himself a sacrifice for sin; that is, his life a ransom for theirs; and thus, through death, destroying the devil, the first and arch murderer, who brought death upon all mankind by sin, or, in the Hebrew dialect, shed the blood of their lives; then the case was altered, and faith and hope in the fullest assurance had a firm and strong foundation to stand on: “For (as the Apostle reasons) he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Thus, it is evident, God requires the blood of every man at the hand of *the man*; i. e. the great or mighty person, his, or every man's brother. And it follows most properly, that *he*, (for *whoso* is not in the text), that he who had shed, and whose trade it was to shed, the blood of man, or to bring him under the power of death, should have his own blood shed, or be destroyed by man. And the reason given is strong  
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in this light: For, as *God made man in his own image*, the attempting his destruction must be the most enormous crime a creature could commit, and deserved the most exemplary punishment; viz. that *he*, the murderer of man, should be destroyed by *the man* who was his *perfect image*, or that seed of the woman who should bruise the old serpent's head. Thus the blessing of Noah and his sons was perfected, by thus securing for them the perfecting blessing. And, in consequence of the favour of rest which arose on this great sacrifice, the intimation of the divine purpose about the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, man and beast, was given, that he would no more curse the ground for man's sake, nor destroy the earth, as he had done, with a deluge.

But after all this, we have a strange account of this great man who was so peculiarly favoured, and had the character of a just man, and perfect in his generation; that though he had lived six hundred years before the flood, and none can tell how long after, for the thing very probably happened near the end of his life; yet then only he began to be a husbandman, planted a vineyard, and knew so little of  
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the nature of wine, that he drank to excess; nay, was drunk to such a pitch, that he had not so much command of himself as to cover his nakedness; and that, upon awaking, he immediately falls a-blessing some of his children, and cursing others for their undutiful behaviour; and both by the spirit of prophecy. Thus I believe all the translations represent it. But the original phrase, Gen. ix. 20. "Noah began to be an husband-man," need not be so understood as if that had been the first time he practised husbandry, but only that it was the business he followed after the flood; and the word rendered *drunk*, does not always signify the stupifying effect of wine, but whatever puts men into such a state as wine doth, locking up the senses to external objects. And thus the history seems to carry in it something very sacred, which made Ham's conduct not only undutiful to his father, but highly profane in itself. Every body knows, that it was the custom of the patriarchs to bless their children before their death; and when there were more than one, to convey the primitive blessing of the promised seed to that one of whom he was to descend.

This, surely, must have been a matter of too great moment to be left to the disposal of  
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of any man whatsoever; and least of all, to the caprice of a man just awaked from a fit of drunkenness. It is evident that it could not be done without particular divine direction. Thus we find Abraham instructed, that in Isaac his seed should be called as the child of the promise. And by what we find Isaac did when about to convey the blessing to his son, Gen. xxvii. 25. drinking wine in some particular manner seems to have been a part of that solemnity. When the Apostle Paul was wrapt up to the third heavens, and had his very extraordinary revelations, he could not say whether he was in or out of the body. If he was in a divine ecstasy, which is most probable, he could have had no more care of his body than Noah had of his. And when the whole of Noah's character, and the special divine favour and grace shown him by God, are considered, together with his prophetic blessing and cursing his children, how much more reasonable is it to think, that he was in such an ecstasy, than oppressed with the fumes of the wine he had drunk: A very improper preparation, one should think, for the spirit of prophecy. In consequence of the indignity offered him by Ham, he might reasonably enough



begin as he does, by cursing, or rather by declaring the curse to be resting where the event afterwards made it appear. But even this he doth not like one under the influence of resentment: he passes by Ham, the offender, and all the elder children of Ham, and lodges the curse on Canaan; where, we know, it has been punctually fulfilled. The blessing is as extraordinary as the curse. Though, by all that appears in the history, Japhet, the eldest of Noah's sons, was every way as dutiful as Shem the youngest, yet upon this last is the blessing made to rest; whether we take the words as our translators have rendered them, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;" or rather, as there is neither verb nor tense in the original, "Blessed is Shem of the Lord his God," which agrees better with what follows; for it was not to God, but to Shem, and his brother Japhet, who was joined with him in the blessing, that Canaan was doomed to be a servant. But the blessing of God is not conveyed as estates are among us, either by seniority or merit. It is free and sovereign, and freely given where the great proprietor pleases. What some learned men have talked of the prerogatives of the eldest line, is so far

far from having any foundation in the sacred history, that seniority there appears, in almost every instance, to be set aside, and entirely disregarded.

13. *Abraham.*

IT might have been expected, that the dreadful destruction of the old world, the distinguishing favour shown to Noah, and the blessing renewed, and entailed on him and his descendants, should have secured the attachment of the new world to that God who had thus manifested at once his eternal power and Godhead, and the sovereignty of his mercy and grace. But it soon appeared, that the creator and sovereign of the world was not mistaken when he said, "That the imaginations of man's heart were only evil continually." How soon the apostasy began, or how long Noah's descendants continued in their adherence to the true God and his worship, cannot be easily determined. It is very probable, that Noah's curse would sit heavy upon Ham and his children, and that they would not longer continue to be devout adorers of that God who had, as they might

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think, shown such partiality against the younger brother, and doomed him to servitude. Among them, however, the defecation seems to have begun; very probably under Nimrod; who was so distinguished in his day, that his name went into a proverb, and gave rise to the fabulous history of the old Assyrian monarchy; which yet did not take its rise until within a few centuries of the date which they make the end of it.

As the worship of the heavens was undoubtedly the first and most natural idolatry, the builders of the tower of Babel seem to have had more in view than barely to prevent their being scattered abroad on the face of the earth; though even that was bad enough, and little, if any thing, short of a direct rebellion against their creator, who had ordered them to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. It can never be supposed they were so foolish as to imagine they could build a tower on a plain, which should overtop all the mountains that surrounded it, much less should reach to the heavens, as our translators have made them say. They proposed, indeed, that the top or summit of it should be to  
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the heavens ; which cannot be conceived to have any other meaning than that it should serve as a temple or altar to the heavens.

This one complex object, by which all the operations of what they call *nature* are maintained and carried on, came in time to be divided into a multitude of imaginary gods, as the different powers, effects, and operations, of that wonderful machine, happened to be pitched upon by different worshippers. And by what we find Joshua saying to the Israelites, of the gods which their fathers served beyond the flood, it would seem that the apostasy had become very general, if not universal, when it pleased God to take a further course for maintaining and supporting right religion in the world, by separating Abraham and his family to be witnesses for him against the prevailing idolatry and false worship.

Whether or not Abraham himself was involved in that idolatry which we are plainly enough told prevailed in his father Terah's family, we have no evidence on either side. The Jewish pretended traditions about him are ill-contrived fables. However, there is not the least ground to imagine

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gine that he merited the extraordinary favour which was shown him, when he was called to leave his father's house, and to go to a land, which, as yet, he was an utter stranger to; which command he nevertheless readily obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.

At what time the command was given to Abraham to depart from his father's house, whether before his father and his family left Ur, or after he settled in Haran, we are not told; though the first is most likely. For though the leaving Ur be mentioned as Terah's deed; yet, as we are told, that it was with an intention of going into the land of Canaan, it would seem to have been in consequence of the order given his son Abraham. In either case it might be very justly said, as we find it is oftener than once, that God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees. It seems also to have happened toward the end of Terah's life; for Haran the son of Terah had not only been married, but left children, who appear likewise to have been married: and though nothing is said of Nahor coming along with them, yet, by what we find afterward of his family being settled at Haran,

ran, where Terah died, it would seem that he did.

But however that might be, which is of little moment to us on either side, the command given to Abraham must have been attended with undoubted evidence that it came from God. We are not told, as on some other occasions, whether there was any sensible appearance of God to him, or in what manner the command was given. It is indeed hard, or rather impossible, for us, in our present situation, to conceive how those divine appearances, visions, and dreams, in which God appeared, and spake to Abraham, and the other patriarchs, could be certainly distinguished, so as there might be no possibility of an imposition: but one must have very poor notions of God, who can imagine it impossible for him to do what we are unable to conceive how it can be done. The prophet gives us a hint from God himself, which may satisfy any sober inquirer: "He that hath my word, let him speak my word boldly: what is the chaff to the wheat? Is not my word like a fire, and a hammer that breaks the rocks asunder?" As much as to say, The word of God distinguishes itself

self by that singular authority, majesty, and power, attending it, which it is impossible for any to conceive unless they feel it. But they who do, feel in their heart a conviction of a kind very different from, and as much superior to, what the most perfect demonstration can produce, as the word of the great creator and sovereign of the universe doth, in regard of evidence and efficacy, surpass the reasonings and deductions of man.

Along with this command, there was given what is commonly called *God's covenant* with Abraham. But neither in this, nor in any of the repetitions of it, is there the least appearance of what men commonly mean by a covenant; which cannot subsist but by a mutual agreement, on certain terms and conditions to be performed by each party. We shall make no remarks here upon the proper meaning of the original word: it is sufficient to observe, that in the whole of that divine transaction with Abraham, which we render *God's covenant*, there is nothing found but free gratuitous declarations of what God had purposed to do, and to give; which were all of such a nature as Abraham had not the least shadow of any  
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right or title to expect, viz. That he would make a great nation of him; that he would bless him, and make his name great; that he would bless those who blessed him, and curse those who cursed him; that he would make him a blessing; and that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him.

These words need no comment to those who know what the divine *blessing* imports. This lies at the foundation of all, and extends to every thing that God has determined to do for completing the perfection and happiness of any of his creatures; comprehending at once the glory and felicity of the world to come, and all that is necessary to prepare and fit them for the perfect enjoyment of it. Thus we find the import of *blessing* explained by God himself, when he said to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward:" and yet "further, when he promised, that he would be a *God* to him, and his seed after him."

But however great and comprehensive this promise was, and indeed the divine blessing is the utmost any creature can possibly receive, or, we may say, the creator can give; yet it was not peculiar to Abraham, but extends to all that ever shall



believe in God as he did. What distinguished the covenant, or grant made to him, from that which is common to other believers, was, that it contained particular promises, which may be called *temporal*, for this reason, that though they ultimately referred to the spiritual and eternal world, yet were they all to be literally accomplished in this. These temporal promises may be reduced to the three following heads, viz. Personal blessings on Abraham himself. A numerous posterity descending from him. And especially, a peculiar seed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

We need not enlarge on what we call temporal, personal blessings; of these his history gives an ample detail. He was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold: he got a great name by his victory over the four kings, and was accordingly entertained and respected by the most eminent persons of that age; and his name celebrated not only in the sacred, but in the most ancient and authentic Heathen historians.

The very numerous tribes of Ishmaelites and Edomites, to say nothing of his sons by Keturah, together with the posterity of Jacob, the chosen line, abundantly  
verify

verify the fulfillment of the promise of a numerous offspring. But what chiefly deserves our notice, is, the promise of a peculiar *seed*, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. It is unnecessary to prove here, what the event has made so plain, viz. that this seed was that divine person who appeared in the world under the name of JESUS CHRIST. It is sufficient to observe, that the original promise of the seed of the woman, which had formerly lain in common among the children of Shem, then came to be limited to Abraham, and his descendents; the highest privilege and dignity that could be conferred on any of mankind: and that, in after times, we find the same promise further limited, first to the family of Jacob, and, last of all, to that of David, where it stood until the fulfillment of it.

As this great promise was the foundation of all that faith and hope in God which was ever found among the children of Adam, and as the faith of this had nothing but the word and promise of God to rest upon, it was necessary that the faithfulness and ability of the promiser should be well instructed; especially when

such a long tract of time, near two thousand years, was to intervene before the fulfillment of it. Accordingly there were several intermediate promises given, all tending to this one great issue. As those made to Abraham were the most remarkable, and on which the greatest stress was laid in after times, to them we shall at present confine ourselves.

The temporal blessings heaped on him in such a remarkable manner, naturally tended to confirm his faith and confidence in that God, who had promised at the same time to give him a numerous issue. The only thing that looks like a condition was, God's command to go into Canaan. On his obedience to this, indeed, all depended; because all the promises were to be fulfilled there, and there only. But it is very evident, that these promises were given him, not as a reward of his obedience, but to excite and encourage him to obey the command; and his obedience was the effect, and at the same time the evidence, of a very strong faith, which (as the Apostle puts the case) could make the bare promise of God overbalance so many difficulties and discouragements.

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No sooner was he entered into Canaan, than he received an additional promise, that God would *give* that land to his seed. It is the style of a sovereign proprietor, who has a right to do what he will with his own: and the donation is absolutely free, without any the least restriction or limitation whatsoever. The same promise was renewed to him some years after, when he returned from Egypt, and Lot and his family were separated from him; with a further promise, of giving him a very numerous seed.

But, many years after, we find him complaining, that, notwithstanding all these promises, and the additional assurance that God was his shield or protector, and exceeding great reward, yet he had no son of his own body, and that one born in his house was likely to be his heir. On this he receives a further assurance, that he should have for his heir one who should come forth of his own bowels; and that of him there should descend such a numerous issue, as should be like the stars of heaven for multitude. And upon this follows what has been constructed a *formal covenant*: when, at the divine command, he  
took



took a heifer of three years old, a she goat, and a ram, each likewise of three years old; and, besides these, a turtle dove and a young pigeon: and having divided them, and laid one half opposite to the other, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, passed between the pieces: A rite which we find practised in after times at making covenants or solemn agreements among men.

But when we consider the history as it lies before us, this solemnity appears designed purely as a sign to Abraham, for confirming his faith in the promise which God had made him, of giving that land for an inheritance: for we find Abraham saying, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" and it was in answer to this that the sign was given him. And in regard it was yet a long time, more than four hundred years, ere the promise should be fulfilled, therefore God condescends to inform him of the fate of his posterity during that long interval: all which was so punctually fulfilled, that we find the historian observing, that on that very day which God had set, the armies of Israel, the seed of Abraham, who had been so long strangers, and

and oppressed in Egypt, marched out of it to enter upon the promised possession.

But all this while Sarah his wife was barren; and she, in her impatience and despair of having any child, gave Hagar her handmaid for a concubine to him. By her he had Ishmael: and there his faith seems to have rested, until God gave him farther assurances, that it was not in the son of Hagar, but in a son whom Sarah his wife should bear to him, that the promises should be fulfilled. This, as matters stood, was so improbable an event, Sarah, always barren, being now advanced far beyond the age of child-bearing, that nothing but the direct interposal of the divine power could render the thing even possible. But this was enough to Abraham: he believed "that he  
" was faithful who had promised, and that  
" what he had promised he was fully able to  
" perform." Nor was he disappointed in his hope: neither he, nor any who ever trusted God, were made ashamed. Sarah brought forth a son, to whom all the promises made to Abraham and his posterity were confined; and particularly that grand one, "that in his seed all the families of the  
" earth should be blessed,"

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Had Isaac been born when Sarah was in her full strength and vigour, the promise would have been as *really* fulfilled; but as that might have passed for a common thing, the hand of God would not have been so plainly *seen*, as it was when nothing but immediate divine interposal could have brought about the promised event. In like manner, Abraham's seed, Jacob and his sons in particular, might have continued in Canaan, and grown up into a great nation there, even as Esau's posterity did in Mount Seir, and Lot's in the countries which they possessed. In that case likewise the promise of giving them the land of Canaan would have been fulfilled. But it would not then have appeared so plainly that God had *given* it to them, as it did, when, after a long and hard bondage in Egypt, he brought them out by immediate and direct interposals of divine power, and put them in possession of the promised land, at a time too when the inhabitants were grown up into a more numerous and incomparably greater and mightier nation than they. Thus, all who would give attention, had sensible pledges of his faithfulness and almighty power for making good the great promise of that  
seed

feed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and thereby supporting their faith and hope in God as their God, and those eternal blessings secured to them in that feed.

14. *Imputation of Sin and Righteousness.*

Great things we find said of Abraham's *faith*, by the Apostle Paul especially; how "being strong in faith, he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," when all rational probabilities were against him: "He considered not his own body already dead, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb:" but even "against hope, he believed in hope, that he should be the father of many nations." But there is one circumstance taken notice of by the Apostle which has occasioned no small controversy in the Christian church: "He believed God, and it was *imputed* to him for *righteousness*." Some have taken such an aversion to the word, that they cannot bear the mention of it; while others show such an extraordinary fondness for the term, that no other form of words



can please them where this is left out. There must certainly be some mistake at bottom; especially as most on both sides appear perfectly agreed in the thing meant by it; and the disputes, it would seem, might be fairly compromised, could the parties be brought to agree in the true and precise meaning of the word.

As the word is so frequently used, not only by the Apostle, but likewise in the Old-Testament writings, to which he refers, there can be no good reason given why it should not be used by Christian divines writing or speaking on the same subject. For if the authority of the sacred writers is admitted, we must acknowledge, that the imputing sin, and the imputing righteousness, are both proper expressions. And as there is not any difference about the first, the agreed meaning of imputation, when applied to sin, will, if I am not much mistaken, go a great way to fixing the sense of the expression, when applied to righteousness.

Imputing of sin, then, will readily be allowed to infer no more than inflicting the punishment which sin deserves; on whatever ground that judgement may be supposed to stand, or whether the person  
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be really guilty or not. Thus we find Shimei at once confessing his sin to David, and praying him not to *impute* it to him. And thus we find David describing the blessedness of the man whose sin is pardoned, that God *imputeth* not his sin to him; while Saul most unjustly *imputed* sin to Ahimelech and the priests at Nob, who were guilty of no crime. They appear therefore to be two very different questions, Whether or not the person be a sinner, or guilty of the crime? and, Whether or not his sin shall be imputed to him? or, which is the same thing, Whether his sin shall be pardoned, or not?

If the imputation of righteousness be considered in this light, the question will not be, Whether the person to whom it is imputed be really a sinner? for that is out of dispute; nor can the judge of all the earth reckon or judge him to be a righteous person: but the question is, Whether he shall be treated as a sinner, or have the reward assigned him by the mere grace of the sovereign? And so far, I believe, all sides will agree. But there is something of an ambiguity in the word *righteousness*, which, I believe, runs through all languages; as it denotes either doing what is right, or

having (however the person comes by it) a right to the privileges of one who does so. And these, it is evident, are very different; for a pardoned criminal has, in all respects, as good a right to the privileges of a free subject, as another who never offended.

But the Apostle John has warned us not to deceive ourselves; for he only “is righteous who doth righteousness,” or what is *right*. And in fact these two always go together. But as righteousness, or doing what is right, refers to some rule or standard, the adjusting of this hath run the parties into very warm disputes. All are agreed, that the divine law is the undoubted rule of righteousness; but of that law as many different forms have been invented, as men had different views and purposes to serve.

As the law of God is, and certainly must be, absolutely perfect, it cannot possibly be answered but by absolute perfection. Those who make this the rule of righteousness are greatly embarrassed. For as “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” excepting only the Son of God, who was sent to be the saviour of the world; him therefore they have been forced

to transform from the surety of God's covenant, into a surety for elect sinners; to give for them, and in their stead, that perfect obedience which the law requires. And this they say is that righteousness by the imputation of which sinners are justified, and have the reward of eternal life assigned them.

But the man who forms his sentiments on the record which God has been graciously pleased to leave in our hands, will find himself greatly straitened to reconcile this plan to what we are there taught. I mention only two points, though many more might be insisted on. The first of them is, that the law requires not only perfect, but *personal* obedience; and cannot admit of the obedience of a surety, however perfect, without altering, or, which is the same thing, dispensing with the rigour of the law framed by the perfect wisdom of the unchangeable God. The other is, that it makes the sinner to be justified by the *law* in a strict and proper sense, and leaves nothing to the *gift of grace*, so much extolled in the gospel, but admitting and providing a surety; which it will be found very hard, if not impossible, to reconcile with the doctrine



doctrine and reasoning of our Lord and his apostles on this important subject.

A very obvious distinction of the divine law, founded in the very different circumstances of perfect innocent creatures, and of sinners, such as all Adam's children certainly are, might, if duly adverted to, set the whole in a consistent light. What is right for a sinner to do, must be very different from what an innocent creature either should or could do. The law of perfection was made for our first parents in their perfect state. They had no promise but what was implied in the threatening, or penal sanction; they were in possession of all the life they had to expect, and that they held by the terms of law, "The man that doth them shall live in them." But when the man sinned, and sentence was given against him in terms of law, binding him under death; all the purpose the lawgiver designed by it, appears by the event to have been answered; namely, to put mankind into such a state, that they could have no hope but in the free sovereign mercy and grace of the creator and sovereign proprietor of the universe. And from that day in which sin entered into the  
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world, there never was any law given which could give life; nay, it became no less than direct rebellion, and rejecting the authority of the sovereign judge, so much as to attempt to live in that way.

What then is *right* for the sinner to do? Surely, in the first place, it must be right to acquiesce in the sentence. And that cannot be done any other way, than by giving up the forfeited life, to be destroyed, whenever God thinks fit to execute the sentence, and absolutely renouncing all hope of recovering it by any thing he himself can do; the same which our Lord expresses by “denying ourselves, and taking up our “cross.” And sunk we must have been into absolute irrecoverable despair, had there not been published, along with the sentence of death, an intimation of a new grant of an incomparably better life, and of another and better way of living, in the promise of the seed of the woman, and the establishment of what may be most properly called *the constitution of grace*; which is the rule and measure, at once of the sinner’s duty, and of the divine proceeding with him. The original duties of the creature, summed up, by perfect wisdom, in the love of  
God

God and of one another, can never admit of any alteration. The law of creation binds them on every creature. But how to reconcile the heart of a sinner to God and to man, is a task which could never have been accomplished, had not God manifested and recommended his love, as he has done, by the grant he has made, not only of pardon, but of eternal life, and the security and pledge he has given for the performance in his blessed Son, whom he sent to be the saviour of the world, with all the fullness of life in his hand.

In this state of things, it is certainly *right* for the self-condemned sinner to believe the testimony God hath given concerning his Son; and that cannot be believed, without believing, at the same time, that he has given him, and eternal life in him, to every sinner who will accept him, and receive the gift of life from him, to be held under him, and, as we may say, in his right; that is, by the free gift, founded on his perfect obedience unto death: and as this cannot be done, without knowing and believing the love of God, so fully manifested and demonstrated in him, the native consequence  
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of this is, just what the Apostle says, that we love him because he first loved us.

And thus the law and commandments of God stand ever since Adam was driven out of paradise. In the first place, that we believe the record and testimony God has given concerning his Son, the same with believing in Jesus Christ; and on this foundation, love God and our neighbour, under the influence of the spirit and life of Christ, which he, we are well assured, certainly gives to all who receive and acknowledge him as God has attested his character. And as this is that doctrine of grace on which the life and happiness of mankind depends, it is astonishing how it could enter into any one's head, that it either had, or could have, any bad or prejudicial influence on holiness of life; when it is the only way in which the heart of a sinner can be reconciled to God, and the only foundation on which the love of God can stand: and surely it cannot be refused, that perfect love is perfect holiness, and that there can be no holiness at all without some degree of it.

As the whole of this divine constitution, or if any one is pleased to call it the



divine law, is founded in Jesus Christ, and his finishing the work which the Father gave him to do on earth; and as it is only his right, which, by his death, and what is very properly called his *testament*, is made over to all who receive him, it is easy to see what the righteousness of Christ is, and how it is so imputed to us, that it becomes a just and righteous thing with God to pardon and forgive sin: but, at the same time it is obvious, that the whole is managed and carried on, not in a course of law, or legal justice, but by a free, sovereign exertion of mercy and grace, raising up the sinner, whom the original law had brought to death, unto a new and everlasting life in Christ Jesus.

But as this plan of the constitution of grace leaves man nothing to do in his own salvation, but only to receive every thing from the hand of God by his free gift of grace, many methods have been taken to mould it either into the form of a new remedial law, or at least a covenant standing upon terms and conditions, such as faith and repentance; to which some add sincere, instead of perfect, obedience, and perseverance to the death. I will only say,  
happy

happy it is for mankind that these wise men were not admitted to stand in God's council when he concerted the plan on which sinners should be saved. When we are so well assured from the God of truth, and the experience of all those who ever tried it in earnest, that of ourselves we can do nothing, what use could have been made of all the promises, standing thus on conditions which could never have been performed? But there is one thing that must not be passed over, which the Apostle takes notice of in Abraham's faith, viz. *that he believed God, and it was imputed, or reckoned, to him for righteousness.* Whence it has been alledged, that faith holds the same place in the new law, that perfect obedience did in the original one; and therefore that faith is imputed for righteousness, or sustained as such, in virtue of the new constitution or law of grace, which the Apostle calls *the law of faith.*

Hardly can any thing be imagined more contrary to the Apostle's intention in adducing this piece of Abraham's history. His professed design was, to show, that Abraham, with all the good things which were about him, had nothing to boast of or

glory in before God; for all the righteousness he had was only imputed or reckoned to him; and, upon the whole, amounted only to this, that he believed God, and the free gratuitous promise made to him. It was this that gave him a right to the promised blessing; and all that his believing could do, was no more than a disposition to receive it as God gave it. That was indeed the only right thing he could do in his situation; but all the worth and merit of it amounted to no more than this, that he did not treat the God of truth as a liar, and one not fit to be trusted, or as if the promised gift was not worth having. The same is the case with us, who have the gift of Christ, and eternal life in him, held forth in the gospel, with the fullest assurances, that all are welcome to take the benefit of it; and that cannot be done but by believing the word and promise of God, and that is all that faith can do. And yet, by this same believing, we find ourselves possessed of as good a right to eternal life, as if we had earned it by the most laborious and costly service. A free gift gives as good a right as the dearest purchase.

The Apostle leads us into a further view of this same imputation of righteousness, by the comparison he states between the two heads of mankind; Jesus Christ, and Adam, who, he says, was the figure or designed representation of him. I do not remember that our first father's sin is ever said to be imputed to his posterity; but the thing is asserted in the strongest terms, That "by one man's transgression, many were made sinners," and subjected to that very punishment which was inflicted on the transgressor. Precisely, in the same manner, we are told, that "by the obedience of one, many were made righteous;" and they were made righteous by the gift of grace coming to them, and upon them, founded in the perfect obedience of Christ, and his fulfilling the terms of life, by which the gift comes to them perfectly free, and nothing is left to them but to receive what God freely gives in his ever-blessed Son.

It has been warmly disputed, whether the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer in itself, or only in its effects. On an impartial view of the righteousness the Apostle speaks of, one should think, that if there ever was such a thing as logomachy



gomachy among disputants, this must be one. Surely no man ever imagined, that God, who sees all things as they are, should ever reckon, that the righteousness of Christ is really the righteousness of the believer; for that is the same as to reckon that the believer himself performed it. It can be no otherwise his, than as the Apostle says it is, viz. by free gift; and the only way it can be conferred, is by giving the sinner the full benefit of it; putting this righteousness to his account, and thus transferring Christ's right to him; that whatever he receives is the reward, not of what he, but of what Christ has done. The promises made to Abraham, and the blessings conveyed in them, it is evident, were not the rewards or effects of Abraham's faith, or any righteousness of his; but the grounds and foundation on which his faith stood. So far as God had spoken and promised, so far had he a good right to believe. But it was not his believing that gave him a right to expect the blessings. And well would it be for men, if they contented themselves to take things in that plain simple light in which perfect wisdom has left them to us, without pretending to model them into the  
form

form of a human science, or attempting an answer to every *how* and *why* that ignorance or malice may cast in our way.

15. *Abraham's Covenant.*

**A** Braham's faith we find very highly commended by the Apostle; and he says no more of it than he gives good reasons for. Never was faith more severely tried; no, not even theirs who suffered the most cruel deaths, in the hope, or rather the certain prospect of eternal life. To say nothing of his leaving his native country, and all his connections there, (and in these lie all the comforts of life); though that was a great matter, the trying command he received was, to go and sacrifice his only son, and that son too in whom all the promises, and what is called particularly God's covenant given him, were to be fulfilled. Nothing could support faith in these circumstances, but the firm persuasion that God was able to raise him from the dead, and that he certainly would do it.

But however strong his faith was in the great essential points, as we may call the  
promises

promises of that covenant; yet it failed him shamefully in lesser instances: for though God had assured him, that he was his shield or protector, yet on a mere surmise that his life might be in danger, he twice ventured to ward it off by a lie, or at least by a silly equivocation: A useful piece of instruction to all that hear of it, that the strongest and most approved faith in God will not be sufficient to support the possessors of it, even in the most ordinary cases, when God is pleased to leave them to themselves; and a strong experimental confirmation of what our Lord says to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Though all the promises made to Abraham stood on the same bottom, the faithfulness of the promiser; yet it is very evident from the tenor of the history, that what God calls his covenant, and which he promises to establish with him, is something different from, and of a higher nature than the promise of a numerous seed, and the inheritance of the land of Canaan. The grant is expressed in the same terms with that made to Noah; and both most evidently had a reference to the original promise,

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mife, or declaration, if any one chufes to call it fo, that the woman fhould have a feed which fhould bruife the ferpent's head, and fhed the blood of him who had fhed man's blood, who brought in and propagated death among them, as he had promifed to Noah, and now renewed to Abraham, under the notion of a feed in whom all the families of the earth fhould be bleffed.

The terms in which this promife or grant was expreffed, have evidently fomething very fingular in them; the *cutting off* or *flaying* BERITH; for fo the word joined with BERITH and tranflated, *making a covenant*, evidently fignifies, and is acknowledged fo to do by all who know any thing of the language, and appears to be the original of the feemingly odd phrafe ufed in later languages for making mutual covenants and agreements; and there was fome good foundation for it, as in the hiftory written in that language we find the fame terms made ufe of in fuch covenants or agreements. But the reafon commonly given for that ftrange phrafeology will hardly be thought a good one by impartial judges: for though it may be true



that some beast or other was slain and sacrificed on these occasions, yet it was the *sacrifice* that was slain, and cut afunder, and not the *covenant* or agreement: and even the slaying of the beast was used for no other purpose but to make a sanction, and furnish matter for the curse the parties took upon themselves if they should break the agreement. But there is good reason to think, that the original of the phrase was something more closely connected, at least with the *matter* of what is called the covenant.

Where things are called by the same name in ordinary language, though very different in themselves, yet they are very readily confounded. And it is not easy to say what confusion, and very dangerous mistakes, men have been led into, by modelling God's covenant upon the transactions among men which go by that name. Nothing can be more evident, than that what we call God's covenant with Noah, and Abraham, and we may add David too, was no more than a sovereignly free, and what we call an absolute promise, of that seed on which the faith and hope of all the patriarchs and their successors were terminated,

ted, for all the blessings ever they had to expect from the hand of God, and which we find continued to be so in after ages, down to the very time of the Saviour's coming into the world. This faith was kept awake by the succeeding prophets; and the Messiah, or son of David, was a common article of faith, not only among the vulgar of the Jewish nation, but even among the Samaritans, who were treated as aliens by that haughty nation. So free and absolute was this great promise, and all that depended upon it, that there was nothing left to Abraham himself to do, but to believe that God would do as he had said, and would not deceive those that trusted to his faithfulness. And he is the pattern on which all his genuine children are formed.

From this view of what we call God's covenant, if I am not very much mistaken, we may get at the true meaning of the word *BERITH*, and the propriety of that strange-like expression of *cutting off BERITH*, for making a covenant. There is a well-known root in that language, בָּרַר. *BARR*, which signifies *to purify*, and has a very extensive application to persons and things, as washing, cleansing, making

pure, and consequently perfect in its kind. The same individual letters make a word which in two different places our translators render by *soap*; and all, both Jews and Christians, are forced to render, by something made use of for cleansing; only the later Jews pointed them differently, and read this *BORITH*. But however that is, *BERITH*, by all the rules of that language, comes as naturally from *BARAR* as *BORITH*, and as naturally signifies something that cleanses or purifies; so that it is hard to say what has moved our lexicographers to carry it away from this obvious root, they knew not whither, and forced them to coin one which is nowhere to be found in the language; and consequently can have no meaning at all, but the arbitrary one taken from the use of *Carat*, *BERITH*, for making a covenant.

Christians, who have the New Testament in their hands, know, that sin is very justly represented as the grand defilement and pollution; nay, that it was so from the time that sacrifices for sin came to be in use; that there was a cleansing virtue attributed to their shed blood, and the

the feveral lustrations, sprinklings, and washings, which attended that part of worship; and that all these were but shadowy representations of the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin. And if what we just now observed is true, viz. that what we call God's covenant with Abraham, was really the promise of that seed, in whom all nations should be blessed, and that this blessedness lay in saving them from their sins, and washing them in his own blood, very properly it might be said, that he gave the *BERITH*, the great and only mean of cleansing, purifying, and perfecting, the sinner.

But as it was a long time after that before God's *BERITH*, the great mean of purification, should be actually exhibited in the world; that it might not be forgotten, and that the only way in which remission and cleansing from sin was to be had, might be kept in view, God was graciously pleased to institute a sensible image or figure of it, in shedding the blood of such beasts as he had appointed for sacrifices. These were the typical or figurative representations of the true *BERITH*, and therefore took the name that belonged



belonged to him : and they were really the means of purification under the Mo-  
saic law ; for the Apostle tells us, that the  
blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ash-  
es of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean,  
did sanctify to the purification of the  
flesh ; that is, cleansed the people from  
that ceremonial or typical pollution, made  
such by the law they were under, and  
which disqualified them for access to  
God, and communion with his people in  
the temple-worship.

From this sketch we may easily see how  
the phrase of *cutting off* a *BERITH* came  
to be used for making a covenant between  
man and man. So long as the original  
import of the phrase was understood, of-  
fering, and shedding, and sprinkling, the  
blood, according to the divine appoint-  
ment, was really entering into God's *Be-  
riTH*. So God himself describes his saints,  
those who have entered into his covenant  
by sacrifice. And as that was the most so-  
lemn act that could be performed by man,  
it was the most proper mean that could be  
devised of their mutual assurance of inte-  
grity and good faith. But after the original  
intention was lost, the phraseology was still  
continued ;

continued; and the rite degenerated into a mere form, affording only matter for a mutual imprecation or curse, in case of failure.

In this view, it is easy to see how properly God could say, that he gave his *Be-riTH* between himself and Abraham, viz. the great mediator between God and man; and that he gave his Son, not only for a leader, but a *Be-riTH* to the people; who are accordingly called to lay hold of him as God's *Be-riTH*, and commended and encouraged when they do so; with many other phrases and expressions, which need a great deal of pains to adjust (if they can be adjusted at all) to a covenant in the vulgar sense. Nor do I know any single objection that can be made, unless it be, that the same phrase is used for common covenants between man and man; which has been already accounted for. Or will any man venture to say, that God's covenant and man's are so nearly of the same kind, that we may judge of the former by what we know of the latter?

It may perhaps be said, that God's covenant with the Israelitish nation, when he brought them out of Egypt, is expressed in the same terms with Abraham's,  
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which yet was a true and proper covenant. It is to be observed, that God's *BERITH* was given to them in the very terms it was given to their father Abraham, and as it stood from the time that man was driven out of paradise; and accordingly he declares himself to be *their God*. This declaration has been dwindled away to mean no more than that he was their *King*; and on this has been built a system of what they call *moral government*, founded on the plan of the kingdoms of this world, where subjects have rights as well as the sovereign, and are in no sense his property. But when the great sovereign and absolute proprietor says to any, that he is, or will be, their God, it can mean no less, than that he will give to them, and do for them, all that he has warranted them to expect from him. I say, what he has warranted them to expect; for he can never be a debtor to any of his creatures, unless he hath first made himself so by a promise. And he never made a promise of being a God to any of mankind, but what was founded in Jesus Christ, whom he has given for a *BERITH* to mankind,

mankind, and in whom all the promises of pardon and eternal life are lodged.

It is further to be observed, that their entrance into, and possession of Canaan, the figure of the heavenly inheritance, was not owing to any covenant or mutual agreement between God and them, but to the sovereignly free promise and oath made to their father Abraham. He had purposes of moment in settling them there, and accordingly gave them a *law*, which was the tenor whereby they held the possession, and was evidently founded in the performance of that promise. And this law appears with great evidence to have been wholly intended for preserving and keeping up the memorial of his *BERITH*, when the apostasy became so general as it did; or, as the Apostle expresses it, “to be a school-master to lead to Christ;” and by which they were “shut up to the faith which should afterward be revealed.” And indeed all other avenues by which relief could enter, were so effectually shut up by this law, that there was no way left open but entering upon that method of purification which God had appointed, by believing



on him whom God sealed, and sent into the world.

The Apostle Paul sets this whole affair in the clearest light, as in the whole tenor of his writings, so particularly and of set purpose in his epistle to the Galatians; which they would do well to consider, who have not scrupled to say, that the unchangeable God puts off the character of creator, and confines himself to that of a moral governor. There were in those days a set of men, who were not able to resist the evident proofs Jesus had given of his being indeed the Christ, the promised Messiah; but at the same time, so bigotted to the law of Moses, of which they had lost the true intention and meaning, that they could not conceive how men could be saved but by the observance of that law; which yet was altogether inconsistent both with the spirit of the law itself, which could not give life, and with God's way of saving sinners in the way of sovereign grace.

The Apostle, for their conviction, carries them back to the case of Abraham, whom they valued themselves upon as their father. In his epistle to the Romans,

mans, he states his case in relation to God, and the promises he had from him, and shews that they could not be founded on any works of his, because he had none until the promises were given. Nay, when by his faith in God, and his wonderful grace, his heart was formed into the natural returns of gratitude and love, yet none of these things were ever brought into the account. And even circumcision itself was no more but a sign appointed of God, as a seal of that righteousness by faith which he had while he was yet uncircumcised.

In his epistle to the Galatians, he pitches on the same faith of Abraham as the only thing on his part which interested him in the promised blessings, and appeals to that original, or rather early, publication of the gospel to him; which he makes to consist in this, that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed; and that none might imagine, that any nation or people descending from him was to be such a general blessing, he observes, that in the very terms of the promise the seed is limited to one person, who is Christ. And all that lay hold on this gracious covenant, by believing in Christ, are blessed

*with* believing Abraham, or blessed as he was, in the way of believing the free promise or gift of Christ.

This we find is the very gospel this Apostle preached, when he was sent by a special commission to the Heathen world: "Be it known to you," said he, "men and brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you repentance, and remission of sins; and in him, all that believe, are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." And what do they believe who thus believe in Christ? Surely nothing but this, that God had set him forth to be a propitiation; and "that Christ gave himself for them, to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; to wash them from their sins in his own blood, and present them pure and perfect unto his heavenly Father."

But it might be alledged, and very probably it was, that there was an innovation made by the addition of the law, the instrument of moral government. This, the Apostle observes, could not be the case; for the deed of conveyance, confirmed before

fore by God in Christ, could not be set aside by the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, and was added for answering quite different ends and purposes. This he illustrates and proves by the allowed principles of law and justice among men; for where a man's testament is confirmed by the death of the testator, no man pretends to set it aside.

By the word the Apostle uses here, and which our translators render *covenant*, and the margin *testament*, we are led to an observation which merits peculiar regard. In the Old-Testament language, there was only one phrase, viz. *Carat BÉRITH*, which was promiscuously used, either for God's deed, by which he, as it became his sovereign grace, made a free gift of his Son, and eternal life in him; or for mens covenants and mutual agreements one with another. But, happily for us, the New-Testament language clears up this seeming ambiguity. That language has two words, with two distinct and appropriated meanings, and which are never confounded in that language. *Συμβηκη* is the deed of two or more agreeing on certain terms and conditions, as the very found of the word naturally intimates to all who understand it. *Διαβηκη* is the deed of



of one single person making a conveyance of his property to another in such a manner as he sees proper. The most common way is by testament; but from the effect of that deed to transfer property, it came naturally to be used for any grant, or deed of conveyance, which has the same effect. The last of these terms we find constantly used by the New-Testament writers when they speak of what we call God's covenant. And by the Apostle's way of speaking, he seems to consider God's *diatheke* as a testament, conveying the inheritance to such as he designs for his heirs. This is by no means weakly supported, by the uniform way of speaking of the conveyance of eternal life, under the notion of an inheritance, riches, a kingdom, glory, honour, and immortality, conveyed to believers as children, and heirs, the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

But here there occurs what has been thought an insuperable difficulty, viz. that God cannot *die*, and therefore cannot convey by *testament*; which, as the Apostle tells us in another place, can be of no force so long as the testator lives. Our Apostle gives the

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the key to this in a short hint. God's ΔΙΣΘΗΚΗ was confirmed by God in Christ. Nor is it of any moment that Christ died not for many years after; for he was the slain lamb, the true ΒΕΡΙΤΗ, the sacrifice for putting away sin, in which God rested, from the foundation of the world.

But our Lord himself has perfectly cleared the whole of this astonishing transaction, in the following words to his disciples, which very probably the Apostle had in his eye, Luke xxii. 29. 30. "I appoint  
 "unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath  
 "appointed unto me; that ye may eat and  
 "drink at my table in my kingdom." Here are two dispositions or appointments of the same subject: The Father, the original proprietor, makes a grant of the kingdom to his beloved Son, the mediator between God and man; through whom only the conveyance could be made to sinners: and along with it the Son receives a commandment, to do and to suffer every thing that was necessary for putting away sin, and rendering it consistent with all the divine perfections to raise up the dead sinner to the possession of eternal life. He, on his part, finished the work which the Father  
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gave him to do, cleared the grant, acquired a perfect right to the promised inheritance, and had all the fullness of it lodged in his hand. Thus the deed of conveyance was confirmed by his death, and thereby made absolutely irreversible, and nothing is left to us but to enter upon possession; which it is evident can be no otherwise done but by believing the truth of the grant, and resting with becoming confidence on the faithfulness of the testator, who ever lives a powerful intercessor, and a captain of salvation to bring the sons of God into glory. And thus the whole terminates, as the Apostle John has stated it, “in that testimony which God has given concerning his Son; which testimony, whosoever believes, has the witness in himself; but he that believes it not, makes God a liar.” “And this is the testimony or record, that God hath made us a gift of eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son,” and entereth, by faith, or believing the testimony, into God’s *BERITH*, “hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.”

16. *Sacrifices and Priesthood.*

**A**Mong all the odd whims superstition ever brought into the worship of the Deity, there is hardly any thing which at first sight appears so absurd as that of sacrifice; for how can it be supposed, that the great creator and sovereign of the universe should be pleased with shedding the blood of animals, and the smell of burnt fat; and so pleased, that, in consideration thereof, he should pardon the offences of man, turn away from his wrath, and forbear the vengeance justly due to them. Nor is the folly of such a persuasion any where more strongly exposed than in the sacred writings, particularly in the 51st psalm.

And yet it is certain, the practice universally prevailed, not only among the rude and ignorant, but more especially among the most knowing and civilized nations; where it made the principal part, and in a manner the whole of their religious worship. Philosophers and wise men saw, and exposed, the absurdity of it. But it kept its ground notwithstanding, in spite of all that reason



could say against it. And no wonder it should; for it was powerfully supported by an universal tradition, that it was of divine institution. This was carried yet farther, when the world lost sight of the creator, and took up with the visible heavens, his agents, and split the several powers thereof into so many deities. Every deity they thought had ordered certain beasts to be offered, and certain rites to be observed in their worship; and that so strictly, that if any mistake was committed, the effect of the whole would be lost.

And surely it affords a strong presumption in favour of the tradition, that a practice, which could never have entered into any man's head, should become thus universal; and that from the earliest ages. For in all the histories of the world, there is no hint of its first institution. Where-ever the history commenced, even in the darkest and most fabulous ages, sacrifices were always found among them. And no wonder; for indeed the practice appears to be very nearly as ancient as the word itself. Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices very early; and though we have no record of the first institution,

stitution, yet the divine acceptance of Abel's sacrifice is a sufficient document of it. Nor have we any reason to imagine, that Adam had never offered even before that time, though there is no record of it, nor indeed of any others presenting such offerings until the deluge. But the distinction then subsisting between clean and unclean beasts, is more than a presumption that the practice continued. Noah offered immediately after the deluge, and God was pleased with it. Abraham built altars wherever he came, and offered sacrifice; Isaac and Jacob did the same. And when their descendants were brought out of Egypt, they had a law given them, wherein this was made the most solemn part of their worship, and very particular directions given about it.

During the patriarchal times, it appears that every man offered his own sacrifice. There is no mention of any priest in those ages, excepting only Melchizedeck, and he appears to have been an extraordinary person, raised up for answering the particular purpose of representing the true king of righteousness and peace, the great priest over the house of God. Neither can I find any good foundation for what some

learned men are very positive in, that the priesthood was confined to the first-born of the family, and that none might offer but they. Surely Abraham and Jacob were neither of them the first-born. The claim afterwards made upon the first-born of the Israelites stood upon another bottom; and the assuming the tribe of Levi, and confining the priesthood to them, was evidently an act of sovereign authority.

Whence the other nations took the hint of setting apart a certain order of men for this part of their worship, is not so easy to say. It could hardly come from the Mosaic law, and the practice of the Israelites; especially if the men called by the title commonly given to priests were really such; and not, as David's sons were, ministers of state, who are a sort of mediators between king and people. But however that was, such an order of men were in every civilized nation; each deity had his own priest or priests; and an office of great honour and credit it was. No man among the Heathen might offer his own sacrifice, nor consult the oracles even in his most weighty and secret affairs; any more than one among the Israelites; among whom it was so expressly

preſely forbidden, that the prieſts found themſelves obliged to reſiſt one of the greateſt of their kings when he attempted only to offer incenſe on the altar: and their zeal was juſtified in a very ſenſible manner by God himſelf; the king was ſtruck with leproſy.

We have a number of inſtances on record, which at once prove the divine inſtitution of this ſeemingly irrational piece of worſhip, and God's acceptance of it, by fire from heaven conſuming the ſacrifices; of which we need not give particular inſtances, eſpecially as they were extraordinary caſes, and deſigned to anſwer particular purpoſes. The ſureſt way of adjusting our notions of it muſt be, a careful conſideration of that ſyſtem of ſacrificature, given with ſuch ſolemnity by the miniſtry of Moſes, by ſpecial divine appointment, and proved to have been ſo by the moſt irrefiſtible evidence. The particulars are numerous, as directed to anſwer all the particular caſes of offences, defilements, and pollutions, that were pardonable by that law: for ſome crimes, particularly idolatry, murder, and finning preſumptuouſly, inferred unavoidable death. It will



will be sufficient for our purpose to gather up the constituent principles, and what we may call the essentials of that part of worship.

To do this to any purpose, we must premise, and carry along with us, what, I dare say, will be readily agreed to, that the most high God, the creator and proprietor of heaven and earth, is so perfectly blessed and happy in himself, and so unchangeably so, that his happiness can neither admit of augmentation nor diminution. From which it necessarily follows, that whatever laws or ordinances he imposes upon mankind, neither are, nor can be designed for any advantage to himself, but purely for the benefit of his creatures, and promoting their perfection and happiness; which, it is easy to see, must go together, and keep pace with one another. And it would be very easy to shew, by an induction of particulars, that every ordinance and command of his is calculated to give us such views of God, and what we have to hope or fear from him, as may form our hearts and sentiments in a suitableness to these views, to direct the conduct of our lives on the principles of true wisdom,  
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the way that leads to final and perfect happiness, and to restrain from such courses as may mar or hinder our progress.

That this was the design of the whole system of sacrifice, so minutely described to us, appears very plainly from this single consideration, that the whole consisted of such offerings, as common sense would tell every man, could be of no manner of use to God, nor give him any pleasure, farther than as they served to display and forward his kind and beneficent purposes to man.

This will farther appear, from the preparation that was made for this service, in the structure of the tabernacle first, and afterwards of the temple, the only place where sacrifices might be offered, except in extraordinary cases. These, on the most cursory view, appear to have been designed for the place of God's residence and abode among that people; nor could there well be a fuller intimation, and we may say assurance, of his gracious intention of dwelling among men, than giving such formal directions as he did to Moses, for preparing a tent for him to abide in, with the positive promises

ses he made of dwelling and taking up his abode there.

But this was too momentous a point to be left to human skill and contrivance; nor did perfect wisdom think it sufficient to give Moses, faithful as he was, verbal directions, but shewed him a pattern which he was to copy, without the least deviation: "For see," said he, "that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." And there was great reason for it. It was the pattern of *heavenly things*; and a sensible representation of these, none but God himself knew how to adjust. One cannot pass this without taking notice of this interesting instance of the divine condescension. He perfectly knew our frame; what absolute strangers we were to the spiritual world; that it was impossible for us to form, not to say any idea, but not so much as any proper conceptions, of the state of things there, nor indeed any conceptions at all, until they were imaged by such sensible things as we are, or may be, acquainted with; and which, if the images are properly chosen, do by a very natural analogy lead us to  
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what we could never have otherwise come to the knowledge of.

What these heavenly things were, of which the tabernacle and its furniture were designed to be sensible representations, will be no question to any one who considers the relation which subsists between the creator and his créatures; particularly such créatures as all the children of Adam are, laden with sin and guilt, and bound by the righteous sentence of the sovereign under death, which can imply no less than putting a final period to the life they possess, and are so very fond of. Whatever speculations men who are at their ease, and loth to be disturbed by melancholy prospects, may sooth themselves with, it is evidently impossible for any man, and I may add for any creature, to say what will be the end of such criminals, until God, in whose hand they are, shall declare how he designs finally to dispose of them; whether he will leave them to perish by that death they must certainly once undergo, or whether, by an exertion of sovereign grace, he will raise them up to the possession of a new and endless life.



The merciful creator did not leave his poor helpless creatures in such a dismal situation as that of a sinner must have been in this uncertainty. No sooner had the poor creature fallen, than he kindly took it up, and cherished it with the revelation of his eternal counsels, and the unchangeable purposes of his grace, founded in that highest instance of it, the sending his own Son to be the saviour of the world, not merely to bestow pardon, but eternal life upon all that would receive it at his hand. This constitution of grace, which we call his covenant, containing an authentic state of matters between God and man, as it stands confirmed in Christ, is undoubtedly the heavenly things which God designed to exhibit in the tabernacle and temple service. And to see how this representation is adjusted by the prophets and apostles, is a study which cannot be thought below the greatest, the wisest, and most learned of mankind.

We need only observe how, in the structure of the tabernacle and temple, and particularly the most holy place, where none might enter but the high-priest alone, and that but once a-year, is represented the  
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true sanctuary and tabernacle, that heavenly place, where the great high-priest of the Christian profession ministers in the immediate presence of God. The furniture of the temple, and especially of the most holy place, requires our utmost attention. There were the symbols of God's presence, and a figure of the heavenly sanctuary, and the state of things there, imaged by perfect wisdom; his throne particularly, and his presence there, to which all their religious services were directed. And it is not to be doubted, that he exhibited himself there precisely as he had manifested his glory to Moses, in proclaiming his name before him, "The Lord God, merciful and  
"gracious," &c. It was so; for the ark with its furniture bore the name of the *propitiatory*, or mercy-seat, the image of what the Apostle calls the *throne of grace*. There were the cherubims, the same for the figure with those which were exhibited on the first revelation of the system of grace at Eden. They who make these last angels, and those in the temple figures of them, give but a cold and uninteresting view of him who inhabited them. For what is it to man, that God dwells among the holy angels?

It is surely more for their comfort, that the face of a man is found in these figures, and united on the same side with that of the lion. Before these figures, and him that inhabited or dwelt in them, the blood was sprinkled on the great day of atonement, under a cloud of incense.

And now that I have mentioned the sprinkling of blood, it will be proper to take in what the Apostle observes, Heb. ix. 22. that almost all things in that constitution were purged by blood. And indeed all things with which the sinner had any concern; the tabernacle; the altars, with all the vessels of the ministry, and even the book of the law itself, were sprinkled with blood; only the mercy-seat was not, but the blood was sprinkled before it; for that being the exhibition of God's part, was perfectly pure and holy. The Apostle concludes with a general assertion, that "without shedding of blood there was no remission;" which plainly imports, that shedding of blood was the way which God had appointed for putting away sin; the only way indeed by which it could be done: but, at the same time, a way in which it most certainly should be done.

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From this general view, it seems to appear, that the great creator and sovereign of the world is not set forth in this system as the avenger of sin, however justly he might have been so, nor as such an enemy to mankind, as that no good can be expected from him till his wrath is assuaged, and he pacified, and rendered propitious, by shedding the blood, and burning the flesh of poor harmless animals; but, on the contrary, that he is exhibited there precisely in the same light as in Jesus Christ, in whom he hath declared himself perfectly well pleased. And the great point is not now, nor indeed ever was, to reconcile God to man; that is done effectually: but to reconcile sinners to God; which cannot be done but by knowing and believing the love of God to a perishing world, manifested and sealed by the most unquestionable token that could be given of it, in sending his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believes in him should not perish.

Though the Heathen nations were greatly mistaken in imagining, that their sacrifices could atone for their sins, turn away the wrath of their angry gods, or  
procure



procure the bleſſings they wanted; yet, by conſidering the Jewiſh ritual, and the particulars of the divine inſtitution, even without any farther view, there were many very valuable purpoſes answered by it. One of the moſt obvious is, a ſtanding caution againſt that darling principle of the wiſe men of this world, That there is no more neceſſary to ſecure the pardon of ſin, and all the fruits of the divine favour, but repentance and reformation. The whole inſtitution proclaims, that without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion: the offender who deſpiſed the eſtabliſhed order, or even neglected the ſacrifice, and means of cleaning, appointed for his caſe, died without mercy; he was to be cut off from his people. It was only upon the appropriated ſacrifice being preſented and offered according to the eſtabliſhed order, that the grant of grace had its effect, that the offender's ſin ſhould be forgiven him.

Had there been no more in this but a bare divine appointment, it muſt have had the ſame effect; for as pardon, without all queſtion, is what the ſovereign may withhold at pleaſure, it muſt have been free to him to grant it, on what terms, and in what

what manner he pleased. There was no injury done the criminal, for he too was at liberty; only he had nothing to hope but from the promise annexed to the sacrifice, and that cut off all hopes in any other way whatsoever.

Upon this principle, the sinner who brought the sacrifice, must have proceeded. And that implies at once the belief of the free and gratuitous promise as it stood connected with the sacrifice, and an absolute renunciation of all other methods whatever of attaining that favour. And thus he acquiesced in God's way of conveying the blessing; and in this very first step rested his faith and hope on the gracious grant which God had made of pardon and life.

Under the influence of this faith and hope, he brought his sacrifice to the priest whom God had chosen and appointed for that office, and confessed his sins over the head of the sacrifice; by which it was understood, as it was expressly declared in the institution, that he laid his sin upon the victim; and of course it was subjected to the punishment which he had deserved.

The priest, by his office, was obliged to  
take

take his sacrifice off his hand, and along with it his sin; not to be stained or polluted by it, or loaded with the guilt, but to put it away, by offering the sacrifice according to the established order: but from the time the sacrifice was taken into the priest's hands, the sinner was free; and if there was any error committed in the offering, that lay upon the priest, and not upon him; only the sinner stood by, and saw the blood of the innocent beast shed, and its flesh burnt upon the altar, an awful representation of what he had deserved and must have suffered, had it not been for the unmerited favour of a free and gracious pardon.

It deserves our notice, that, from the time the confession was made over the beast intended for sacrifice, and the offender's sin laid upon it, the victim took a new name from what was done, and was called *sin*; and under that designation had its blood, which we are often told is the life of the animal, poured out, and itself burnt upon the altar. By this we are taught a very important lesson, That God never pardons a sinner but where he condemns and destroys sin at the same time. His perfect goodness, as well as what we call his justice,

stice, makes it absolutely necessary, that sin, that great, and in effect only, evil in his sight, should be destroyed out of his world. He has kindly concerted a way by which a separation may be made between the sinner and his sin; the sinner saved, and sin destroyed. But if the sinner will not submit to this gracious provision, there is no remedy; he and his sin must be destroyed together.

It cannot escape the notice of the most cursory reader, that when the sinner makes his confession over the sacrifice, he of course acknowledges his having incurred the penalty of the law, and that he has no longer any right to his life, but in the virtue of the sacrifice, and the promise of pardon annexed to it: and consequently, renouncing any title he might have had before the forfeiture, he lives ever after purely in the strength of the new grant conveyed in the pardon.

I have not taken any notice of the special solemnity of these sacrifices by which the Israelitish nation were entered into God's covenant, their daily sacrifice, the great day of atonement once every year, and the particular sacrifices of private persons.



Whatever difference there was in the solemnity, and particular circumstances suited to the several occasions, all of them agree in answering the same ends and purposes, to be shadows, figures, and sensible representations of spiritual and heavenly things, of the order and method which the most high God, in whose hands all these things are, has established for conveying pardon and eternal life to sinners of mankind, and to be an exhibition of himself in that light in which the Apostle represents him; "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

But, after all, it was impossible the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin. There was, the Apostle justly observes, a remembrance or recognition made of it every year. These therefore could never give perfect peace to the conscience of the worshippers, sensible, that sin was growing upon them every year, nay, and every day; which made the application to the instituted means of purification necessary; and the provision, not only of annual, but of daily sacrifices, would not suffer them to forget it. Thus being weak, and unavailable, the worshipper's faith and hope  
came

came to be naturally led to that new and better grant, which stands upon better promises; where God is pleased to take the whole burden upon himself, to write his law in the heart, to be their God, and to make them his people; and so effectually to put away their sins and transgressions, that they shall be remembered no more; the grant of eternal life which he had sealed in the blood of his Son.

And this leads us to another and essential weakness in the Mosaic sacrifices, that the only promise annexed to the most exact compliance was, that the sin should be forgiven; and that amounted to no more than putting them in the same state in which they were before the sin, thus forgiven, was committed; which reached no farther than a present world, and gave no security at all against a new forfeiture. Thus the worshipper was held in continual uncertainty even about a present life, and had no prospect at all beyond the grave, but in the promise of that seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

This promise, the gospel published to Abraham, was carried down through the

whole duration of the Jewish state, and was received and rested in precisely in the same manner as the gospel of Christ is now, viz. by believing the promise, and expecting the blessing through the intercession and mediation of a greater priest, and an infinitely more perfect sacrifice. The faith of these worshippers was not confined within the narrow bounds of the Mosaic sacrifices; but at the same time that they made their acknowledgements over the beast that was to be offered, and had their sins taken off, and left in the hands of the priest who was to offer it, they had their faith and hope fixed on the better promise of eternal life, secured in the hands of the great priest over the house of God, the true intercessor and mediator between God and the sinner.

And this leads to a farther observation: When the Jewish priest took the sin of the people upon himself, he became surety to them that they should be no more burdened with it; but, on the contrary, should be secured in the promised blessing. And accordingly we find it was one essential part of his office, to bless the people in the name of the Lord. This was done  
with

with the greatest solemnity when the high priest carried the appointed blood into the holy place, and sprinkled it before the mercy-seat.

This explains to us the title which the Apostle gives our great high priest, when comparing him with the Old-Testament priests. They were sureties of that covenant under which they ministered, and were bound to do every thing necessary for making good the promise contained in it: but our Lord taking the sins of his people upon himself, is surety of a better covenant; better on account of the better promises; not simply of pardon, but eternal life. And thus he stands bound by his office, not only to put away sin, but effectually to convey the promised blessing. This is quite another, and incomparably greater thing, than what some have rested the import of it upon, viz. to be surety to God for sinners, and to make up the honour due to God and his law, by his perfect obedience. Accordingly, when our great high priest had effectually put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and entered into the true holy place, the very presence of God, with his own blood; he had  
all



all the blessings ever God designed for mankind, eternal life, with all that belongs to it, all that is necessary for beginning, carrying it on, and perfecting it in glory, lodged in his hands.

Upon reflection even on this faint sketch, and yet more as it stands in the record, it will appear, that our Lord's terms of discipleship, *to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow him*, are really no more than what every man who brought a sacrifice was bound to, and, if he was in earnest, certainly did practise. He renounced all right or title to life, could have no dependence on any thing he had done, or could do, and betook himself to the free grant of pardon, and the new right to life there given him.

There has been great fault found with a term commonly made use of in describing the effect of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, viz. his satisfying the justice of God, or the demands of his law. It is true, the word *satisfaction* is no where to be found in scripture; and perhaps some accounts which have been given of it are not altogether proper. But as there can be no doubt made of his having punctually

tually discharged every part of the priestly office, by taking upon himself the sins of all that come to him in this character, and thus being *made sin for them*, as the Old-Testament sacrifices were, and accordingly binding himself to put them away, which he actually did by his one sacrifice; and all this being done by the direction of his heavenly Father, and in obedience to the command he received from him; he thus finished the work which was given him to do, and perfectly fulfilled the terms on which the disposition or grant of eternal life was made to him in behalf of a perishing world. When these things are considered, the term, making full *satisfaction*, is by no means improper. But when men are agreed in the matter, it seems hardly becoming men of learning and candour to fall out with one another about a word.

19. *The import of the word God.*

THE often repeated promise of being God to this or the other person or people, naturally leads one to consider what

what it is to be *God* to 'one. The very words carry in them an intimation of what is commonly obſerved, that it is a relative term, and very different from another, which we render *Lord*. It is agreed by all, that *JEHOVAH* is an eſſential name; and it will be eaſily allowed, that the Apoſtle John's is the beſt tranſlation of it, "He " who is, and was, and is to come;" the eſſential poſſeſſor and proprietor of being. Our tranſlators have been very juſtly complained of for rendering this by the relative term, *Lord*, after the later Jews, whoſe ſuperſtition not permitting them to pronounce this name, always ſubſtitute *Adoni*, *Lord*, inſtead of it. But certainly they ought not to be followed by Chriſtians.

There would be the ſame ground of complaint for rendering the original name *Elahim*, which is plural, by the ſingular word *God*, the origin and meaning of which is not certainly known, had not the writers of the New Teſtament uſed a word of as uncertain derivation. And there are but two ways I know of by which the import of it can be aſcertained; either to have recourſe to the Old-Teſtament name, or to gather up the particulars which are found

found to be comprehended in this short expression of *being a God to one*. And if these two are found to agree perfectly, we may be well assured, that we have fallen upon the true import and meaning of it.

The original word stands pointed ELO-HIM. Those who look upon pointing as a modern invention of the apostate Jews, and with no good design, and therefore disregard it altogether, read ELAHIM, and others ALEIM: the letters are the same, only assigning different powers.

The word evidently carries a plural form; and that has occasioned a variety of speculations, many of them little to any good purpose, and as ill founded. But when it is considered how propense the people were to idolatry and polytheism, the import of it cannot be the same with our word *God*: for that would have led them to speak just as the Heathen did; "The Gods do, or did, so and so." And perhaps this very word carried off, and brought into common use, without knowing what was designed and intended by it, might give countenance, if not rise, to that unnatural notion of many gods.



They who are best acquainted with the genius of the language, shew a great inclination to derive it some how from *ala*, an oath; and some, on no contemptible grounds, say positively, that a word of precisely the same letters signifies a *swearer*, or one that gives or takes an oath; and which, they are positive, is the singular of *Elahim* or *Aleim*. But then this supposes a plurality of *Elahs* or *Ales*. And indeed if there be not, it is quite unaccountable, how the creator of heaven and earth, the God of Israel, came to assume a plural name: Surely he who made the world, and taught the first man the use of language, could easily have found a word which could not be misconstrued or abused as this plural name has been.

This observation is considerably strengthened by the other essential name, JEHOVAH, which is commonly joined with this, and has no plural; which naturally leads one to think, that in the one undivided essence there are subsisting more *Ales* than one, who, for want of a proper word in the modern languages, are called persons, very apt to mislead one into a notion of three beings subsisting separately, which  
would

would be three Gods. Whereas, in the original language, there is one JEHOVAH, and three ELAHIM. I say three; because throughout the record they are found to be three; the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; shadowed and represented by the three agents in the material world, viz. fire, light, and air; and very often called by their names:—“ Our God is a consuming fire;”—“ The Word made flesh;”—“ The true Light that enlightens every man that cometh into the world.”

But when all this is supposed, and even made good, the doubt remains, How and on what grounds these three take the name of *Elahim*? And this will lead us to the second way I mentioned of coming at the right meaning of our word *God*; by considering what God does, or binds himself by promise to do, when he undertakes to be *God* or *Elahim* to any one, or what they have to expect who have him to be their *Elahim*.

There are three words or terms we find very frequently made use of, and applied to him, who is JEHOVAH ELAHIM; *King*, *Father*, *Lord*; all relative, and the relation intimated by them well known among

men. The great, and the only proper uſe of them is, to help us to form our conceptions of him, who is in himſelf abſolutely incomprehenſible; that is in the way of analogy; what a king is to his ſubjects, a father to his children, and a lord or maſter to his ſervants or *ſlaves*, (for that is the original word), that JEHOVAH ELAHIM is to thoſe to whom he is *Elahim*. But ſure none will imagine, that he is ſuch a king, father, or lord, as men are to one another. All analogical or tranſlated terms need a great deal of adjusting to reduce them to propriety; and therefore none of them can give the true import of the term which his perfect wiſdom has ſeen fit to uſe. Could we conceive a kingdom or family where all the ſubjects are children of him who is lord or king, by uniting all the three, we might carry our conceptions a good way, but ſtill greatly ſhort of the truth.

There is another word commonly uſed among men, and the import of it rather better underſtood; a *Saviour*, *Redeemer*, or *Deliverer*; which have nearly the ſame meaning, though perhaps ſome circumſtantial difference. Thoſe who have ever read the

Bible

Bible with any attention, must have observed, that this is often joined with *Jehovah* in the same manner as *Elahim* is; which naturally leads one to think, that they are either synonymous terms, or so nearly allied, that one cannot be without the other. Thus particularly he promised, and thereby engaged himself, to be the *Elahim* of Abraham and his seed, and as such to give them the land of Canaan for a possession. And in virtue of this promise, he found himself bound to deliver them from the bondage and tyranny of Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Nor did he find himself discharged of this obligation, until he had put them in possession of the promised land. And on this foundation it is that he assumes the title and rights of their *Lord* and *King*, tempered with the amiable and endearing title of *Father*.

It is, I believe, agreed among all Christians, that the whole affair of old Israel, and particularly their deliverance from Egypt, and being put into the possession of the promised land, was a type or figure, a sensible representation, of deliverance from an infinitely worse bondage, under sin and death, and him who hath the power of death,



death, that is, the devil, who leads the poor thoughtless race of Adam captives at his will. For this purpose the only Son of God was sent to be the *Saviour* of the world. And to have a fair view of this divine name, we can have no better directory than the constitution of grace, as it was at first revealed to mankind immediately after the fall, and carried on from time to time by the ministry of the Old-Testament prophets, until it was perfected in Jesus Christ.

There is one great point we are directed to by the Israelitish covenant, or the grant of Canaan: That it was made to Abraham, the chosen head and father of that people, and confirmed by an oath; a wonderful piece of condescension! And this we find always referred to as the reason of God's gracious forbearance of that people under their manifold provocations. Through him, and in virtue of the promise made to him, all the favours he bestowed were conveyed. Our Lord gives us the counter part, or what was represented by it, in these words, formerly quoted:  
“ I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my  
“ Father hath appointed unto me; that ye  
“ may

“ may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.” This is a key to the whole testimony of God, by which the frame of the constitution, or what we call the covenant, of grace, is adjusted; how the method of grace takes its rise, and is carried on to the full completion of it, in bringing sinners, rebels, enemies, to be the sons of God, and in bringing the sons of God into glory. And could it be known when and how this grant was made to Jesus Christ, we should, I believe, see the true meaning of this very significant name *E-lahim*.

That the plan of this divine constitution was laid in the eternal counsels of God, all Christians must allow. They who believe the doctrine of the Trinity, must believe, that Father, Son, and Spirit, were equally concerned in it. It must likewise be acknowledged, that Jesus Christ, the Son, or Word incarnate, was laid at the foundation, and on him the whole was built; consequently that he bore that character from the date of these eternal counsels; and of course that the grant of eternal life, or the gift and disposition of the kingdom, was made to him in that same character; that

that is, in our low way of apprehending the thing, the three *Elabim* made a grant to one of themselves, sustaining that character. And we are sure enough, that the grant stood on certain terms; for the character he bore was that of a priest, whose principal business was, to put away sin by the appointed sacrifice; and in this case it was by the sacrifice of himself. His priesthood therefore must be of the same date with the grant.

He was a priest therefore of an order peculiar to himself, a priest after the order of Melchisedeck; that is, such a priest as was at the same time a king; and, as the Apostle explains it, king of righteousness, and king of peace. And we are well assured, that the whole was ratified and confirmed by an oath, the oath of all the *Elabim*; or, which is the same thing, the oath of *Jehovah*: “*Jehovah* hath sworn, “ and will not repent, Thou art a priest “ for ever, or an eternal priest.” And thus the Apostle illustrates the peculiar dignity of his priesthood above the Levitical, that he was made or constituted priest with an oath, Heb. vii. 21.

This brings us directly to the native sense of this divine name; and at the same

same time shews it to be wisely chosen, and to carry in it what is of the utmost importance to mankind; every thing they want in order to their present and future happiness. Literally it is *the swearers*: and that necessarily takes in what is sworn to; the whole system of grace, and all that God has promised to give to mankind in and by his blessed Son. The very name carries in it the most endearing view one can possibly imagine of any being, and a fund inexhaustible of the strongest consolation.

It is in this view the Apostle represents God's oath to Abraham. "He swore by himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee." "—that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation," &c. It might readily be said, What is God's swearing to bless Abraham to us? Indeed it would be nothing, were it not for the matter of that blessing, the seed to whom the promises are made, and for the hope set before us in him; by flying to which, they who do so, contract a new relation to this father of the faithful or believers, and thereby become heirs of the same pro-



mises, and Jehovah stands engaged to be their *Elahim* as well as his.

18. *The Propitiatory, or Mercy-seat.*

Rom. iii. 25.; Heb. ix. 5.

**B**Y comparing these two places together, we will easily perceive, that the Apostle means to tell us, that what the mercy-seat was in the tabernacle and temple, that Jesus Christ is in the true and heavenly temple. Jehovah Elahim dwelt between, or inhabited, the cherubims of glory, which shadowed the mercy-seat; for so they did with their wings touching one another. And thus our Lord tells us, that he is in the Father, and the Father in him; and that in Christ, as his rest, the Father is well pleased. His dwelling in the cherubims was the sensible sign of his dwelling among the Israelites, and being their Elahim. His dwelling in Christ is incomparably more so to us, when he hath given his only begotten Son, and by him united himself to this order of creatures. They who receive him as he is given, can have no doubt of God's dwelling with men upon

upon earth, and that Jehövah is their Elahim.

But the title given by the Apostle, both to the type and to the antitype, carries something farther in it; not only the truth of the thing, but the reason of it. Ἰλασῆριον, which is the original term in both the passages referred to, is more than Ἰλασμος. The first is a *propitiatory*, the last is *propitiation*, the fruit or effect of it. This may perhaps be the reason why, in Rom. iii. 25. (where Ἰλασῆριον, instead of a *propitiatory*, is rendered a *propitiation*), our translators have inserted the supplement *to be*, which would have been needless had they kept by the native import of the original word. A propitiatory is that which makes the propitiation; for that is the same thing as making one propitious or gracious, who either had reason to be offended, or from whom there was no reason to expect such favours.

One needs no more but to read the history of the old Israelites, to be assured, that they had no reason to expect such extraordinary favours as were secured for them in the promise made to Abraham. And they must be strangers indeed to what obviously appears to be the state of mankind, who do not find incomparably less

reason to expect such favours as the grant made to Jesus Christ in their behalf; the grant, not only of the pardon of sin, but of eternal life, with all the perfection, glory, and happiness, which attend it. That the great creator and sovereign of the universe should be thus propitious, and shew such favours to such creatures, requires such a foundation to make it consistent with perfect wisdom, the highest reason, as none but he who is possessed of it, could either find, or lay: and firm and strong it must not only have been, but appeared to men to be, which had the whole weight of the firmest faith and hope in God to bear.

The assurance which Jehovah gave to ancient Israel of being their Elahim, by fixing his throne, a throne of grace, among them, even on this cursory view, appears to have been very great. But if we may suppose, that they understood at the same time what was represented by the ark, with the law in it, covered with the mercy-seat, and cherubims of glory, which were but figures for the time then present, and shadows of heavenly things, they must have had the same views which we have now, of the  
new

new head of mankind, designed from eternity the great priest-intercessor, the surety of the everlasting covenant or grant of eternal life. In him, the promised seed, they would find the great propitiatory, the true foundation and mean of conveyance of all that favour and grace they received, or hoped to receive, from the hand of God; and must have seen, that the only way in which they or we can believe that God is, or will be, propitious, is faith, or a believing dependence on his blood; by the shedding of which, he finished the work that was given him to do, fulfilled the terms of the grant made to him, and made over the same kingdom by his testament to all who would receive it from his hand, and hold it in his right.

#### 19. *Reconciliation.*

**T**HE direct and immediate, and, I may say, the necessary, fruit and effect of a propitiatory, is propitiation. And when God has set forth his ever-blessed Son a propitiatory, it gives a firm and sure foundation for the strongest confidence, that,



that (it is not, I think, proper to say, he will be propitious, but that) he certainly is propitious; that is, as he proclaimed his name to Moses, "Jehovah Elahim, gracious  
" and merciful, long-suffering, slow to  
" wrath, and of great patience, forgiving  
" iniquity, transgression, and sin." That this is a just account of the divine nature; and which we may call his very essence, appears abundantly from this single consideration, that, of his own proper motion, without any external motive, he provided and established the great propitiatory. And as that was established from eternity in the unchangeable counsels of the Elahim, from the same æra we must date his being propitious. So that there never was a time when he could be called an enemy to mankind; though they had deserved to be treated as enemies, because they were really so to him; enemies in their minds through wicked works.

God indeed is said to be "angry with  
" the wicked every day," and to have "re-  
" vealed his wrath from heaven against all  
" ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."  
But a father may be angry, very angry,  
with his children, and shew his wrath by  
punishing

punishing them severely for their faults; while yet he is so far from being their enemy, that this very anger, and the strongest expressions he can give of it, not only proceed from love, but are the strongest evidence of his concern for their welfare. It would be enough to say, that this is the very case with God; but there is more in it. The faults of children not only reflect disgrace on their parents, but are otherwise often hurtful to their interests. But as creatures can bring no advantage to the creator by all the good they can do; so neither can their wickedness hurt him any farther than by marring the effects of his love either in themselves or others. And therefore the only reason of his anger and wrath, must be, concern for the good of his creatures, according to his kind and gracious purposes set forth in his blessed Son, the great and only propitiatory, that sin may be destroyed, and the sinner saved.

It will be proper, however, to observe here, that there is no foundation in all this for that very loose assertion, which some people, for very obvious reasons, appear extremely fond of, viz. That God never punishes an offender but with

a view to the advantage of the party suffering. Such is the essential goodness of the great creator and sovereign of the universe, that he cannot but hate, with the most perfect hatred, (if that expression may be allowed), all that kind of evil which goes under the name of *sin*; the only evil he hates, and which he therefore will certainly destroy out of his world. He has indeed appointed, in his perfect wisdom, a way in which sin may be destroyed by the sacrifice of his blessed Son, the great propitiatory; and they who sincerely and heartily acquiesce in it, may be as sure of pardon and eternal life as God can make them. But if any sinner will, in any instance, make the God of truth a liar, and neglect his great salvation, he and his sin must be destroyed together.

But however that may be, nothing can be more evident from the whole of the divine conduct, than that God is not, that he never was, nor indeed can be, an enemy to mankind: and therefore to talk of his being *reconciled*, must be rather something worse than an improper way of speaking, as it has a native tendency to confirm a sinner in that very injurious notion of God, which

which nothing but an evil conscience could ever have suggested, and is the occasion of all those doubts, fears, jealousies, and evil surmisings, wherein the strength of that astonishing sin of unbelief lies. There likewise lie the roots of that heart-enmity against God, which is the spring of all sin. For so long as we consider him as an enemy, how is it possible we can love him? The Christian duty of loving our enemies has a foundation both to recommend and enforce it, which can have no place here: it is the knowledge and belief of the love of God as manifested in Christ Jesus; and that is the only thing that can destroy our natural enmity, and plant the love of God in our hearts.

There are indeed several texts in our translation of the Old Testament which seem to speak of God's being reconciled to sinners. But by the most cursory glance on the original and context, they only seem to do so: for in those very cases it plainly appears, that God is so far from being an enemy, or acting as such, that the whole design of those transactions is, to convince self-condemned sinners of the gross mistake, and thereby to reconcile their hearts



to him, by destroying the very roots of their enmity against him.

This is the view which the writers of the New Testament uniformly give of the business of reconciliation. The Apostle, Rom. v. 10. states the case plainly: "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And yet more plainly, because more fully, 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," &c. These words need no commentary. So far is God from being an enemy, that his declared purpose is, to reconcile us to himself by Jesus Christ. And he hath taken the most kind and endearing methods to effect it: Not contented with sending his blessed Son into the world, the most undoubted token of his warmest friendship and tenderest love, he hath appointed an order of men, whom the Apostle calls *ambassadors for God*, whose office it is to beseech and pray sinners, in Christ's name and stead, to be reconciled to God.

This naturally leads us to a more particular consideration of the method the wisdom of God hath chosen for reconciling the world

world to himself; very different indeed from that which the philosophers and wise men of the world have pitched upon. The wisest of the Heathen had nothing either to assist or support their reasoning powers, but fragments of old traditions, very imperfect, and miserably mangled: and yet upon these we shall find that all their sublimest notions of religion were originally founded; and they must either have made what they could of them, or have thrown up the pursuit altogether. Accordingly one, who was reckoned the wisest of them, chose the last; and attempting to put afunder what the creator had inseparably joined, contrived a system of what is called *morality*, instead of religion.

Our latest philosophers, who ought to have known better, seem to value themselves on merely copying after this pattern; and what their predecessors were forced into by their circumstances, they have made their choice. The knowledge of God was in the days of the former very low. As they had no convincing evidence that all things in the universe were once nothing, they could have no notion of the distinguishing character of the true God, viz. *the creator of heaven*

*and earth*, but what came by a faint tradition : yet this is the first and fundamental principle of all religion, that it is only by the sovereign favour and grace of the creator that any creature can subsist. The most they could make of the character of Deity, was that of an universal monarch ; and even this they were forced to limit by such restrictions as are necessary among men for preventing the abuse of absolute power. A wise and righteous moral governor was the best they could make of what they called *God* ; and the measures of his government were, rewards and punishments, in such proportion as the philosopher thought right.

Our moderns are nothing near so excusable : for though they, no more than those, either know, or can so much as imagine, any power adequate to such an effect as the producing a real being out of nothing ; though they neither have, nor possibly can have, any satisfying evidence, that this universe was once nothing, or even in any other state than it has been in ever since there were men to observe it ; yet they boldly take it for granted, that all these things are the works of that being which they call *God* ; and on this bottom build a  
system

system of what they call natural religion, and such a plan of moral government as their Heathen predecessors groped out for themselves before them. And all their business is not so much how to reconcile themselves to God, as how to placate and reconcile a sovereign who has the greatest reason to treat them as enemies. An arduous task this! But the men are so fully persuaded of the all-sufficiency of their own rational powers, that they scorn to have any recourse to foreign assistance, unless perhaps to men who have wrought upon the same plan before them.

Were men indeed as innocent as when the first of the kind came out of the creator's hands, the immensity of perfection that appears in the works which the being we call *God* is supposed to be the author of, could not fail to produce the highest degree of esteem, the profoundest awe and reverence. And if they were persuaded at the same time, that they owed their lives and all their enjoyments and pleasures of life to him, there would likewise be something of gratitude. This would of course produce answerable measures of love, were not the  
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operation marred, partly by the terrors of majesty ſo infinitely above them, but eſpecially by the uncertainty of what they have to hope or fear from him, or how he means finally to diſpoſe of them. Innocent creatures can never arrive at ſuch a pitch of arrogance as to claim any thing as their due; they find themſelves abſolutely in the hand of their creator, and know not how ſoon he may ſee fit to put an end to their being. This reflection comes with redoubled force on all mankind, who certainly know they muſt die; and that looks ſo like putting an end to their being, that the very thought chills the heart, caſts a damp upon all the comforts and joys of life, and of courſe deadens gratitude, and leaves the heart in a ſtate of cold indifference at beſt: and ſo long as they know of no other life, nor any other way of living, jealousies and fears readily creep in, that, after all God has done for them, he may yet be ſo much their enemy, as to deprive them of all he has given.

Though this temper is bad enough, and ſo immenſely ſhort of that ardency of love which is ſtrictly due to a benefactor of ſo much worth and excellence, it were well  
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if the parties resentment stopt there. But creatures made as we are, for a present world, and with hearts and sentiments formed upon the pleasures and gratifications in the way of living here, will find it very hard to be deprived of them all, as death certainly will deprive us of all; and will scarcely be able to avoid wishing, that the first and best of beings were so much better, or more indulgent, as to continue us in the eternal possession of what our hearts are so warmly attached to: and when we are sure this cannot be, must not the seeds of enmity be deeply planted there, though we dare not allow ourselves to acknowledge them?

But none of the descendants of Adam are, or can be, in a state of mere innocence. Every creature of God was designed to answer some purpose or other. While they do so, they continue innocent; but no longer; the least failure is criminal in some degree. Whatever other purposes man was designed to answer, it may not be doubted, that he stood bound in the strongest manner to acknowledge his creator, and all his benefactions, with the natural homage

mage of adoration, the warmest gratitude and love, and of course a hearty acquiescence in every intimation of his will; which cannot subsist without a thorough confidence in his wisdom and goodness. Where this is refused, or even neglected, the man becomes criminal; and if he continues in that way, becomes a rebel to the great sovereign.

That all the children of Adam are sinners, is a truth so obvious, and so universally acknowledged, that it would be idle to spend words on it. For however earnest we may be in asserting our innocence in particular instances, none were ever yet found so mad as to stand upon their absolute innocence; and if we once admit that we are sinners, it follows of course that we are absolutely at the creator's mercy. It is without all dispute free to him either to pardon or to punish. But, all things considered, it will be found infinitely more probable, that he will punish. His very goodness serves to make it necessary: For how can a being, who perfectly hates, and cannot look upon this evil, suffer it in his world? At any rate, we can never be sure he will pardon, unless he shall tell us so; nor  
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how, and on what terms he will do so, but by the intimation of his will. Those who know God's perfect goodness, and abhorrence of sin, will find all the reason in the world against it. Sin, we are sure, must be condemned and destroyed; and how that can be done without condemning and destroying the sinner, is beyond the reach of created wisdom to say.

There lies the foundation of that enmity so deeply inlaid in the heart of every child of Adam, until they are reconciled to God. It is not, I believe, in the power of any creature, but certainly it is not in the power of man, to love or hate at pleasure, and merely because he chuses to do so. There must be something in the object that determines us either way, and touches the heart in a manner that is not always easy to be accounted for. We naturally, and, I think, one may say, necessarily, love what appears good, and in the same manner hate what appears evil. No body will deny, that God is perfectly and absolutely good, and worthy of the highest measure both of our esteem and love. But absolute goodness, however it may approve itself to the judgement, never touches the



heart, unless we find our own interest in it. Until we believe that God is good to us, and according to our notions of goodness too, the highest approach to him goes no further than a cold approbation. But if we perceive, or imagine we perceive, any thing in his character inconsistent with what we find our pleasure in, it is impossible we can be pleased with him; and so much as is wanting of that, so much enmity must be found in the heart, however carefully concealed. And such is the state of every heart where the love of a present world is the ruling passion. But if one comes seriously to believe, that however good he is in his general character, he is an irreconcilable enemy to sin; he will easily believe what an evil conscience suggests, that the sinner has nothing to expect but everlasting destruction from his presence.

How hard it is to reconcile a sinner to God, we may easily judge, by the measures which infinite wisdom has taken to accomplish it, and the little success they had with the generality of mankind. Seneca tells us of a love-charm prescribed  
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by an old philosopher, *If you want to be beloved, love.* And it is the only means that ever did, or ever will succeed. It is the way perfect wisdom has taken to reconcile sinners, enemies to God in their minds, and root out those fears, jealousies, and misgivings of heart, suggested by an evil conscience, and the love of a present world; which are so strong, that we may boldly say, nothing but the knowledge and belief of the love of God as manifested in Christ, can effectually balance the heart against them, and recover it to God.

Much has been said by men at ease of the divine placability, and the mercy and compassion so essential to his perfect nature. But when all is said on that subject that can be said, our hope can rise no higher than a bare possibility; *it may be*, that the God whom we have so long and so shamefully affronted, may be so good as to pardon us. But *it may also be*, that his wisdom may see fit to punish us; and the probability certainly lies on that side. But suppose we should carry it as high as the most sanguine hope can go, and that we might be sure he will pardon all that is past, what would be the effect of it? A bare pardon can only re-

ſtore us to the caſe we were in before the ſin was committed; but gives no ſecurity againſt after ſinning, and the puniſhment that it will deſerve; which muſt of courſe be greater, as the provocation is higher. Nay, and if we ſhould be even ſecured againſt that, the effect could only be, leaving us in the quiet poſſeſſion of a preſent life, and what we can make of a preſent world: and to that we know death will very ſoon put a final end; and there is an end of all our hopes, unleſs we have the proſpect of another life, after theſe bodies, which make an eſſential part of the man, are diſſolved into inanimate duſt.

Much has been ſaid of the natural immortality of the ſoul: It is a ſpirit, and ſpirits cannot die, as animals do, by a diſſolution of the component parts. But death and annihilation are two different things: and, notwithstanding the very poſitive aſſertions of philoſophers ancient or modern, we are very ſure the ſoul is not the man, but a component part of him; and however it may ſubſiſt after ſeparation from the body, the man, the child of Adam, is dead, and can never live more, unleſs ſoul and body are again united.

united. A separate soul is a being of a quite different kind; and how it subsists and lives, what its business is, and wherein the pleasures and enjoyments of that life lie, the wisest philosopher may imagine, but really can know no more of, than the most ignorant peasant.

These sort of views, it is evident, are by much too faint to balance the heart against the loss of a present life, and all the comforts we presently possess, or might hope to enjoy, if we could be sure of the continuance of it: so that, upon the whole, we shall have more reason to be displeas'd than delighted with the prospect; and of course find nothing to endear to us the character of the sovereign disposer of all. But if we could be sure of another, a better and happier life to continue for ever, after death has put an end to this shadow of life we derive from Adam, the case would be greatly altered, and the divine character appear in such an amiable light, as would at once captivate the heart into the warmest sentiments of gratitude and love.

But this is an assurance that none but God himself can give; and he has given it  
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in the most endearing manner in the record he has made, and the testimony he has given concerning his Son: For this is the record, that he has given us eternal life; and, for greater security, lodged it where it must be perfectly safe, even in the hands of his blessed Son; lodged it as certainly there, as he has sent his Son to be the favour of the world; and not only allowed, but commanded, every man, without exception, to receive him, and to trust in him, not only for pardon, but eternal life, in a perfect conformity to the standard of perfection, Jesus the Son of God, exalted as he is at the right hand of the Majesty on high. If we know this Jesus, and trust him as he deserves, we must know and believe the love of God to us, and love him who first loved us.

20. *Regeneration, and Eternal Life.*

THE grace of God which brings salvation, and his love to man, have appeared in such a strong and surprising light, in the gift he has made of Jesus Christ, with not only pardon, but eternal life in him, that it is quite

quite astonishing how any sinner that hears the report of it, can be hardened to such a degree of perverseness, as to neglect so great a salvation. But experience assures us it is a common case, and none of us need go farther than ourselves to feel it. Our Lord lets us in to the mystery of it. The love of God, wonderful as it is, is not to be perceived but in Christ; who hath assured us, "that no man can come to him, unless his heavenly Father draw him;" or, in other words, "that no man can believe in him, unless it be given him of the Father." And the reason of this he likewise gives, viz. that none of the children of Adam have life in themselves, but are dead in trespasses and sins, until they are quickened with that new life which is lodged in his hands. There is hardly any thing that the men of the world, even the wisest of them, are more loath to believe: but what our Lord told Nicodemus, though it seemed an inconceivable thing to him, yet is most certainly true, "That unless a man be born again, he can by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and that is the same with obtaining eternal life; which cannot  
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be but by entering the child of Adam into the spiritual and eternal world.

That there is a spiritual and eternal world, completely provided for the subsistence and entertainment of created spirits, its natural inhabitants, is as certain, as that there is a God, and such beings as created spirits. But of that world we never had known, nor yet can know any thing, with tolerable certainty, but by report, and the testimony of such as are acquainted with it. We have no correspondence with any of the created inhabitants, and can have no information but from him who has given us hopes of being admitted there. He has given information so far as we are capable of receiving it; but that can be no further than human language has words to express, or than our world hath images to convey, some notion of these unseen things: for direct ideas we neither have, nor can have, of any of those things which cannot be imaged. From what falls under our observation in the sensible and rational world, all our descriptive terms are, and must be taken; and all the knowledge we can receive of that unseen world, must subsist in pure analogy, and the resemblance

blance which this of ours bears to it. And in this view we are directed to consider it as a designed figure, or sensible representation, of eternal and unseen things.

We can say nothing about life or being farther than we can gather from what we enjoy of them; but the things themselves are as much mystery to us as creation out of nothing. We may know how we came into this world, and enter upon life; how we are supported and maintained in the possession of it; and how we are fitted and qualified, by the powers belonging to it, for the business and enjoyments of life: and that is all we have any concern with; the giving and disposal of life are entirely in the hand of the creator.

The life we now enjoy was originally lodged in the hands of our first father, and from him derived down to all his posterity in the course of what we call *ordinary generation*, the only method of entrance into this world. In this way all the powers necessary for living, for taking in the proper food and nourishment for supporting life, and raising the man to his proper degree of stature, and strength of body or mind, are conveyed. But all de-



pende on the connection established between us, and the material system in which we subsist; the heat and light of the sun, and the air we constantly breathe in. When this connection is broken, though there is not any particle lost, life is at an end; the man dies; and the curious bodily machinery is crumbled into its original dust.

No body will imagine that spirits can be supported in life by the same means that our bodies are; but it would at once be a very gross and dangerous mistake, to think that life is essential to them; or, which is the same thing, that they have life in themselves. There is a spiritual system as well as a material one, and it is in dependence on, and connection with, that system, that spirits live. *There*, we are told, is spirit answering our material air; and in the original languages there is but one word for both. *There* also is the light of life, and that spiritual warmth and heat in which life consists; all of them as necessary for supporting the life of a spirit, as the material light and air are for supporting the natural life. Whenever this connection is broken, the spirit must die; that is, though the substance of it continues the same, yet it must be incapable of exerting

exerting the proper functions of the spiritual life; or, to say the thing in the most proper terms human language affords, it cannot live upon God, and take in the pleasures and gratifications, the comforts and joys, which are to be found in him, who is the very life, and, we may say, the only substance of the spiritual and eternal world.

That this is the very state in which all the children of Adam are naturally found, none, I think, needs to be told. They who doubt of it, need only try what they can make of God, of the happiness, pleasure, and joy, which are certainly to be found in beholding the glory of God, and in the sense of his friendship and love; and they will find themselves absolute strangers to that way of living. Sin made the separation between the creator and our first father; and the insurmountable distance has been continued and kept up by the same unhappy means. In his great goodness he has provided a way for destroying sin, and saving the sinner. The fulness of life is lodged in Jesus Christ, who is the head of mankind in the spiritual and eternal world, even as the first Adam was in this; and the spiritual life must be

conveyed from him in a manner something analogous to the conveyance of this natural one. And thence arises the name of *regeneration* and *the new birth*, the way in which the Apostle saith mankind are saved: Tit. iii. 5. 6. “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Spirit; which God, in his love and kindness to man, sheds or pours out abundantly through Jesus Christ the Saviour.”

How the conveyance of life is made, either in the one birth or the other, is no more possible to be apprehended, than how life was given to the first man. In the natural birth into this external world, however the body may be formed by the mediation of material mechanism, it is, I believe, allowed by every body, that there is an interposal of divine power equivalent at least to that by which being was first given to all things. The second birth, by which the children of Adam are born again, into the spiritual world, we find described in the same terms: It is said to be a *new creation*, the *workmanship* of God; and the effect of it is styled a *new creature*.

I know not why men should have been so loath to admit the native and proper sense of these terms, and so anxious to have them ranked in the class of strained and high-sounding metaphors, unless it be, that they cannot reconcile proper creation, or the interposal of creating power, with their darling plan of moral government: and they are indeed inconsistent; for the Apostle expressly opposes saving by works of righteousness, to saving by regeneration and the renewing of the Spirit. And how can they be said to be born of God, and born of the Spirit, as the only way by which sinners can be entered into the spiritual and eternal world, if there is not an exertion of the same power which entered them into the material world, by the first, and what we call *the natural birth*?

But the evidence does not stand singly on the words and terms which perfect wisdom has chosen, though that ought to carry full conviction; the very nature of the thing requires such an interposal of divine power. The two worlds into which the first and second birth enters men, are essentially different, even as different as God and the creature; consequently, the way



way of living, and of course the principle we call *life*, which fits and qualifies the creature for either station and way of living, must be equally different. The life conveyed from the first man enters us into this present world, and qualifies us for the way of living here, viz. living upon the creature: A life which the curse of God rests upon, and will certainly destroy; and a life which is so far from fitting us for living as spirits do, living on God as children do on their father, that it is utterly inconsistent with it, infomuch that no man can enter upon this new life, but by crucifying, mortifying, and renouncing the former: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The love of a present life and of a present world, the constituent principle of the child of Adam; and the love of God, the constituent principle of the new creature; are utterly inconsistent, and destroy one another.

That these are respectively the constituent principles of the two lives conveyed to us by the first and second birth, the experience of many thousand years, even as many as the world has stood, abundantly proves. The Spirit of God conveyed through Jesus Christ produces the one, the  
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spirit of the world, indeed the spirit which works in the children of disobedience, influences the other. Nature can rise no higher than to take in the report of the life which the spirit of Christ gives, and to balance it by the powers of reason: and tho' reason will give its verdict on Christ's side; yet it has not sufficient strength to destroy the love of the world, and the appetites and passions raised and employed under it. The strong man armed will keep the house, until a stronger than he comes, takes away his armour, casts out his stuff, and fits it up for himself. And the power that is necessary for that purpose, or so much as to bring a child of Adam to believe in Christ, and of course to live by him, must be the same, as the Apostle tells us, that raised up Christ from the dead.

But, say our wise men, there can be no new creation, nor new birth here, but only a metaphorical one; for there is no new substance created, nor any new faculties given, only the old ones are refined, and directed to their proper objects. Should we see one of those animals we are best acquainted with, taken from the plough or the pasture, transformed into

a man, and endued with a capacity for entering into all the refinements of metaphysical, and the most abstruse parts of natural philosophy, we would readily say there was a new creation: and yet, if Jesus Christ and his apostles do not deceive us; the natural or animal man, the mere child of Adam, who is at his highest only a living soul, is really as incapable of living as spirits do, until he is transformed in the spirit of his mind by the Spirit of life conveyed by Jesus Christ the creator. By what falls under our senses in the animal or vegetable creation, we are able to distinguish one species from another, and to observe whatever supernatural changes may be made in any of them. But spirits are not the objects of our bodily senses; we know nothing of their substance, and but little of their properties and powers; and from the superficial knowledge we have of their nature, are apt to imagine they are all of one kind: though, for any thing we know, they may be as different from one another, according to the several purposes they are designed to answer, as the several kinds of animals are. Human souls are evidently a very low, if not the lowest class of all, designed

designed to act not only in conjunction with, but in absolute dependence on, gross material bodies. The perceptive powers, on which all our knowledge is founded, extend no further than material objects, and what we are conscious of in ourselves, and a presumption that other men are like us. Our active powers are in the same manner very limited. The whole of the spiritual world lies so far beyond our reach, that we can make nothing of it, until he who breathed or inspired the breath or spirit of life into the first man, inspires or conveys the spirit and life of Christ, and either gives new powers and faculties, or enlarges and new-moulds the old ones, in a suitableness unto the place and station they are advanced to in Christ, so as to enable them to perceive spiritual objects, to judge of their worth and excellency, and to find their pleasure, happiness, and joy, in God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Could we make out a description of this same spiritual world into which the children of Adam are entered by the new birth, of the way of living there, the



business and employments of the inhabitants, their enjoyments and happiness in the all-sufficiency of Jehovah, it would appear with convincing evidence, that there is in every respect as proper creation in the new birth as in the old. But this is as impossible as it is to give a detail of the fulness and all-sufficiency of that God who is all in all there, yea, the very substance of that world, and of the happiness that those who are entered there must find in him who is love, and appears in that amiable character to all the inhabitants; for they are all his children through Jesus Christ.

This the Apostle John celebrates, as at once the strongest evidence, and the most endearing commendation of the love of God, 1 John iii. 1. And well he might. It was much that the great proprietor and sovereign of heaven and earth should condescend to pardon sinners, rebels, enemies; it was more, that he should make them a free gift of eternal life in his own blessed Son, and thereby justify them from all things, from which it was impossible for them to be justified by any law that could be given, or any measures of moral government; but the endearing manner in which  
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the gift is conveyed crowns all: "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God?" The highest title, the nearest and most endearing relation, and at the same time the happiest; for the Apostle's conclusion is out of dispute, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Men may adopt strangers into their family; they can give the rank, and a right to the inheritance of the family: but they cannot give them the spirit of children; they must take them as they find them. But it does not become him who is perfect in understanding and wisdom to adopt at random. When he confers the relation and rights, he at the same time gives them the spirit of children, and forms them into a meetness for the dignity of that station, and a capacity of enjoying the inheritance: "For we know, when he the blessed and glorious Son of God shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." To be made like the blessed, the glorious Son of God! who is "the brightness or shine of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," is

surely to be made as like God as it is possible for a creature to be. And must not these be an order or species of beings very different from the natural children of Adam, who bear only the image of that earthly man; living souls, or rather living bodies, and no more; or, as the Apostle describes them, “ sensual, having not the Spirit.”

Thus there is made, and thus only can be made, an effectual provision against a difficulty which has very justly puzzled the wisest moral governors; when it is fit to pardon, and when to punish, offenders and criminals. It is not enough to say, as many who reckon themselves very wise take upon them to say, that the penitent ought to be pardoned, and the impenitent punished. But what wisdom can determine with any certainty who are truly penitent? and yet more, what security can be had of such a mutable and weak being as man, that he shall not on some new temptation fall into the same crimes? An experiment was made on the most perfect man that ever was; and after his shameful failure, who of his posterity could be fit to be trusted? There was indeed one, and only one; but he had the fulness of the Divine Spirit dwelling in him;

him; and nothing can secure the creature but the same Spirit.

21. *The Spirit, and Inspiration.*

**T**HE Apostle has said so expressly, “that if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” that none who know any thing of Christ dare venture to deny it: nor indeed will any doubt of it, but such as flatter themselves they can do well enough without him; or at least that they need no more but to have the terms of life proposed to them, a law which shall give life, by the observance of which they are to work out their own salvation. But, unhappily for them, the Apostle knew of no such law; for he tells us very expressly, there was no such law existing in his time; and in his time the way of life was finally adjusted and settled. And hence it appears certain, that if there is any law now among men which pretends to convey life to the observers of it, or gives them any hope in that way, it can be none of God’s making. He has left no possible way to eternal



ternal life, but the free sovereign gift he has made of it in his Son; nor any other way of conveying life, but by his Spirit.

The record we have in our hands of God's ways with man is, from the beginning to the end of it, so full of the same Spirit, that there is no getting rid of the term, without absolutely rejecting the whole record. But the word happens to be used there, and yet more in common language, in very different senses, which has given occasion to very different constructions of words which seem to be in themselves very plain; and thence occasion has been taken to explain away the meaning of several propositions, which one should think could not be mistaken.

The term *spirit*, in its first and native sense, denotes a substance, of a nature altogether, and almost in every respect, different from matter; and is applied primarily to the first being, the Father of spirits, as the Apostle very emphatically calls him who has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to all created spirits, those we call *angels*, and the souls of men. Hence, by a very natural transition, the spirit of  
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man is used to denote the temper and disposition by which all one's actions, and the whole conduct of life, are regulated and directed; the inward sentiment, the spring and director of them all; and very often is applied to the gospel, in opposition to the letter of Moses's law, as that which gives it all its worth and value, and wherein its life and power consists.

Could we attain any satisfying notion of that kind of beings which merit the name of spirits, we would be at no loss to see the reason of the apparently different applications of that term to subjects so greatly different. Philosophers, and philosophical divines, have laboured, with great earnestness, to make out what they call the idea of a spirit: and, to say the thing as it is, they might with as much prospect of success have attempted to make an image of it. Several have flattered themselves, that they had as distinct, and some say even more distinct, ideas of spirit, than we have of matter: but when they come to explain themselves, it amounts to no more than that we have no idea of either, but only of some properties and powers belonging to them, by which the  
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unknown substances are distinguished from one another. How far these refinings are consistent with the common sense and experience of the world, I do not determine: but this I must say, that these subtle metaphysics have made no manner of addition to useful knowledge; but, on the contrary, have opened up a fund of scepticism, of which we have no way to relieve ourselves, but by returning to common sense, and what lies within the compass of experience and observation.

Before any of those cant terms which learned foppery has introduced, were known, the world was, and the bulk of mankind, which never heard of them, still are, possessed of a distinction between matter and spirit, which answers all the purposes of life every jot as well; and so much better, as, being founded on plain observation, it is equally intelligible to the learned and unlearned. Those parts of the universe which are perceived to be dead and inactive, incapable of so much as moving themselves, they call *matter*; and whatever possesseth, or appears to possess, active powers, a capacity of moving themselves, or putting other things  
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in motion, or, in other words, a capacity of producing thought or motion, is called *spirit*. And I strongly suspect, all the learned labours of philosophers put together, will never, at least in this world, be able to carry it farther.

In this view, it will easily appear how the term *spirit* is very properly used in all the above cases: And the precise application of it (when it denotes a particular kind of being, and when it is designed to express the executive and active powers of any agent) will not be found hard to be adjusted by an honest unbiassed mind. In the present case, it will not be difficult to discover when the principal agent is meant, and when the under-agent, or instrument by which the effect is produced, is to be understood by that term. The fountain and fulness of life lies in God: It is conveyed through Jesus Christ, by whom all things were and are created: The grant lies in the gospel, the only way we come either to the knowledge, or title to the possession, of it: but it is the Spirit, promiscuously called the Spirit of God and of Christ, which makes the conveyance effectual, or rather in which the life of our spirits lies.



That the spiritual or Christian life lies in the abiding and indwelling of this same promised Spirit, may not, nor can be refused by any who acknowledge the New-Testament writings. All true Christians are born of this Spirit; and by being thus born, our Lord says they are spirit. And surely that which is born of the Spirit must be different from the Spirit of which it is born; and therefore this Spirit must be an agent as different from that divine state and temper of mind by which the new creature is distinguished from the old, as the cause is from the effect.

It is the same Spirit which was given to dwell in the man Jesus, and by being given without measure, distinguished him from, and exalted him infinitely above, all the rest of mankind; the same Spirit which he promised to send upon his disciples when he was about to leave them, and which should supply his absence greatly more to their advantage than his sensible presence; that Spirit which should lead them into all truth, bring all things to their remembrance, take his things, (and all that the Father has, he says, is his), and shew them  
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to them, should help all their infirmities, and be an absolute and complete Comforter to them.

By the image that is given us of this new birth in the first natural one, and the analogy or resemblance held forth to us in that expression, we are naturally led to conceive, that this Spirit of life answers the same purpose in the pure spiritual life, that the breath of life does in the imperfect animal one, viz. that by this there is established a connection with, and dependence on, the spiritual system, for spiritual subsistence and life, even as we are connected with the material one by the air we breathe in, and without which we can by no means subsist. And further, as this air in which we breathe, is not so properly an effect, as the very substance of the material system; so must this Spirit be in the spiritual one; that is, in the very Spirit of God in Jesus Christ, we live, move, and have our being; which cannot be at all conceived or apprehended, but by a *Trinity* in the Divine Unity, which we have designed and distinguished by the names of *Father*, *the Word* or *Son*, and *Eternal Spirit*, the same divine substance in

all, diſtinguiſhed in a manner far above human, and very probably above all created apprehenſion, ſubſiſting and acting in and by one another.

How this ſame Spirit is conveyed and communicated by Jeſus Chriſt to his diſciples and followers, we can no more apprehend, than how he made the world, and breathed the breath or ſpirit of life into the firſt man. We can obſerve what is done, the effects and conſequences of this unſpeakable gift; and that is enough for us. We are told by our Lord himſelf, who perfectly underſtood the affair, “ that  
“ as the living Father ſent him, and he  
“ lives by the Father; ſo all that have  
“ heard and learned of the Father, and  
“ come to him, ſhall live by him;” that by this one Spirit they are united to him in the neareſt and moſt intimate manner, and are one ſpirit with him; that his life is communicated to them ſo really, and without any figure, that in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, it is not they, but Chriſt who lives in them: he is their life, and with him that life is hid with God; and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.

The native conſequence of this conveyance

ance of the Spirit of life, and of the new life thus communicated to them, is a new way of living: for they who have the Spirit and life of Christ, live in this Spirit, and walk in this Spirit; that is, they follow Jesus, they live and walk as he did; for if there is the same spirit, there must be the same mind, to see things in the same light, and accordingly to form the same judgement of them, and consequently to esteem and despise, to love and hate, just as he did. This is the new heart and new spirit, the divine nature the Apostle says they are made partakers of: the law of love is written in their heart; and the Apostle John assures us, “ that he that dwelleth in love, “ dwelleth in God, and God in him; for “ God is love.”

The wise men of the world will say, as Nicodemus did, “ How can these things “ be?” It must be so; for the Apostle has told us, “ That the natural man,” one who is merely a child of Adam, “ receiveth not “ the things of the Spirit of God; neither “ can he know them, because they are “ spiritually discerned.” And indeed the very nature of the thing declares it. The way of the Spirit cannot be known but by feeling the powerful effects of it. And these



these none can either feel or perceive, but such as are alive; as they, and they only, are who believe. They have the witness in themselves, but cannot show it to those who want the spiritual discerning, any more than one who has the most perfect use of his eyes can show the light of the sun to a blind man. In both cases, it is only by doing what the other cannot, that they can make them believe there is any such thing. In many instances, the old prophets showed the Spirit and power of the true God; but never did the Spirit appear so illustriously as in his descent upon the disciples after their master's ascension. By what was then done upon them, we see what the Spirit can do, and need have no doubt of his answering every purpose he is promised for.

I hinted before the purposes on which our Lord promised to his disciples to send the Holy Spirit the Comforter: the sum of the whole is, "That he should teach them all things."

None will be so foolish as to imagine, that the promise imported their being made omniscient, any more than the Spirit's being promised to "lead them unto all truth" did. There are many things which it is impossible

impossible for man, or any creature, to know; many more which he has no occasion for the knowledge of; and many which it might be hurtful to him to know; as indeed all useless knowledge must be hurtful, as it diverts the attention from minding and improving what is most necessary. But this we may be very sure of, that the gift of the Spirit carries in it all that we need: and how the Spirit, or, which in this case is the same thing, how the almighty power of the creator, effects this, is none of our business to know, nor could the knowledge of it answer any good purpose to any of mankind.

But vain man will be wise: and if we will needs be diving into a secret which none but God is capable of understanding, it would be proper to begin somewhat lower, and, we may say, nearer home. How came we to be provided with the perceptive powers we find ourselves in possession of, and every particular sense so exactly suited to its object? It will be said, all this was adjusted by the perfect wisdom and understanding of the creator. But it is evident this is no answer to the question, and that we are still left entirely in  
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the dark how the thing was effected by this same divine wisdom and almighty power.

If we look further into ourselves, the state and furniture of our minds, and what we call *mental powers*, which go by the general name of *reason* and *understanding*, it will readily be allowed by all who acknowledge a creator, that all this is his work. But the profoundest philosopher has never been able to say how it is done, any further than Moses has told us, that he breathed or inspired into man the breath or spirit of life: and, I believe, it is from this that *inspiration* is become a common word in all or most languages, and the only term they have for expressing the divine communications of peculiar gifts to men. It is, I believe, commonly restricted to the revelation of the divine mind and will; but then we have no other word left for the conveyance of life, and all the powers of life. But, however we apply the term, we can make no more of it, than that there is something done by the creator which we call by that name, and which produces real and sensible effects; and when it is thus understood, it will appear to be no such extraordinary thing as  
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it is commonly thought to be; and that, indeed, every man who has a spirit in him, is really more or less inspired.

Those writers who understood the affair best, being themselves inspired in what is thought to be the highest sense, express it by God's giving another spirit, and the Spirit of God coming upon one, and conveying such peculiar gifts, or making such improvements or alterations as he sees proper: and they extend it far; to mechanical skill, as in the case of Bezaliel and Aholiab; to wisdom and understanding, as in Solomon and others. He gave Saul another spirit; his spirit was taken from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. The different measures of this gift are to be seen in the ordinary and extraordinary prophets under the old dispensation; and by the whole history, it appears, that the spirit of man is absolutely in the creator's hand, to give or take away what gifts and endowments he pleases; that is, to give or withhold his Spirit.

But never was this matter set in so clear a light as in the case of the twelve disciples of Jesus. That there might be no room left for the slightest surmises, and



that all men might ſee that the whole was an effect of immediate divine power, he choſe his diſciples out of the loweſt and moſt contemptible claſs which was to be found in that nation, which was very far from being reſpectable in the eye of the world: the moſt noted of them were poor illiterate fiſhermen of Galilee. During the time of their maſter's continuance with them on earth, they had ſuch a meaſure of the Spirit as raiſed them not only greatly above what they formerly were, but even above the wiſeſt and moſt learned men of that nation; and the maſters of Iſrael, without doubt, knew more of God than all the world beſides. But, to the time of their maſter's reſurrection, and aſcenſion to heaven, they continued under ſo much weakneſs and ignorance of the moſt neceſſary truths, that after all the pains he had taken in teaching and inſtructing them, they could not believe his reſurrection, until they were forced to it by ſenſible evidence.

But when the promiſe he had made them came to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecoſt, then it appeared to what aſtoniſhing height, and how near perfection, the

the Spirit could raise the lowest of mankind. The gift of tongues was the most obvious and striking effect, because it was utterly inconceivable how ignorant unlearned men could in a moment acquire the understanding of all languages then in being. The power that was given them of healing diseases without any sensible means, was not to be accounted for but by the power of God being present with them. But what was least obvious to sense, was by far the greatest miracle; the astonishing measures of knowledge and understanding in the most secret mysteries of the kingdom of God; and, what is yet more, the forming their hearts, their sentiments, affections, and passions, upon these views; so that the world, with all its allurements and terrors, was treated with the utmost contempt, and could not make the least impression on their resolution and behaviour. The Apostle says it strongly; the world was *crucified*, made a dead thing, to them, and they were dead to the world.

This astonishing fact, in all the circumstances and consequences of it, stands so distinctly recorded, that we need not enter upon particulars; and is so fully attested,

that we cannot avoid believing it, without resolving to believe nothing. It may perhaps be said, This was an extraordinary case, for answering an extraordinary occasion; but what is that to ordinary Christians in ordinary cases? The measure of that inspiration, or effusion of the Spirit, was indeed extraordinary, and attended with sensible circumstances suited to the occasion; but the gift itself was by no means confined to the apostles in the truth and reality of it. So far from it, that all who believed in Christ had the Holy Spirit given, even in a sensible manner, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles; insomuch that the Apostle says expressly, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This we find taken for granted in all the apostolical writings; insomuch that the gospel they preached is called *the ministration of the Spirit*; and unto this same Spirit we find all the fruits and effects of the gospel attributed. And that we may not imagine this was only a temporary dispensation, the whole stands on the indispensable promise of giving a new heart, and a new spirit, and writing God's law there, the substance of that covenant or grant of which Christ is

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is the mediator and surety. And so late as the time when the Apostle John wrote his epistles, it was the common privilege of Christians to have an *unction* or anointing from the Holy One, by which they were taught all things; and so essential to Christianity, that no man could say Jesus was the Lord, but by this Spirit.

By this we may be directed what to think of the commonly-received maxim, that since the finishing the New-Testament writings, inspiration has ceased; and all pretensions to it are branded with the odious title of *enthusiasm*; a cant word, which has no determined meaning as now used; and in the language from which it is taken, was deemed to be the same with inspiration, or being actuated by a Divine Spirit. If the meaning of the maxim is only, that there is no revelation of new truths, or terms of acceptance with God, which are not contained in these writings, it is certainly true. But whether the impressing these truths on the minds and consciences of men, and forming their hearts and sentiments upon them, is not as real inspiration, as the original revelation to those  
who



who thus delivered them down to us, is another question, or rather ought not to be questioned or doubted: and indeed there never was, nor ever will be, a real Christian, who is not as really inspired with the truths of the gospel as the apostles themselves were, and by the same Spirit too, though in a different manner and degree, which accordingly produces the same effects proportionally.

It may perhaps contribute something towards our forming some conception of this truly mysterious affair, which, in itself, is, and must be, absolutely incomprehensible, if we consider attentively the several cases recorded in the history of the gospel, of persons possessed by other spirits, evil ones, or devils. We are plainly enough told, that these unhappy creatures, though most of them had intervals, when they might be said to be themselves, yet were under the power of these spirits, to act in them and by them; that it was not so properly they who acted, as the spirit that possessed them. One damsel we find was possessed with a spirit of divination; and as many of these demoniacs were endued with bodily strength and force greatly above  
human,

human, in her we have a specimen of as unnatural strength of mind. Jesus and his disciples signalized themselves by dislodging these usurping demons, and thereby showing their superiority and absolute authority over them; which leaves no room to doubt, that his Spirit can possess the bodies, and especially the spirits of mankind, in as absolute a manner, as to make them act, and even think, as he pleases.

The belief of this was so strong among all the Heathen nations, that on it the whole business of oracles was founded; which made so much noise among the Greeks and Romans, that it would have been deemed blasphemy to deny, and great profaneness even to doubt of the divine inspiration of the ministers of the gods, as they were reckoned on these occasions; and who, on this account, had the name of *enthusiasts*, as being under a divine enthusiasm or possession. Nay, the wisest of them carried it yet further, even into common life, and appear to have been fully persuaded, that no great or extraordinary action was ever either undertaken or accomplished, without some degree of this enthusiasm.

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Our wiser moderns, being loath, as it would seem, to be so much indebted to God, as deliverance from the spirit which the Apostle says works effectually in the children of disobedience, and leads them captive at his will, would make them, have found a way of explaining all the effects of spirits, whether good or bad, on mankind, by a system merely mechanical. These effects, by tacking a new sense to the old word, they call by the disgraceful term of *enthusiasm*; and for all who have any regard to the influence of spirits, good or bad, they have coined two other terms of disgrace, to which no mortal can affix a meaning, viz. *Fanatics*, and *Mystics*. Festus dealt more honestly with the Apostle Paul: he thought him mad, and told him so; but in the gentlest manner that such an imputation could be conveyed, "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad." In the present state of human nature, no man can be quite secure against mistakes, even where the constitution is best and foundest. But the smallest disorder in the animal system affects the intellectual and rational powers; and when carried to a certain

certain height, entirely perverts and overturns them. This we call *madness*. But there are as many different degrees of it, as there are of bodily disorders which occasion it: and something there must be of this kind where-ever men are very confident and warm, without proper evidence and rational grounds. But however that may be the case of such as are under the influence of evil spirits, which perhaps is more common than any of us are aware of; yet it neither does, nor can be the case, of those who are possessed by the Spirit of God, and under the divine influence and leading. Every step in their way is laid out by perfect wisdom, and of course supported by the truest and most perfect reason. Every deviation from it is a piece of folly; and the further they recede, the nearer they approach to the height of madness. And when Perfect Wisdom condescends to take the leading and guiding of such as cannot guide themselves, what name shall we give to those who will not follow?

But, say the wise men of the world, if men are thus possessed and actuated by the Spirit, what becomes of human liberty? and if that is gone, there can be no such



thing as moral virtue; no human actions either justly rewardable or punishable, and the whole system of righteous moral government is subverted or destroyed.

I have no mind to enter into the intricacies of the disputes that have been raised on the subject of human liberty, which, if ever that affair comes to be well understood, I am satisfied the difference of the several contending parties will be found to lie more in words and terms than in the thing itself. All are agreed, that men, the freest of them, are necessarily determined by what appears the strongest motive; that is, such as makes the strongest impression on the mind of the agent, or, which is the same thing, excites the strongest affections and passions, the immediate makers or determiners of what is called the *will*, and perhaps that very thing itself. Could any agent be supposed so perfect as never to be mistaken or misled by false appearances, every motive would have its just weight, neither more nor less; and the whole conduct of such an agent would be perfectly regular, and such as it ought to be: and if that is not moral virtue, I know not what is. By  
what

what means the creature comes to be thus enlightened or determined, can make no alteration in the nature of his actions. When all is said that can be said for giving the creature the honour of being master of his own actions, when it comes to be traced to its rise and original, it will appear, that it is "by the grace of God that we are what we are." Those who are possessed and led by the Spirit of God, are no more treated like stocks or stones, than the wisest philosopher treats himself; only with this advantage, that they are more directly taught of God, and better secured against being imposed on by false appearances, and of course more steadily and strictly virtuous.

On this view, and that which the gospel of Christ gives, it is of no moment whether human actions are rewardable or not. That is an extrinſical circumstance, which does not alter the nature of the actions as they are in themselves, and abstracting from the motives on which they proceed. He must know very little of himself, I may say nothing, who imagines that he can ever requite his creator for the benefits he has received; and with what

face then can he expect to be rewarded, even on the impossible supposition of his having done all that he ought to have done? The plan of moral government is no other than a plan of man's contriving, under the influence of a spirit which certainly is not of God, by this sure token, that it lies directly contrary to his declared mind. By the free gift he has made of eternal life in his ever-blessed Son, he has given all the reward man is capable of receiving; and they who do not treat him as a liar, but believe his faithful word, receive the earnest of the Spirit, the principle of this life: and those who will not have it by gift, unless they can have the honour of deserving it, will in the end find themselves punished as such insolence deserves; and that we are well assured is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; the natural issue of moral government, and the measures of justice. But it is the happiness of those who are led by the Spirit to live, (as every creature should do), by the free sovereign grace of the creator, that they are under no such law: "Sin shall not have dominion over them; " for

“ for they are not under law, but under  
“ grace.”

22. *Heaven; or, The World of Spirits.*

WHEN men attempt to speak upon subjects they do not understand, it would be strange if they did not stumble into absurdities. There is nothing more real than the existence of spirits, and of course what may very properly be called *the world of spirits*, in contradistinction to this material one which we inhabit. But as we have no powers capable of perceiving spirits, and indeed can know nothing of them but what we can observe about ourselves, or those we have access to converse with, we can form no notion of them, nor their way of subsisting and acting, but by an analogy with our world; an analogy so remote, and which needs so much adjusting, that it is the hardest thing in the world to avoid mistakes, and even absurdities of the grossest kind; and would have been absolutely impossible, had it not been for the condescension our creator has shown in the information he has given us  
of



of what he alone perfectly knows; and he has given us as much as we need to know, and, one may say, as much as we are capable of in our present state.

When we have pursued our search into the nature of those beings we call *spirits*, our knowledge of them will be found to consist almost wholly of negatives; that they are not matter, nor capable of any of those properties that belong to matter. This has been carried so far, as because matter cannot subsist but in some place, or without occupying a certain quantity of what is called *space*, some very acute philosophers have thought, that spirits, which cannot occupy space as bodies do, could not be said to be any where: and much unintelligible reasoning has been employed on each side, to prove, or disprove, what no mortal can possibly form any distinct conception of. The most we can make of it is, to conclude, that spirits are subsisting where they act, and produce their effects.

That the human spirit, which we call *the soul of man*, subsists and acts in and by the body, is hardly possible for any one to doubt. But how it subsists, and how it  
acts

acts there, the most learned philosopher knows no more than the meanest peasant. No wonder then that we know nothing of such created spirits as we neither have nor can have any sensible or perceptible correspondence with. We have got two words in our language to distinguish the different abodes of good and bad spirits, viz. *Heaven* and *Hell*. Both are described in the sacred record, so far as we are capable of apprehending them. But a description where the terms are not understood, could make us never a jot wiser; and therefore the indulgent author has shadowed it out under such images as we are best acquainted with; *heaven*, as a state of perfect happiness and pleasure; and *hell*, as the extremity of misery and torment: and when we are assured of this, it is a matter of no moment in what determinate place those who are thus happy or miserable have their residence allotted them. The only purpose an inquiry of this nature could answer is, to avoid, if possible, erroneous or false conclusions, which may fill the mind with such prejudices as may in some cases have a very pernicious tendency.

Heaven

Heaven and hell being directly opposite with respect to the inhabitants, it seems reasonable to conclude, that they should likewise be opposite with respect to situation. But as it is impossible to know what will be the state of the eternal system when the present one shall pass away, and all things, even heaven and earth, be made new; our inquiries and decisions on the present state of the world of spirits, even though just, would answer no purpose beyond a present world, and the state of things as they now are; but may be of great use to prevent mistakes, and being imposed on by false appearances, and the undue influence of this outward sensible world; to which our present constitution is so much fitted, and on which we have such an immediate dependence, that it is no wonder numbers of mankind look no further.

But those who know any thing of God the creator, must know, that this material system is but an under-agent, or rather the instrument which he employs in exerting his power for the support of his creatures; and where-ever he directly and immediately exerts that power to the sense  
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and observation of the creature, there is *heaven*, in the common sense of that term: and if there is any particular place where he does it more than another, that we naturally imagine is his peculiar residence and dwelling-place. But when he fills heaven and earth, what shall we pitch on for the place of his throne? as it is, I believe, commonly enough imagined, he some where or other keeps his court with all his angels, his ministers, and servants about him, like the kings of this world, from whom this image appears to have taken its rise.

When he is said to fill heaven and earth, it is evident enough, that heaven must be the same which Moses in the history of the creation tells us God then called by that name; that immense invisible fluid, &c. in which this earth, and all other visible bodies, are contained. The original name in that language signifies both place and placers, an expansion which places and keeps in their proper place all things in that order the wise architect ordained them, to stand so long as this system should continue. And if this is the heavens where God is said to dwell, and to have his



throne, it would follow, that heaven is not ſo very remote, as that there ſhould need an immenſely long journey to arrive at it; nay, that we are locally there already, where God dwells; but want the neceſſary organs and perceptive powers for making the proper advantages of our ſituation, and living as perfect ſpirits do.

But this has been thought a depreſſing the Divine Majeſty, who is ſaid to dwell on high; and accordingly we find thoſe who knew beſt how to addreſs him, always looked upward, and lifted up their eyes toward heaven. The Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of the third heavens as the place where the Deity peculiarly reſides in all the glory of his majeſty: and when Jeſus was ſet down on the right hand of the Father, he is ſaid to be exalted far above all the heavens.

From theſe, and ſuch like expreſſions, many having imagined ſomething like the lower, ſecond, and third ſtories, in our buildings, conſider the groſs atmosphere, which is ſtretched above this earth, as the loweſt, or firſt heaven: the boundaries of the ſecond are not eaſily adjusted, but are generally thought to reach to the fixed ſtars: and ſome unknown place beyond theſe, they call the third. Whether it  
was

was on this view they were induced to it, I cannot say; but some have been very positive, that the residence of the Divine Majesty is without the bounds of this material system, and make it the distinguishing property of that immense being to act at any distance where he is not present; the only salvo that could preserve this opinion from the imputation of removing God out of the world, commonly called *Atheism*.

But however that may be, and whatever extramundane space may be pitched on for this purpose, certain it is, that this cannot be what the creator himself called *heaven*. It is not conceivable how the same name should be employed in the same record to signify another thing, which has no relation to what he called so, and thereby taught us to call so. They may seem to come nearer the truth who make these material heavens an image and sensible exhibition of the spiritual, and this last the proper residence of God, who is a spirit, and the father of spirits. But neither doth this mend the matter much; for these same spiritual heavens must either be in the same place with the material ones, or

beyond the utmost verge of them ; that is, no mortal knows where. And the more narrowly circumstances are laid together, and considered, the greater will the absurdity appear, of attempting to adjust the immensity of that being who possesses all the fulness of being so essentially, that where-ever any thing exists, there he must be.

This consideration, I believe, is what has determined the most considerate to allow the immensity of the divine presence, as well as his being. But still they think themselves bound to distinguish between that and his manifestative or glorious presence: and there is some reason for the distinction ; for we find himself often speaking of hiding and of manifesting himself and his glory: and, in fact, we find, that the most part of mankind are so far from beholding his glory, that they do not at all perceive his presence. But whether this may not be more owing to their want of proper faculties and perceptive powers, than to distance of any kind, should be carefully considered. The sun shines equally through every part of the system ; but blind men perceive no more of the  
glory

glory of his light, than if there was none.

But however this may be, we are sure he is not far from every one of us; and where-ever he is, there his glory certainly is, whether it is perceived or not by the creature. It may be of use to consider what we often meet with in the books of Moses, the glory of the Lord appearing in what our translators call a *pillar of fire*, or *light*, and *cloud*, the substance of the material heavens, exhibited in that sensible form; and which demonstrated, that he was the same who inhabited and dwelt in them as their proprietor and lord. We are told likewise in the history of the prophets, of the heavens being opened, and their seeing visions of God. None sure will be so foolish as to imagine, that this was like opening the door of a house, or particular apartment, that one may see what is within. The case of Stephen explains it: He saw heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He was not as the old prophets; or even as Paul when he was wrapt up to the third heaven, but could not say whether it was in the body, or out of the body: Stephen was standing  
before



before the Jewish council, and did no more but look stedfastly up to heaven. Something of the same kind happened to the Apostle Paul at his conversion: Jesus appeared to him in a light far exceeding the light of the sun, which might very properly be called an opening of the heavens; the light of his glory, who dwells in light inaccessible, breaking through the more gross and dark parts of that fluid or expansion, which we are taught to call the heavens. And it is likely enough, that when John Baptist saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descending on Jesus at his baptism, that it was something of the same kind.

This perhaps might be improved, to lead us into a juster and more consistent notion of the third heavens the Apostle Paul speaks of; viz. That they are not like the stories in Noah's ark, lower, second, and highest, in point of place; but the different constitution, if we may call it so, of the heavens, suited to the different constitutions of the several orders of creatures which have their residence and abode in that immense expansion. There can be little doubt that this gross atmosphere in which we live and breathe,

breathe, is the lowest. We may easily conceive the difference there is between this, and that part of the fluid, which is free from the gross steams and exhalations of this earth, or such bodies as are of the same kind, where there is nothing but light and air: and as conceivable a difference there must be between even that, and pure light, without any mixture of the grosser particles of air. We need not amuse ourselves with guessing where this last is to be found in the material system. It may be sufficient to say, that this is the only part of the system which he “ who is light, and “ in whom is no darkness at all,” chuses to reside immediately in, and by which he manages every part of it, produces every thing that is produced, and all the changes and alterations which are made throughout the system, to the utmost extent of it. It might be thought extravagant to imagine, that there are different orders and ranks of spirits above us: and that as there are many different species of animals below us, every one of them placed in their proper element and way of living, suited to their constitution; in the same manner, those beings which are above us should have their pro-  
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per place and station fuiting the purposes they are designed for. But as the knowledge of these things, even if it could be attained, could answer little or no purpose to us in our present state; it would be but idle for us to amuse ourselves with guessing about it, when we have more business of moment upon our hands than our short lives can serve to accomplish.

23. *The Way to Eternal Life.*

Matth. xix. 16.—21.

**I**T was a true testimony that was given by the Apostle concerning Jesus Christ, on a singular occasion, That he was a man approved, or rather authorized and attested, of God: and indeed he was so in the fullest and strongest manner that can be imagined. And when the whole evidence was completed and laid together, he was declared, manifested, to be the Son of God, with such power, that it is not conceivable how it could be resisted by any rational being.

This character presents him unto us, not only as a teacher sent from God, and  
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whose every word was to be respected as a divine oracle, but as the perfect image of the invisible Father, exhibiting at once the awful majesty of almighty power, and the alluring sweetness of sovereign grace, love, and kindness. His history therefore must merit our utmost attention: for in every particular of his behaviour, we are instructed in what we may expect from God in parallel circumstances; and there are very few cases we can be in, if any at all, to which we may not find something parallel in the record we have in our hands.

Among the numerous incidents of this kind, though there may perhaps be some that may be thought more encouraging, there are none more instructive than that before us; for it carries an authentic resolution of the important question, How one shall come to inherit eternal life?

The young gentleman appears to have been very much in earnest. We are told he came running, as one afraid of missing the opportunity of being instructed by such a teacher. He applies to him with great respect; and gives him a title, which, on the views he had of him, proved to be



too high; *Good Maſter*. Had he known and believed him to be what he really was, the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe, he had received no rebuke: but as he had no higher notion of him than that of a prophet or teacher ſent of God, he was very juſtly reprov'd for giving him a title belonging only to God. Some have been thoughtleſs enough to imagine, that our Lord here refuſes that title, as too high for him, and thus renounces all pretenſions to proper Deity. But he does not. He only puts a queſtion to the man, Why he gave him a title which could belong to none but God? And had he known the Son of God ſo well as to be able to answer, that he meant to acknowledge him as ſuch, the queſtion had never been put.

But it is the Lord's answer to the queſtion we have mainly to conſider; and it merits ſo much more conſideration, that it has been improved by the admirers of moral government, as they call it, to overturn and ſet aſide the whole ſyſtem of ſovereign grace, as the Apoſtle Paul has fully declared and confirmed it, and that with ſuch plainneſs, and ſtrength of evidence, that nothing but rooted prejudice can

can either evade or resist. We may be well assured, that our Lord, and his apostle, whom he taught and sent forth with authority to teach and instruct the Gentile world, did not, nor possibly could, contradict one another in any point; and least of all in a matter of such moment: Nor is there indeed the least shadow of inconsistency between them.

The manner in which the question was put, very naturally led the infallible teacher to give the answer he did. Had he simply asked, How he should inherit eternal life? it is more than probable he would have told him as he did his disciples, "That he himself was the way, the truth, and the life; and that no man could come unto the Father but by him." But the poor man, full of the spirit of the degenerated disciples of Moses, had no doubt but that the inheritance must be earned by doing; and all he wanted was, a direction what good thing he should do to secure the great point he had in view.

The wise Master knew the man perfectly, and frames his answer upon the principles of perfect truth, but so as should

effectually reach conviction to him on his own views. The general answer he gives him is a fundamental truth, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The commandments of God, it cannot be doubted, take in all the duties he requires, or the whole mind of God, with respect to the method of conveying eternal life to the dead sinners of mankind; for die they must to this world, ere they can live to God. Life of every kind is the creator's gift; and the most excellent life must be the most valuable gift. It was free to him to give it or not as he pleased; and with-holding it could be no injury even to an innocent creature. It must therefore have been free to him to convey it in what manner he pleased; and he has chosen to do it by his Son Jesus Christ. It is then only by believing the gift that we can know any thing of it; and acquiescing in the way by which he conveys it, is the only mean by which we can come to the enjoyment of it: and hence believing the testimony God has given of his Son, or faith in Jesus Christ, is the first duty, on which all other duties depend, and become practicable by a sinner.

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This suggests an observation of very great moment, That there never was a law given to mankind, until the foundations of every duty were previously laid in an act of pure sovereign grace, free gifts bestowed, or, which is equal in this case, promised to be bestowed in due time. We need say nothing of the primæval law given the first parents of mankind. They had newly received being and life, with all that could make such a life easy and comfortable. When he gave a peculiar law to the Israelitish nation, he had by his almighty power, exerted in a most striking and illustrious manner, delivered them from a long and grievous bondage, and was ready to put them in possession of the land he had promised unto their fathers. The law given to mankind in general was established on a greater gift, and infinitely better promises; even the gift of eternal life, secured in the hands of his ever-blessed Son, whom he promised from the beginning, and in due time sent to be the saviour of the world. When this foundation is overlooked and neglected, not only are the obligations and proper motives to obedience set aside, but the only solid principles and foundation on  
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which all the duties both of religion and morality can ſtand, are ſet aſide at the ſame time.

This is more than implied in the direction our Lord gave in the paſſage before us, when he concludes with bidding him *come and follow him*; which he makes at leaſt as neceſſary as what he had told him of keeping the commandments; nay, ſo neceſſary, that whatever elſe he might do, the commandments could not be kept at all without this. Nor is this contradicted by what he had ſaid of keeping the commandments. He affirms indeed, that the commandments muſt be kept by every man who propoſes to enter into life; and they muſt be kept too as the all-wiſe law-giver has laid them. But by the detail he gives here, which is wholly confined to the ſecond table of the law, it is evident he could not mean, that every man who obſerved theſe commandments ſhould enter into life. There are two general heads under which all the particular duties are comprehended, viz. the love of God, and of our neighbour. He mentions only the laſt, in which he knew the gentleman was very defective, and on  
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which he designed to convict him. He knew the love of the world was lying very deep in his heart, though he flattered himself that he had kept all these commandments from his youth. He puts him accordingly to the trial, “Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” The poor man could not bear the thoughts of such an exchange; and went away very sorrowful, because he could not have the heavenly inheritance without parting with the earthly; nor reconcile the love of God, and the love of a present world, so as they might dwell together in the same heart; which our Lord and his apostles assure us is absolutely impossible. See Matth. vi. 24.; James iv. 4.; 1 John v. 15.

There is another text, Rev. xxii. 14. which has been abused to the same unhappy purpose, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life;” where our translation leads us to imagine, that doing the commandments, gives a *right* to the tree of life; which, we are sure, is not to be had but by a sovereign free gift. To  
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rectify this miſtake, we need only have re-  
courſe to the original. The word ΕΞΟΥΣΙΩΝ,  
which our translators have rendered *a*  
*right*, does not ſignify *a legal right*, or juſt  
title, but only freedom and liberty to make  
uſe of any thing as our own, however we  
came by it.

But the capital argument for the plan  
of moral government, as they call it, and  
on which all the reſt depend, or any  
ſtrength that can be pretended in them, is  
taken from what the ſcriptures have in-  
culcated over and over, viz. that in the  
final judgement God ſhall render unto e-  
very man according to his works, whether  
they have been good or bad. This is a pro-  
poſition which no man who profeſſes any  
regard either to ſcripture or reaſon, or even  
believes a judgement to come, can poſſibly  
make any doubt of. But if men were at  
pains to conſider what works are good, and  
what are evil, in the ſight of God; and  
that by works are meant, not only our  
outward actions, but our words, and even  
our thoughts, all which ſhall be brought  
into judgement; they would eaſily per-  
ceive what a bold adventure it muſt be  
to appear in the preſence of the all-know-  
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ing God on this footing. The Psalmist has determined it, “ that no flesh living  
 “ could be justified in his sight, if he should  
 “ enter into judgement with them.”

But let it be observed, that it is no less an essential part of the divine law; that we should believe in the name of Jesus Christ, whom God has sent; than that we should perform any the plainest duties of morality; nay, so essential is it, that where this faith is not working by love, none of the commandments of God can be kept as the great Lawgiver has laid them. When men then are judged according to their works, it is not, may not be imagined, that the capital, the damning sin, should be overlooked. For this is the rule given by the Judge himself, “ He that believeth,  
 “ and is baptized, shall be saved; but he  
 “ that believeth not, shall be damned.” This he has told us “ is the work of  
 “ God,” according to which the sentence will pass, “ that we believe on him whom  
 “ he hath sent,” John vi. 29.; and no other works can come into consideration, so as to be sustained good, but such as are produced by this faith; viz. the exercises and actings of that love to God and  
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man, which nothing but faith in Christ can produce in the heart of man in his present unhappy circumstances. Accordingly we are fairly told, that in Christ Jesus; that is, on the plan of the divine government as it stands under his administration, nothing can avail but faith, which worketh by love; and as this faith is not of ourselves, but the free gift of God; it lands in the same thing with the new creature, the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Spirit, which he sheds forth abundantly through Jesus Christ the Saviour. This same Saviour being the judge, they must certainly be safe who have sheltered themselves under his care. But as for those his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them, and scorned to be indebted to his grace, one may easily foresee what they have to expect.

The End of the First Volume.

The Second Volume is in the  
press, and the third will be put to  
press when the second is finished.









2 vols 3/4

