

ARGUMENTS,
NATURAL, MORAL and RELIGIOUS,
FOR THE
IMMORTALITY
OF THE
SOUL.



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PREFACE.

WHILE the teachers of religion have been deeply engaged in speculative controversy, while they have shewn a pious zeal to denounce and anathematize each other, and to prune off the branches of the tree of religion, till its size and shape suited their fancy; a common enemy, taking advantage of their divisions and altercations, has "laid the ax at its root," and would cut it down, under the pretence, that "it cumpers the ground."

The enemy has attempted to undermine the basis, and overthrow the superstructure of morality and religion together. The dreary doctrine, "that death is an everlasting sleep" has been widely promulgated, and is fatally prevalent. Infidels, deists, sceptics and atheists, all renounce their other peculiarities, and make a common cause in disseminating this. And one would conclude, from the zeal and perseverance which they exhibit in their cause, that they really imagined, that the state and condition of mankind would be ameliorated, when they had once attained the philosophic illumination, that there was nothing to hope or fear beyond the grave.

Nominal Christians have been heard to acknowledge their doubts. The language of the scriptures is to too many a tale without a meaning. They hear of eternal life, and read the explicit language of the gospel—but all their thoughts are bounded by the grave. Too many, who neither believe, nor disbelieve, have never bestowed a thought upon this momentous and awful subject. Too many drown the small voice of reflection, in the bustle of the world. Too many cannot, or will not extend their views to eternity.

Thus our subject addresses itself to an idle, thoughtless and indifferent world.

But we either are immortal, or we are not. If we are not, sectaries will be prudent to spend their zeal, and exert their talents in idle disputation upon prescience, fate and chance; election, reprobation, and God's eternal and hidden counsels. Thus they may easily make what is to us "confusion worse confounded." They may draw the attention, and call the reverence of their partizans to the shadow, when the substance is no more.

If we are not, men may consistently sleep on till death, regardless of eternity, and indifferent to religion. "Let us eat, and drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

But if we be immortal, and if Jesus Christ and the scriptures have put it in our power to render that immortality a blessing, then is our subject interesting and important indeed!

To those who might feel disposed to censure, the author observes, that however inadequate to the task he has undertaken, however inaccurate and faulty the performance, it was his serious object to defend the doctrine. He has thrown his "mite" into the scale of religion and truth; and he hopes that the serious inquirer after glory, honor and immortality, will feel above a verbal criticism, or a severe remark upon him, whose endeavor it was to prove that immortality is our birthright. He will not say that the production was hasty and imperfect—that the reader will discover. He will not supplicate candor. He will say, believest thou our doctrine. Then square thy conduct to thy creed.

N. B. The reader is requested to notice, that the first Chapter is chiefly taken from "GOLDSMITH'S *Animated Nature*," and that recurrence has been made to "BUTLER'S *Analogy*," where his ideas coincided with those of the author.



ARGUMENTS,

NATURAL, MORAL & RELIGIOUS

CHAPTER I.

Old Age and Death.

ALL animal bodies have their periods of rise, progress and decay. The human structure is no sooner arrived at its state of perfection, than it begins to decline. The transition is at first gentle and insensible ; and several years elapse, after it has begun to take place, before we find ourselves grown into age. The news of this disagreeable change generally comes from without, and we learn from others, that we are aged and approaching the mortal hour, before we are willing to credit the report.

The duration of the life of an animal or vegetable body, may be calculated in some measure from the time of its coming to ma-

turity ; for as soon as either has reached its highest point, it begins to progress downward. The tree, or the animal which takes but a short time to increase to its utmost pitch, perishes much sooner than those that are less premature. Man grows in stature till he is about the age of eighteen ; but his body is not completely developed till about thirty. And being so long in coming to maturity, he continues to live to seventy or eighty years. But those animals that attain their acme in a few years, as soon decay and die. It is even said, that prematurity of intellect and genius in man, is an indication of short life.

In all animal bodies one thing is certain, that they carry the causes of their own decay about with them, and that death is a necessary and inevitable event. The prospect which some visionaries have formed, of perpetuating life by remedies, has been often enough proved false by their own example. And the enlightened sages of the present day, who assert that we die merely by our own mismanagement, will probably exhibit the same foolish mismanagement with their credulous brethren, who believe that death is the law of our natures. Had not the love of life heightened our credulity, such unaccountable schemes would have died with their authors. To this love of life, all these chimerical pro-

jects may be traced. To this it is owing that quackery has the privilege of being leagued with pestilence, famine, sickness and old age, under the banners of death.

The only effectual way of protracting human life is prescribed in the scriptures. "What man is he, that loveth life and desireth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." A moral and religious life, a peaceable and quiet temper, a sound, serene, and equal mind; abstraction from the world, freedom from the assaults of passion, a regular and abstemious diet, and a considerable degree of exercise are the great specifics for longevity. It has generally been remarked in the most striking instances of long life, that the persons were of a disposition calm and tranquil, whom the events of fortune and their intercourse with mankind could but little vex or disturb. Indeed, it must be sufficiently obvious, that nothing can be more injurious to the health and destructive to the constitution, than an irritable, passionate, and uneasy frame of mind.

But however some may have delayed the effects of age, and to whatever extent life may have been prolonged, death is the certain goal to which all are tending. A thousand

causes concur to hasten our dissolution. Yet in the regular course of nature we approach the awful period by slow and imperceptible degrees. Life is consuming day by day, and some one of our corporeal powers is every day dying before the rest, so that death is only the last shade in the picture. And we suffer, perhaps, a greater change in the transition from youth to age, than from age into the grave.

When we begin to live, our lives can hardly be said to be our own. As the child grows into life, its body increases in the same proportion ; and is at its height in the prime of manhood. But as soon as the body begins to decay, life begins to decrease. For, as the human frame diminishes, and its juices circulate in smaller quantity, life diminishes and circulates with less vigor. So that, as we begin to live by degrees, in the same manner we die. This is the regular progress from infancy to dissolution. But a small proportion, however, of the human race, meet the event in this regular transition. Death lurks in every substance on which we subsist, and in the element in which we move. The human machine is complicated with an infinite number of springs and constituent parts ; and their texture is extremely delicate and frail. The failure of a single spring, the derangement of a single constituent part, often puts

a stop to the whole vital motions, “ breaks the wheel at the cistern,” and levels the complex and curious machinery with the dust. Thus infancy and youth, maturity and age, equally fall the victims of death, the universal conqueror. His power none resist ; his arrest none evade. We have received the present life on the condition, that after we have enjoyed it for a time, we all should retire, and make room for our successor.

Why then should we fear death, if our lives have not been such, as to render eternal existence dreadful. Why should we fear that moment, for which a life of sickness, and pain, and trial has been preparing us ? Why should we shrink from death, and welcome sleep, its nearest resemblance : The first pangs of sickness being probably greater, than the last struggles of departure. In most persons death is endured more calmly than the disorder, which caused it. If we inquire from those, whose business it is to attend the sick, and the dying, we shall find, that except in a few acute causes, when the patient seemed to die in agonies, the greater part seemed to depart quietly, and without pain. And even the groans of the former, rather terrify the spectator, than indicate extreme suffering on the part of the patient. For how many have we seen, recovered from this extremity, without retaining impressions of what they endur-

ed, or any memory of pain. It should be noted that the powers of sensation and the susceptibility of corporeal suffering almost cease before death. The greatest part of mankind, therefore, die without sensation; and of those few who do preserve their faculties entire, there is scarcely one that does not also preserve the hope of outliving his disorder. Providence, for the happiness of man, has rendered this sentiment stronger than reason. A person dying of an incurable disorder, which he must know to be so by frequent examples of his case, which he perceives to be so by the inquietude of all about him, by the tears of his friends, and the countenance and manner of his physician, is still in hopes of surviving it. His interest is so great, that he attends only to his own representations. The judgment of others is considered as a careless, indifferent, unfeeling and ignorant conclusion. While death makes new inroads upon his constitution; while dissolution advances with silent, slow, and irresistible progress, beating down one barrier after another, hope still retreats from fortress to fortress, still survives the universal ruin, and is the last that submits to the blow.

Cast your eyes on a sick man, who has an hundred times told you, that he felt himself dying, that he was convinced he could not recover, and that he was ready and willing to

die. Examine what passes on his visage, when through zeal or indiscretion some friend assures him that his end is at hand. You will see his countenance change like one who receives an unexpected piece of ill news. He now appears not to have entirely credited what he had just been telling. Hope still lurked in his bosom though mingled with a greater proportion of fear.

If we attend to the mortal hour itself, death merely in its immediate consequences is not that dreadful thing we have been accustomed to conceive it. It is a spectre, dressed up by alarmed imagination in frightful colors, and awful forms, which frighten at a distance ; but which, scrutinized by reason and religion, vanish away. Our ideas of its terrors are conceived in prejudice, and swelled by fancy. It is regarded not only as the greatest misfortune, but as accompanied also with excruciating torture. We have increased our apprehensions by reasoning on the probable extent of our sufferings. It must be dreadful, say some, since it is sufficient to sever the bond which unites the body to the soul. It must be long since our sufferings are proportioned to the succession of our ideas ; and these being painful, must succeed each other with extreme rapidity, and thus swell a moment to an hour. Thus has a false philosophy labored to increase the sum of hu-

man misery, and to aggravate our apprehensions of that moment, which nature in kindness usually seals up with insensibility.

Neither the mind nor the body can suffer these high extremes. A very acute pain produces fainting, and death is only fainting continued. And whoever has felt the one, may probably form definite and just conceptions respecting the other. In this manner, excessive pain destroys sensation and reflection, and with them destroys itself. And wherever we see evidences of reflection, we may be sure that the patient suffers no more than what we may have remembered to endure.

But in the article of death we have numberless instances in which the dying person has shewn that very reflection, that presupposes the absence of the highest pain. And consequently the pang that ended their lives was not so great, as some that preceded. Thus it is the prejudice of persons in health, and not the body in pain, that makes us suffer from the approach of death. For it appears, that, before the closing moment, nature is worn down, the vinculum between the body and the soul almost burst asunder, the susceptibility of extreme suffering precluded, the avenue of sensation closed, the feelings blunted, and the pain, like the indistinct images of a waking dream.

Such is human life, and such is death ; an event, that will still, notwithstanding all speculation upon it, assume a dreadful appearance to the human imagination. And, considered in its ultimate consequences, imagination cannot surely magnify its importance too much. A question the most momentous and awful that can arrest the attention of the mind, succeeds to these remarks : Does the history of our existence terminate here, or is there ought beyond ? Situated as we are in a dying world, and assured that we must one day pass through the change we have been describing, one would think we should need but few inducements more to urge us to a serious consideration of the following subject, and to a careful examination of the arguments for our immortality. And, we trust, it will appear in the result of the inquiry, that although foolhardihood may shut its eyes, and rush upon death, that nothing but religious hope can quiet the awe and apprehension, and dread raised by its nearest approach ; and gain a final, and decisive victory over it,

CHAP. II.

If a man die, shall he live again ?—*Joh.*

HAVING transiently passed over the period of human life, and considered some of the circumstances that attend its close, we come now to the inquiry, Is the event to which we have been attending, the termination of our existence ? Does the spirit of animation and intelligence expire with the body ? Or are there natural reasons, sufficient to induce the belief, that the soul is immortal ? These inquiries must be interesting to every thoughtful mind. For the love of existence is not a local, nor a temporary passion. It is common to the inhabitants of every climate ; to people of every age, rank and condition. It is as warm in the heart of a wretched convict, immured in the glooms of a dungeon, as in that of the monarch on his throne. Sorrow cannot damp, misery cannot extinguish it ; and the common consent of mankind attaches dementation and insanity to the man, so destitute of human feelings, as wantonly to sacrifice his life. . It is the first desire we feel, and receive no diminution from the successive changes, through which we pass from infancy to age. It strengthens with increasing years ; and if you ask an aged man,

over whose head four score years have revolved, if he be not satisfied with life ; although his equal aged friends are gone—although he is left solitary and friendless, like an island in the midst of the ocean—yet that man will enumerate his infirmities, and his countenance will brighten while he informs you, that he hopes still to survive a few years more.

The Author of our being has provided a corresponding gratification for every other natural desire of the human heart. Till the present period, miscalled the age of reason and philosophy, it had been almost the universal belief of mankind, that this was not implanted in the breast to delude and disappoint. It had been hoped and believed, that a principle of life which no change could materially affect, and nothing short of Omnipotence destroy, would survive the ruins of the grave. Infidelity has endeavored to convince mankind of the fallacy of this doctrine, and in its zeal for the dignity of human nature, to rob it of eternity. It states that man is entirely material—that the powers of sensation and reflection depend on the peculiar organization of the human body. In short, that we are material machines, fitted up to be acted upon by the heavier motive, in the same way, that the heavier weight inclines the scale—that, as all material bodies are li-

able to derangement, decay and dissolution, this is at last deranged and dissolved by death—and that organization on which the living powers depended, and those powers themselves are lost in the common ruin ; and thus death is the end of our being.

Were this statement true, a gloomy comparison of ourselves with the irrational creation would present itself. Why were we illuminated with the glimmering light of reason but just sufficient to afford us the most dreary prospect of that darkness which bounds the little space of human life on either side. While they neither dwell upon the past, nor anticipate the future, while they neither fear nor premeditate death ; and when the event comes, suffer but a momentary pang. Man is all his life speculating upon the event, and “ in bondage through fear of death.” He is born the most feeble and helpless of animals. He enters on the stage with wailing. His part is a perpetual conflict between reason and the passions. The former is fully sufficient to teach him the vanity of all that he possesses or enjoys ; the latter are perpetually clamorous for some kind of gratification. This life of change, of disappointment, and vanity is but of short duration. Hoary hairs soon cover his head. The man is but just in the infancy of being, and has but just commenced an acquaintance with the works

of God. He feels that he has made but little progress in knowledge and improvement. He knows that he is susceptible of an eternal progression in virtue and goodness; that there are no finite bounds which he cannot pass, had he but time to complete his career. His love of existence has increased even in this scene of change, disappointment and pain.—

—————“For who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being;
These thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish, rather, swallowed up, and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion.”

But the immutable law of God is against him. Unsatisfied with life, unresigned to death, he falls a reluctant victim to the severe conditions of his being. His death is an “eternal sleep.” Such, according to modern philosophy, is the rise, progress, and issue of man; and if this be a true statement of all our hopes, man is of all beings most miserable.

Our attempt will be to shew, that this statement is not true; that even reason discovers so many arguments in favor of future life as to preclude all reasonable doubt of it.

While by this dim taper, we attempt to feel our way through the palpable obscure of the grave, should we be bewildered and lost in the gloom, we have, as Christians, a safer,

and brighter guide. To that, we will reascend, and traverse the regions of "life and immortality" in the splendor of that meridian light which has gleamed from the gospel.

Our first argument in favor of the doctrine, is drawn from that nature of the thinking substance, which is a necessary inference from its capacities and powers. With respect to positive knowledge, what the thinking substance is, the wise and the ignorant are both alike. Our knowledge on this head can be only negative, for of matter, or mind, we know nothing but their properties and qualities. The argument for which we would contend, is this; that the mind exhibits faculties and powers which cannot belong to organized matter, which have no necessary dependence on matter, which must inhere in some substance which is immaterial, indiscerptible, and of consequence immortal. It has been questioned, if Omnipotence might not endow organized matter with sensation and reflection? If it be proved that these powers are inconsistent with the necessary laws of matter, the question in other words will be, if the Deity have not power to reconcile contradictions? And the full belief that if he has ability, he possesses no inclination to this, increases our reverence for his awful and exalted character.

The principal properties of matter are extension, impenetrability and inertness, or a

tendency to a state of rest. These are properties inseparable from its nature ; for take either of them away, and the substance is no longer matter. Now the art of man can produce a thousand changes in its configuration of particles in their relative situation to each other. But the most curious and complicated machinery, is as remote from the possession of animal life, as is the most misshapen fragment of a rock. The infinite variety of modifications, which matter has received from the creation, to the present day, would in probability, have produced animal life, if mere modified matter could ever be susceptible of it. But the man cannot be found who will assert, that under his hand some parcel of matter had received the lucky moulding and configuration necessary to its becoming an animal, and had of course waked into life under his care ; and the human mind cannot conceive any essential alterations, which new modification can produce in matter, except in its figure, and its passive powers of motion.

From its property of extension, all matter is capable of infinite divisibility. You may divide any material substance into two equal parts, and neither of those parts are any nearer to nihility than was the whole substance ; and so of the equal division of each of them. Now thought and consciousness, evidently come from some substance, which has not

thus an infinite number of parts ; they are simple acts of the thinking substance, and we cannot, even in imagination, entertain the idea, that the simple act of thought is the consequence of some inexplicable, strange and wonderful concurrence of motion between an infinite number of separable particles in the human body. When a man involuntarily, and without any effort, perceives that he is the same person today he was yesterday ; when he remembers, that he yesterday felt satisfaction or suffered pain, it seems that these powers must flow from some indivisible substance. For, if the sentient substance, the conscious being, were made up of separable parts, all those parts must concur to produce thought, and to support consciousness. It has been said, that the sound made by the percussion of a sonorous body, as a bell is as indivisible as consciousness, and analogous to it. But we find an argument in support of our doctrine, in the fact adduced to disprove it. This sound is not only capable of ideal division, but may be in fact divided. We may easily stop the vibrations in any particular part, and they subtract one part of the sound from the remainder. But this consciousness is not capable even of an ideal division. The supposition that a part can be subtracted, and the remainder left, is absurd. The unity and indivisibility of the

act, must result from the unity and indivisibility of the substance in which it inheres. If, for example, the sentient substance was composed of two monads of matter, two particles divided, as far as possible, and these two particles concurred and produced thought, one half of that act must flow from one, and the remainder from the other; consequently it might be separated from the other, and leave but half the thought or consciousness. Thus, if it be true that the thinking substance be indivisible, the most obstinate sceptic will grant, that there is no reason to believe that death is the destruction of our living powers.

If we attend for a moment to the structure of man, as he appears to our senses, we observe a material body, governed in general by the same laws, and exhibiting the same qualities with all inanimate matter. Some mysterious power within the structure gives circulation to its fluids, activity to the limbs, articulation to the tongue, and life to the whole body. The man is conscious that what he calls himself, has the power of communicating motion to this body. By its medium he becomes acquainted with the material and external world. He has sensations, pleasurable or painful, in consequence of this intercourse, which is carried on between him and the external world. He is conscious of having continued the same being, from the earliest peri-

od to which his memory can ascend. At death, these powers, on whatever they depend, are no longer resident in the body. That is, no longer a fit medium to transmit sensation to the sentient substance. The rest of mankind have no longer sensible evidence that the being is in existence. For the body, which alone afforded that evidence, affords it no more. Now if man be entirely material, if these living powers really inhered in the body, as qualities are supported in a substance, the question is, In what part of the body did they inhere? For they must either be diffused over the whole, or be supported in some constituent part. These are the only alternatives. And, either supposition being true, death would close our existence. But the most inattentive observer is aware, that they are not diffused over the whole body. When a man determines to view an object, he feels that his eyes have no concurrence in forming the determination, and that it did not originate there. When we elevate the hand, it is unconscious of the elevation. When we walk, the feet have no share in the separate volitions that produce each repeated step. When the hand or foot is wounded, a very small degree of reflection will convince the sufferer that it is not the wounded member that feels the pain. Does the man pause and inquire, whence did the above mentioned

determinations come ; negatively he can feel satisfied that they came not from the limbs moved ; but positively to determine whence, he cannot.

It is true by the laws of our present existence, we are much more intimately bound to the body, than to any other portion of the material world. But this difference, we believe is in degree, and not in kind. For instance, the eye is no more a percipient, does no more perceive the image it transmits to the sentient substance, than the glasses which assist the sight. It has long since been discovered, that the eye has only a mechanical influence, in conveying the image to some place where the mind perceives it. The hands and feet may both be amputated, and the thinking substance not only remain in the body, but sustain no diminution. The body may after this loss, be reduced by wasting sickness to almost a skeleton, and still the thinking substance remain in full force and vigor. Now, upon the supposition, that it was extended over the whole body, it will, we think, be granted, that the most trifling loss of substance from the body, would occasion a proportionate diminution of the living powers. But numerous instances will occur to every recollection, of persons wasted from extreme corpulence to living shadows, and yet retaining every power of mind

in as full exercise as before. The proportion of mind indeed is generally inversely less, as the body is more gross and corpulent.

If consciousness were diffused over the whole body, it would be perpetually changing. No person would be, or would feel himself the same two days together. For all animal bodies are perpetually changing, increasing, or diminishing. Physicians say, that we change our bodies more than once in a year; and if they were the substance in which consciousness inheres, the quality would surely change as often as the substance which supported the quality. A man in memory can ascend to that period of his youth, when he probably had not a single particle of matter, that now enters into the composition of his body. Yet, as far as his memory can ascend, he feels the consciousness of having continued the same individual person. Thus, it must be clear, that consciousness is not diffused over the whole body.

A certain philosopher, who holds a kind of halting place between infidelity and christianity, but whose labors have infinitely more subverted the former, than the latter, has attempted to prove that the brain, or the commune sensorium, is more immediately the soul, that all our ideas are material impres-

sions, similar to that of a seal on wax ; that we are entirely passive in the reception of these impressions. If this doctrine were true, what a curious phenomenon would the brain of a man of reflection, and the experience and knowledge of eighty years exhibit ? Examine it with a microscope, and there would appear a map of all the different countries he had ever seen ; in another all his experimental knowledge would be marked out ; in a third all his abstract notions would appear—in short, every idea stored in the mind of the man at the time of the observation, would be delineated on a surface perhaps less than the thousandth part of an inch. What a humbling idea of the human soul !

But admitting the doctrine, the commune sensorium is infinitely divisible. Suppose it ideally divided into a thousand parts, and there is in the brain a thousand souls, from the percussion of which, is produced a single idea. But how an impression from the external world, made upon these thousand parts, could produce such an individual quality as consciousness, to us appears strange and marvellous indeed. But on this head, unintelligible as it will be to many, we will no longer dwell. We believe it is capable of moral demonstration, that thought and consciousness do not depend upon any divisible and material substance. If matter be incapable of infi-

nite division, and one of those monads which can no longer be divided be the soul, it is still, as before, beyond the reach of death ; for that only can be dissolved which has parts.

If there were any ground to imagine that death was the destruction of our living powers, “ it must arise either from the reason of the thing, or the analogy of nature.* But we cannot infer from the reason of the thing, that death is the destruction of living agents, for we know not what death is, except by its effects on animal bodies ; and these effects do not imply the destruction of a living individual agent. As we are in the dark upon what the exercise of our living powers depend, so we are entirely ignorant on what the powers themselves depend ; as distinguished not only from their actual exercise, but also from the present capacity of using them ; and as opposed to their destruction. For sleep, or a swoon shews us that these powers exist, when they are not exercised, as the passive power of motion in matter, but also that they exist when there is no present capacity of using them ; or that the capacities of exercising them may be suspended for the present, and yet the powers themselves remain undestroyed. Since then, we have no positive knowledge upon what the exercise of our living

* See Butler's Analogy.

powers depend, this further proves that no shadow of probability can be inferred from the reason of the thing, that death will be their destruction; and we have attempted to shew, that their existence depends on something beyond the reach of this king of terrors.

So that nothing is more certain, than that the reason of the thing shews no connexion between death and the destruction of living agents. Nor can we find anything in the whole analogy of nature, to raise even the slightest presumption, that animals ever lose their living powers, much less that they lose them by the event of death; for we have no faculties to trace any beyond, or through it, so as to see what becomes of them." We shall in another place attempt to shew, that many arguments in favor of immortality suggest themselves from analogy. If, then, the living powers do not depend upon the body, it will follow, that the body is no part of ourselves; that we communicate with the material world in the same way with our hand when we touch some solid substance, and with a staff when we hold it in our hand. In the former instance, it is true, we form more correct and definite notions respecting the shape and size of the thing handled. But the difference is only in degree, and not in kind; that our eyes assist our vision in the same way with glasses. In short that the body is only a

receptacle, filled up for a temporary residence of the soul, and is only the organ by which it communicates with the external world. This idea in its full extent will undoubtedly seem wild and visionary to many. For when most of mankind speak of themselves, their thoughts immediately recur to their bodies. But these crude notions and prejudices, are founded entirely in that intimate union, which subsists in this world between the body and the mind ; and between the latter and the material world.

Imagination is the parent of error. This, however, is always busy and intruding beyond its sphere. The event of death opens an endless field of mystery—and in darkness and mystery imagination delights to dwell. It is not strange then, that in the consideration of such an event, the suggestions of this delusive and busy faculty should be mistaken for the conclusions of reason. We must silence the suggestions of fancy and imagination, to give these arguments their weight. Death then in the view of reason only destroys the sensible proof of our existence. The body which gave that sensible proof is decomposed. But, that the living powers are extinct, because we do not see them manifested in the animation of the body, is surely an erroneous conclusion. As well might we conclude, that there were no such powers as

magnetism or electricity, because we neither see, hear, nor feel them. As well might we conclude, that in every instance, the person who was out of our sight, was out of existence. We possess no powers to trace the being beyond the grave. Nothing therefore but positive proof that death does in truth and fact destroy the living agent, should establish our belief in the doctrine of annihilation. But so far from there being this positive proof, there is every presumptive proof to lead us to the impression, that death only changes the mode of our being. We enjoy the living powers now, and this alone is presumptive evidence that we shall continue to enjoy them, if there be no positive proof, that we shall not. This is a mode of reasoning, which governs most of our conduct in life. Having observed certain events regularly taking place in time past, and knowing of nothing to disturb or interrupt this regular course in time to come, we believe and act as if certain, it would continue to take place.

Death alienates from us all that portion of organized matter, which composes the human body. But we suffer this alienation every year in the usual course of nature, and frequently in cases of accident and disease a partial alienation, and yet the living powers remain invariably the same. The power which determined us to raise the hand, is not lost

when the hand is amputated. Death must undoubtedly introduce a striking change in the mode of our being. But we have passed through changes, perhaps as great as that of death, in our progress from the first moment of our existence to maturity of reason and years. It is hardly possible to imagine two modes of being more different than our present, and our once embryo state.

It is objected, that in one instance the alienation of organized matter is gradual, and in the other immediate. But this is no ground for concluding, that while the living powers may and do survive the gradual alienation, they are destroyed in that, which is immediate and total. It is at least as easy to conceive of the existence of the soul in a separate state, as to suppose that its consciousness could be taken from a large portion of matter to be evacuated or amputated, and transferred to a portion, that was to occupy the same place by repletion.

We shall here instance two or three facts, which seem to favor the opinion, that the living powers depend upon the body ; and by this expression, we uniformly mean, as qualities are supported in a substance. Human bodies have been reanimated, after all the living powers have apparently ceased. In most mortal diseases the mental powers are ob-

served to decline, in a proportion, at least as great as the body.

In the first instance, if the soul be immaterial, it can have no relation to space. The idea of its leaving the body and returning, is borrowed only from our connexion with matter. We are entirely in the dark, whether the soul has relation to place. But if it even has, if we attend farther to the fact, we shall find nothing in it, tending to disprove the spirituality of the soul. For there is no attested instance of the vital functions being restored to a drowned person, after they have been suspended beyond a certain time. Now if the living powers depended only on the body, there could be no limited time in which they might not cease, and be afterward restored, while the body was not in any degree dissolved, and its constituent parts were not deranged. But if a human body have been immersed in water but for one hour only, though there be every reason to believe, that its constituent parts are uninjured, and no putrefactive process commenced, yet no human exertion can reunite the soul with the body. The single fact would give us a strong presumption, that the living powers did not depend upon the body. For if they did, nothing more would be necessary to restore them, while the body was uninjured,

than to restore the vital motions or distend the lungs.

Upon this principle, could a man be immersed in some preserving fluid, that should keep the fluids and solids of the body in the same conformation, which they had, when he was immersed, he might be kept there for any given number of ages, and afterwards taken out and restored to life. It will be objected, that we state an impossible case. But it is answered, it is one which materialists themselves have put; and have attempted to adduce corresponding facts in the instance of animals taken from the bowels of a rock, apparently lifeless, and where it was supposed they had remained ever from the creation. But upon restoration to the air, they immediately began to breathe again. They instanced also insects brought in a cask of spirits across the ocean, and upon their emancipation from the cask, beginning to fly again. But we believe, there are few who would imagine, that a body, thus perfectly preserved if it could be, would ever be animated with a conscious and thinking being again.

In the instance of a drowned person, we ask, why the body may not be restored, as well after an immersion of an hour, as of a quarter? In the depth of winter a body plunged in water of nearly the same temperature with ice, could not surely suffer a pu-

refractive process in an hour so great, as to prevent the restoration of life, when it might be restored after an immersion of half an hour. If it be so, why can the body be re-animated after half an hour's immersion, and not after that of an hour? We believe, that the rational answer is this: The vinculum, which binds the body to the soul, is not burst asunder in the former period, and is in the latter, and while that remains, and nature is assisted, a resuscitation of life may always be effected; and after it is burst nothing short of the power of him, who established the connexion at first, can restore it again.

In the other instance, it is said, that the decay of the living powers before death indicates, that the body and mind are both approaching their dissolution. It is held to be a prognostic of approaching death to the body, when it is enfeebled and decayed; why not, the same appearances with respect to mental debility and decay, an equal indication, that this is also approaching its final period. In most instances, death finds the body relaxed and feeble; and the mind in a state of insensibility and idiotism. We reply, that in the first instance; the decay of the body is manifest and obvious to the senses; but as we see the mind only through the medium of the body, the decay of the mind is not thus capable of sensible demonstration.

The soul manifests itself to our corporeal senses only in the motions it gives to the body, and articulations to the tongue. And it is evident, that when these organs, by which alone the operations of the soul could be ascertained by others, have suffered decay, their must appear a proportionate decay in the mental faculties. But should we rationally infer in the instance of a palsy, from the suspension of the bodily powers, that the living principle, that used to communicate motion to the body, was extinct; and not rather, that the body was no longer in a situation to obey the dictates of this moving principle? When we observe a person on a sudden struck dumb, do we infer from it, that the power, that used to give articulation to the tongue is no longer in being; and not rather that the organs of speech can no longer move and obey the power? Then why these conclusions in the apparent suspension, and decay of the living powers before death?

When the aged complain of the failure and decay of their mental powers, the idea, which should be affixed to the remark is, not that the mind has really decayed, and has been retrograde in its motion, but that some of its faculties that depend almost entirely on its connexion with the body, as, for instance, memory have failed them, in consequence of the failure and decay of the body. The power

of recalling past ideas, and making them pass in review before the mind again, evidently depends much on the peculiar organization of the body : Thus after severe sickness, the patient may retain but few recollections of any transactions which took place, or ideas, that he entertained, during his sickness. But, when the person recovers robust health again, all his mental powers manifest themselves as before. The apparent decay then of the mental powers in sickness, old age, and at approaching death, is a proof not of real diminution of the powers, and energies of the soul, but of those faculties, which much depend on the body, or association of ideas, and memory, and also of the organs by which the soul manifested its energies and powers.

If this were not the case, man is not a progressive being, but like the brute would attain the perfection of his mind at the same time, in which he arrived at maturity of body. Thus, both having reached their acme at the same time, both would begin to decay. But, in opposition to this, we frequently see men with all the corporeal decrepitude and infirmity of extreme age, yet retaining every mental power in full force and vigor, and daily making fresh acquisitions of knowledge. We often observe men too, the moment before their death in the full exertion of memory and reason. And if the

mind were even invigorated with new and unusual energies before death, while the body and the organs were thus deranged and decayed, these energies could not at all appear.

Sceptics have said, that the origin of man is as evidently mechanical and material, as a vegetable. The objection is founded entirely on our ignorance. When or how animation and the passive powers of reflection and thought are infused into the inanimate embryo, neither the sceptic, nor the Christian can tell. But both will grant, that the Deity can as easily emanate and infuse the heavenly principle, the inspiring breath, at one time as another. Heat and moisture, will never account for the origin of animal life; much less for the rational faculties. There must have been a time, we know, when God did thus breathe the breath of life into man, and in consequence when he became a living soul. Of this we should be certain without the information of scripture. The history of the origin of the human soul in scripture is very concise and comports with the deductions of reason: "And God breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul." The wiser and more virtuous heathens came to the same conclusion from the light of nature alone. Plato affirms, that the rational soul is produced immediately by God and

without the interference of second causes, that it is “ingenerable and incorruptible.”* A plant from the Supreme being, not of “earthly, but of heavenly original.” The scriptures account not only for the origin of the soul, but also of the body. The one is fashioned from the dust of the earth, and the other is the immediate inspiration of the “father of our spirits.” Thus while he sustains to the rest of creation the more distant relation of creator, he is immediately the father of our spirits. And that not only the soul of our first parent, but those also of all his posterity are infused by the immediate act of God, is as evident from reason, as from revelation. Heat and moisture, will account, perhaps, for the expansion and consequent growth of a plant. But we are sure, that they are not sufficient to originate an animal. There was a time, when the material part of man was an inert inanimate substance; and there is a time when this substance is informed with life, and nothing, but the interposition of God can change inanimation to animal life.

We now proceed to infer the immateriality and consequent immortality of the soul from its capacities and powers, the manner in which it exerts them and the objects, on which they

* Agenēton. Phuton ageion. all' euranion.

are employed. In the first place, if the soul were a concrete substance, we cannot conceive, how it could entertain abstract ideas that have no relation to any thing, which is the object of our corporeal senses ; nor how the assertion of the schools can be true, “that we have no ideas in the mind, which were not admitted through the medium of the corporeal senses.”* The ideas of goodness, virtue, justice and truth, are not abstract ideas gained from any concrete substance. They have no affinity in the mind with the moral beings who practice them. Through what sense then were they admitted there ? Their fancied resemblance to proportion in bodies is surely fanciful and unfounded. We conclude then, as the effect is always a consequent to the cause though necessarily inferior to it, that a material soul could entertain no ideas, but those which relate to material objects. It may perhaps be said then, that an immaterial soul could entertain on this supposition no ideas relative to matter. But though the first of these propositions be true, yet the other its reverse does not follow. From the known laws and properties of matter the first conclusion is drawn. But that the latter is true, none can tell, and we have the evidence abovementioned, that it is not. On the supposition, that it was

* Nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius fuerat in sensu.

true, simple reflection could not affect the body. Yet it is certain, that the contemplation of dreadful objects, which we never saw, will awaken those emotions of fear, which agitate, and affect the body. Now here is a corporeal change affected by an incorporeal image. Hence, immateriality can act upon materiality. But it is indeed mysterious to conceive upon what the image fell, or how it moved, and affected the body.

A person arrived at that period of life, when we become reflecting beings, can indulge the most intense contemplations, when all the avenues of sensation are closed. The mind in a moment can glance upon a million different objects, dissimilar and wide as the world, from each other, while the body has not changed its place. It can penetrate into the recesses of the invisible world; it can pass the "flaming limits of the universe."* If all these faculties result from the modification of mere matter, how unlike the properties of any material substance, with which we are acquainted. The infinite velocity of mental transition from one object to another—the spirituality of our conceptions; in short, all the phenomena of mind evince with the utmost precision the same truth—the distinctness of mind from body. We have already considered the doctrine of materialism, and

* *Ultra flammantia mœnia mundi*

have been indignant in the consideration of a doctrine which treats of the mind, as a diminutive material crucible, in which, by the help of slight impressions on the sensorium, an intellectual process is carried on.

Hitherto we have considered the powers of the mind, when we are awake—we shall briefly consider the effects of sleep upon it. The ancient termed sleep* the brother, or relation of death. But, if we attend to this state of the mind, near as it seems to resemble death, we shall find, that it affords the most striking arguments in favor of immortality.

In the deepest sleep the mind retains, and often exerts its usual powers. It frequently carries on its usual volitions; but the body is not subject to the will. The mysterious connexion between the body and the mind is partially suspended. Now, it should seem, that a material soul should sleep with the body. But so far from it, that sleep still holds its resemblance to death, that by introducing the mind to a new world and another scene of things. The body is in effect dead, but the soul is still conscious and active. It is partially freed from the cumbrous shackles of the body. It begins to indulge ideas, which, when awake, the mind never entertains. It begins to taste of new, and exalted pleasures.

* Consanguineus lethi sopor.—*Virg.*

It sketches the most magnificent, and useful scenery. It realises the high enjoyments of a disembodied spirit. With the rapidity of a sunbeam, it flies through the empire of possibilities, and forms the most excentric, wild and irregular combinations, and seems to feel itself possessed of that energy, and activity, which in probability, will characterize its separate state. But still it is weighed down by a partial connexion with the body ; and a kind of faint impression hangs upon it, that it is all a dream. “ How often in alarming dreams we are conscious of making an effort to save ourselves from apprehended danger, yet in spite of our efforts, continue chained down to our beds.” We fancy some ruinous building, some impending cliff, or falling tree about to descend upon our head, and crush us in the ruin. But an unaccountable weight binds us to our place. We labor, and pant, and feel the most violent emotions of fear. The body does not however obey the volitions of the will. Thus we observe, that the soul does in fact exist, when the connexion between it and the body is so far dissolved, as that the latter does not obey the dictates of the former. It seems then, that in these instances, the body is far from being necessary to the existence of the soul ; that it only binds, encumbers and shackles it. A strong proof this, that it may and will exist, when

the connexion is entirely dissolved. A thousand arguments naturally suggest themselves in favor of immortality from the resemblance between sleep and death. But we shall speak of those drawn from analogy in another chapter. It is sufficient for us to observe, that all the phenomena of sensation and reflection, imagination and memory, evince in the clearest manner, the same great truth, the distinctness of mind from body.

CHAP. III.

Moral Arguments for a Future Life, drawn from our progressive Nature.

He will have regard to the work of his hand.—*Job.*

WE only discover the intentions of the kind author of our being in all the works of his hand. He has made nothing in vain. In that regular gradation, which descends by easy and gentle transition from the most exalted of created existences, to the humblest animated being, there is not a single chasm. One obvious design pervades the whole, that every thing created, should attain the utmost perfection of its nature. That every natural

desire of every living thing, should have a reasonable and corresponding gratification. Plants grow up, and flowers afford the seed that will reproduce their kind and die. The most diminutive insect attains to all the perfection of which it is susceptible, before it dies. And is it reasonable to believe, that God, elsewhere affectionate and kind, is to man cruel and severe? Can it be supposed that the being, whose ancient companion, even from eternity, was truth, will delude and mock, and deceive man with wishes which have no corresponding gratification with hopes, the object of which will never be realized?

At the close of the present life, man has not attained the perfection of his nature. A thousand generations of brute animals succeed each other without making a single improvement. But one man makes a discovery, and pursues its advantages through his whole life. His successor takes it up and pursues it still farther. He is capable of an eternal progress towards the perfection of his nature. Eternity is his career; his goal is the Deity. And though he can never reach the point proposed, yet is he susceptible of an eternal approximation to it. One attainment opens a prospect to another. He has no goal, no resting place where he can sit down satisfied, and say, "I can know no

more." In his moral nature, each conquest over one passion leads him on to another enemy. He eradicates one immoral propensity, and still finds another to subdue ; and no man ever attained to that moral purity, that a continued existence would not enable him to increase. And, can we suppose that man is the only being whom God has created, that does not attain all possible perfection and improvement. Shall we suppose that such a mind, capable of such expansion and improvement, capable of going backward to the time when itself, and no being but God was in existence, and forward to the hour when time itself shall be swallowed up of eternity. Shall this mind be arrested in its progress, and the outset of its career, and consigned to eternal sleep in the grave ? " Would an infinitely wise Creator make such glorious creatures for so mean a purpose ? Can he delight in the production of such abortive intelligences, such short lived reasonable beings ? Would he give us talents, that are not to be exerted ; capacities, that can never be satisfied ? How can we find that wisdom, which shines through all his works, in the formation of man, without looking on this world, as a nursery for the next, and believing that the several generations of rational creatures, which rise up and disappear in such quick succession, are only to receive their first rudiments.

of existence here, and afterwards to be transplanted into a more friendly region, where they may spread and flourish to all eternity.

If man had been intended only for the present life, it should seem, that the first, who lived, would have arrived at an impassable goal of knowledge and virtue, and thus of all his descendants. But so it is not. At three score years, he is but just entered on the threshold of experience and knowledge. He is but in the infancy of being and improvement. To suppose, that he will not have a period allotted him, sufficient to unfold all his latent energies, to attain to all the perfection in knowledge and virtue, of which his nature is susceptible, is to suppose that the Deity will violate the most obvious and best known law of nature. And as he has not this period in the present life, his existence will be continued after, and no bounds can be set to the progress he can make, this duration must be without end."

There is not in religion a more pleasing and triumphant consideration, than this of the perpetual progress, which the soul will be making towards the perfection of its nature. To look upon the soul as going from strength to strength; to consider that she is to shine forever with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that she will still be adding virtue to virtue, and knowl-

edge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully pleasing to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his creation forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him by greater degrees of resemblance.

“ Methinks this single consideration of the progress of a finite spirit towards perfection, will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and contempt in superior. That cherubim, which now appears, as a God to a human soul knows well, when the period will come about in eternity, when the human soul shall be as perfect as he himself is now ; nay, when he shall look down upon that perfection, as much as he now falls short of it. It is true, the higher nature still advances, and by that means preserves his distances and superiority in the scale of being ; but he knows that, how high soever the station is of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will at length mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degrees of glory. With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our own souls, where there are such hidden stores of knowledge and virtue, such inexhausted sources of perfection. We know not yet, what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in

reserve for him. The soul considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines, that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it. And can there be a thought so transporting, as to consider ourselves perpetually approaching him, who is not only the standard of perfection, but of happiness ?”

CHAPTER IV.

Analogical Arguments for a Future Life.

Look nature through ; 'tis revolution all.
All change ; no death.—*Night Thoughts.*

DEATH destroys the sensible proof we have of a man's existence ; and so also does his removal to another country. In the latter instance, we have faculties that enable us to ascertain that he is still alive. But in the former, we have none that can follow the living agent beyond the grave. But here faith and reason, and particularly analogy in this view of our subject come to our aid. If we attend to the changes, through which he actually does pass, and still exhibit sensible proofs that he has not lost his being, we should

rationally conclude, that he would pass through this in like manner. What a striking change has he passed through between the first moment of his existence, and the first hour after he is born ! A change strikingly exhibiting his natural progress from a narrow, humble and confined state of being, to one more suited to expanded knowledge and increased perfection. Follow him from infancy to manhood and age ; through sickness, change, vicissitude and transition ; and from thence to the grave, and compare what he then is before death, with what he was in an embryo state—and can death thus produce a greater change upon him ? It is a law of his nature that he should exist with different capacities, enjoyments, sufferings, pleasures and pains at different periods of his life. And this holds with respect to all other animals. The caterpillar, one of the most loathsome, sluggish and diminutive insects with which we are acquainted, affords however an actual proof of the doctrine of animal resurrection. It attaches itself in autumn to some tree or building ; becomes a mouldering, lifeless film, and the winter passes away while it remains in this state. But the germ of life is in it. It is reanimated in the spring, emerges from its film, and the loathsome insect appears a gay butterfly, which spreads its wings, gay in all the colors of the bow, and with infinite

rapidity wafts itself from flower to flower. And shall God thus raise this diminutive reptile to a state of existence so much more exalted, and leave man to eternal sleep in the grave? A thousand insects experience the same transformation. Numberless animals are congealed to the consistency of ice by the severity of winter, and so far from being destroyed by the temporary death, come forth in the spring with renewed youth and vigor. To enumerate all the transmigrations and changes, through which different living beings pass, without losing the sensible proof of their existence, would be to describe a great part of the whole animal creation. Indeed it is hardly possible to conceive two states of being more different than our present and once embryo state. Then let us suppose, and the conclusion is strictly analogical, that death will introduce us to a state as different from the present, as the present is from what once we were; or a state as different from the present, as the butterfly is from the caterpillar. And is it reasonable to believe, that these diminutive insects will survive death, and gain so much by the event, and man, the work of God's own hand, and the creature of his peculiar care perish forever?

Through the whole circle of animated nature, we observe in the animal a perfect adaptedness for the element, in which it lives, and

moves. Its conformation and structure has a perfect reference to its state and condition. This wonderful adaptedness of animals to their mode of life with regard to their external structure, and internal wants and desires, must strike every attentive mind with the irresistible conviction, that an infinite intelligence made, and governs the world. Thus every animal has every thing necessary to its supplying itself with food, satiating its wants, and procuring its usual enjoyments, and nothing more. The fish is in every respect exactly accommodated to its watry element, and no other. It is formed to glide along with infinite rapidity and ease ; and is carefully guarded on every side from all the inconveniences of its situation. But, little as we are acquainted with the animal, it has nothing in its structure for which we cannot find a necessary and obvious use ; and that the derangement of the smallest part of its structure, will subject it to great and manifest inconvenience. This has been a subject of frequent remark by the wise and learned of ancient times. It was to the serious and reflecting a sufficient refutation of atheism. Galin, by the dissection of a human body, and attention to its admirable and wonderful structure, renounced his atheistical opinions, and become a sincere convert to theism. He saw such infinite design in every

minute vessel, and thread in the complicated machinery, that all sophistry and doubting were done away. He felt the full conviction of the first and greatest truth, *the being of a God* ; a truth stamped in characters equally legible and fair, on every page of the great volume of nature, and the mind of man. The general truth which we apply to our subject is this : There is no animal that lives or moves, which has one organ, one capacity, one constituent part of its make superfluous to its necessity ; nor is there one which lacks any thing necessary to its subsistence and happiness.

Should a philosopher from another planet and unacquainted with the laws of that providence which governs this, visit our world, and observe a living fish in the open air attempting to struggle forward on the ground ; should he mark how little it was calculated for the element, he would be at a loss to ascertain the use, object, or end of that formation, which entirely incapacitated it for the situation in which it was. But, restore the animal to the water, and his doubts would at once be gone.

When we mark the growing wings of the young nestling, we conclude immediately, that it is destined at some future period to fly. The wings, it is true and the growing feathers are useless then. But we hesitate

not to admire the wisdom of providence is thus early beginning to prepare it for its future element. What an argument for atheism, if a race of animals could be found with wings, and plumage; the make and conformation of a bird, but which always moved on the ground, and never applied the wings to any purpose whatever. In all we observe, indeed capacity, and structure of no use to them in some period of their being, but only preparatory to another scene of action. Let us apply this universal analogy to man. Let us bear the truth in our minds, that no animal has any deficiency, as superfluity of organs, capacity and powers.

Let us inquire whether, these must not be another scene of action for man, except he is the chasm in the analogical chair; except most of his capacities and powers are thrown away upon him with an inconsiderate profusion, which is so far from having any object or use, that it is in this view cruel and injurious. Of what use is his boasted reason, if this life be the whole of his existence. Modern philosophy, it is true, descants pompously upon the perfectibility of man, and the dignity of his reasonable nature. But did we firmly believe, that death was an eternal sleep, with all our refinement, with all our reason, with all our dignity about us, happier would be the "brute of the field." Reason teaches

as the value of life, and in proportion, as it was valuable, it would then swell our fears of death. Much of our dignity is due to our reasonable nature. It has afforded a light by which the human mind has travelled through the visible universe. It has measured the circuit of worlds, which the naked eye cannot discern. It has taught us, that those glittering lamps, which brighten the face of night are suns attended by convolving worlds. But how dreary would be the reflection, that the mind, which had made these researches, which had thus, unassisted and alone, wandered through such a broad province of God's universal kingdom, must at length return to nothing; while these luminaries still shine, and still invite these high speculations. A different for different reflection occurs to the Christian philosopher, the legitimate descendant of Newton, while his mind is exerting its powers at these infinite distances, in these "wastes of creation," "these suburbs of our system." Those worlds which now faintly gleam on his eye, may one day be his resting place. He hopes one hour to visit them in reality. Perhaps they will be so many stages, where he shall pause from time to time, and refresh his mind with broader views and nobler conceptions of the universe; ascending from world to world, increasing in moral perfection, and perpetually drawing nearer to

him, who is the sum, and source, and center of perfection.

Of what use are all those high researches respecting the existence and perfections of God, which give us a portion of that excellent nature which we contemplate, if we are soon to lose them all forever. We are able to form conceptions of eternity ; and a mind that ever entertained these ideas, will always feel the poverty of finite possessions. The only advantage of reason to us, if there were no life but this, would be to teach us, how truly wretched was our situation ; how low and grovelling our usual enjoyments ; but it could offer no substitute for them. Without it the brutal creation are ignorant that sensual pleasure is not a real good. They enjoy to-day, and are unconscious of tomorrow. They have no internal enemies, that rise up and tell them the meanness of all that they enjoy. They are untortured by envy or ambition, and in contented indifference, sail quietly along the stream of time.

But man is always restless, always uneasy, always looking to futurity. Most of his mental faculties are totally useless, if this life be not preparatory to another.

If a sceptic, ignorant of the progress of infancy towards maturity, should observe an infant in a cradle, he would perhaps immediately inquire of what use were its helpless

hands and feet. He would argue from its useless limbs, that there was no infinite intelligence that superintended its creation. But in a few months the arms and feet are nerved with strength. The child leaps and walks, and his hands subserve the various ends for which they were made. His doubts are at once removed. Conviction falls upon his mind, with respect to the object of the Creator in its form and structure.

To apply these remarks, if then it be certain that man possesses faculties which can be of no use to him in the present life—as sure as God hath not provided wings for the fish, or fins and scales for the quadruped, destined to graze the plain ; as sure as he hath wasted superfluous faculties upon no being ; so sure will he bring man also forward into an existence, where all his latent powers shall be unfolded, and where shall appear no more waste of faculties, than now appears in every animal that lives or moves.

CHAP. V.

*Moral Arguments for a Future Life, drawn
from the justice and goodness of God.*

—————But here the cloud,
So wills eternal providence, sits deep
Enough for us to know, that this dark state
In wayward passion lost, and vain pursuits—
This infancy of being cannot prove
The final issue of the works of God.—*Seasons.*

THE moral proofs of immortality open a broad and extensive field. The natural arguments from it would not cease to have force, even admitting the dreary and dreadful suppositions of atheism. But from the existence and perfections of God we are led to another source of proof. That God does exist, uniting in his character all possible perfection, few will be disposed to contest. If then he be supremely good, and if it will be found to militate with his character to create such a being as man, and destroy him in the grave, the truth of our subject will follow immediately from his character.

It is evident that the designs of Providence with respect to us are not completed. Human life always bears an evident relation to something past, and something to come. The whole system of nature is verging to some

end. Why disorder and sin prevail among the works of God, we cannot tell; but that they do, and that reward and punishments are disproportionate to the virtue and vice of mortal beings, proves that a perfect retribution must be reserved for an existence after death.

It is demonstrable, that virtue is agreeable to the nature of the Deity, and vice the reverse. Thus obedience to his laws would be always rewarded, and disobedience always punished here, if here was the end of our being. But we frequently see the direct reverse of this. Good men are often subjected to temporal misery and suffering. They wear out their lives in misery, toil and obscurity. They steal unnoticed to the grave. While vice is often rank, luxuriant and flourishing, the "lot of the wicked is cast by the rivers of waters," and he flourishes like "the green bay tree." All his capricious wishes are gratified. All his schemes, however wild and chimerical, prevail. All his labors seem to prosper. The scriptures strikingly illustrate this truth in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Let the Stoic say, that virtue is sufficient for itself; let the disinterested moralist assure us, that the plaudits of approving conscience, the serenity and satisfaction of a mind at ease with itself counter balance any earthly distress. Even the parable declares,

that in this life Lazarus suffered “evil things.” And the sufferers themselves, so far from being happy, express their wretchedness, and feel the full misery of their situation. Now there is no difference between real and ideal suffering except in degree. Consequently, notwithstanding their loyalty, virtue and obedience, they were unhappy. And the others, notwithstanding the reproaches of their conscience, and that misery which is appropriate to vice, declare themselves happy; and by their reluctance to die sufficiently prove that they are satisfied with life. Now, if this life were the whole of our existence, a good and faithful father would surely secure in every instance happiness to his humble and loyal subjects, and misery to the rebellious and disobedient. As this is not the fact in the present life, the inference is obvious and strong; there will be another life, in which this discrimination shall fully appear, and the “ways of God to man be justified.”

The most pleasing view of nature is that which reflects the perfect benevolence of the Almighty; and this is the view which it assumes to every pious and attentive beholder. Pure and disinterested benevolence reared the fabric of the universe from chaos. His pervading energy and diffusive kindness fill and enliven every place. He is the source of good, the giver of “every good, and every

perfect gift" to all his creatures. The animals that graze the plain, that "stately tread, or lowly creep;" the birds, that "singing up to heavens high gate ascend;" the fishes that glide through the seas; in short, the whole animal creation evince the happiness they feel. Man is not yet admitted to his rest. He is a probationer for an immortal existence, and must be tried by suffering. by passing through scenes of trial, temptation and discipline, to "train him for the skies." Were this not the case, he would not have been subjected to so much trial and distress. He would have been ignorant, contented and happy; unconscious of tomorrow, and satisfied with the present. From this happy ignorance and indifference, death would have snatched him quietly away, and consigned him to the bosom of annihilation. But now he anticipates all the horrors of coming misery, before it is present. Why such powers of mind? Why that ardent love of being which no suffering can quench, which no distress can extinguish, and nothing short of eternity can completely satisfy? The brute is not disturbed by a desire, for which there is not a corresponding gratification. The young, as soon as it is brought forth, and while yet without experience, feels the desire of food, and as soon as that desire was manifest to us, we should know, had we not

even observed it before, that there was a proper object for that desire.

The aquatic fowl, brought into life by the incubation of a domestic fowl, as soon as it is disengaged from its shell, begins to seek for water, and having found it, plunges in. Let the sceptic tell us, why the animal thus instinctively flies to the water ! Let him inform us, why in autumn a whole nation of gregarious fowls set out from the north, and mount the autumnal winds ; and without quadrant or compass, fly a thousand leagues to a warmer and more genial climate. And the course of Cook was notwithstanding wild, meandering and indirect compared with theirs. Let him shew us what moved them to this great attempt, and what enabled them to complete it. Let him account for the inimitable phenomena of instinct in animals, and then inform us whence this universal and ardent love of existence in man !

Would it not have been unkindness in the Deity to create within us an unquenchable thirst without providing water to satiate it ? Or hunger without food ? Now to have formed within us this unextinguishable love of being without providing its corresponding gratification, is unkindness greater than the former, in proportion as this desire is stronger than those. It may be objected that this is an acquired desire, like a thousand fond

and foolish wishes and fancies, which grow up within us, the troublesome children, not of nature but of art—desires which we foster ourselves. It is an infallible criterion to distinguish natural desires from artificial, that the former are universal in their empire and perpetual in their duration ; whereas the latter are local and changing, one prevails in one place and at one time, and others in another. And it should seem, that if any desire be connate with our being, and a necessary consequence of our make and constitution, it is this. For this is the only one, that never fails, that survives every change, and remains itself unchanged.

Therefore, if it be unkindness to create a being with strong desires and no gratification for those desires, and if the Deity cannot be unkind, then have we the strongest assurance, even the attributes of the Almighty, that immortality shall satisfy our desire of existence.

CHAP. VI.

*Arguments for a Future Life, drawn from
the consent of Nations in its belief.*

Omnis autem in re consensus gentium lex naturæ putanda est.
Cicero.

THE ancients established it as a maxim, that the opinions which were admitted by the human race in general must be true. The maxim is founded on two obvious truths, that a speculative opinion universally believed, must be innate to the mind, or raised there by the Deity; and that a sentiment by him implanted in the mind will not be unfounded and delusive. Particular nations may adopt erroneous opinions. But time is the friend and test of truth. Error from its nature will always be local and temporary; whereas the empire of truth is universal and eternal. Therefore in the nature of things error cannot prevail for a long time, nor become universal. The reason which would induce its admission into one country would prevent it in another. The circumstance of its being an article in the creed of one profession would incline another to reject it. But great and acknowledged truths force con-

viction equally in the minds of all professions and sects, however dissimilar. The belief of immortality has obtained this consent of nations ; for none has been found so barbarous and ignorant as not to admit its truth. Nor has this belief originated, as some have supposed, in the policy of legislators, and been transmitted from one nation to another. It is an article in the creed of hords of savages, who live in a state of the most absolute anarchy. The barbarian, who traverses the wilds of America, hopes repose after death in the abysses of the sea, the fertile islands of a lake, or in the regions beyond the moon. He expresses these hopes in his prayers to the “ great spirit,” who resides according to his belief on the top of some inaccessible mountain, or at the source of some impetuous torrent. He expects his heaven in a mild and genial climate ; in groves replete with game ; and then to pursue those favorite occupations which are so dear to him in the present life. All the different tribes figure a happiness similar in kind, but higher in degree than what they enjoy in this world ; such as forests full of game ; rivers swarming with fish—where they shall never tire in their delightful pursuits, and where they shall always have the zest of unceasing and unceasing novelty. Here famine, and toil, and war, and trouble shall be no more.

"Lo! the poor Indian whose untutored mind
 Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind.
 His soul proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way,
 Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
 Behind the cloud-topp'd hill an humbler heaven,
 Some happier land in depth of woods embrac'd ;
 Some safer island in the watry waste :
 Where slaves once more their native land behold
 No fiends torment, nor Christians thirst for gold.
 To be contents his natural desire—
 He asks no angels wing, nor seraph's fire ;
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful day shall bear him company."

In those lately discovered islands, that arise in solitary beauty from the bosom of the pacific ocean, so far removed from others, by intervening wastes of water that the inhabitants believe themselves the only people on the globe ; they are yet firm in the belief of the immortality of the soul. So long had their communication with the rest of mankind been suspended, that they had lost all memory, and tradition of their emigration from another land. Now, whence did these simple children of nature derive this belief ? Where did they acquire it ? Let us be informed, and it will solve the whole mystery, respecting the consent of nations to the doctrine of immortality. They must have received the opinion in one of these three ways. Either it must be traditionary, or the result of their reasonings, or the consequence of an internal impression of immortality. It seems in the

first place probable that the memory of their emigration would be as permanent, as the tradition of immortality. Suppose some violent convulsion of nature severed them from a continent, would they not preserve the tradition of such an awful catastrophe which would so forcibly strike their senses, as long, as the remembrance of a speculative truth, which addressed only the understanding? Nor is it probable, that their belief followed from the conviction of reasoning. It remains then, that the sentiment was written upon the soul by the finger of God, and interwoven with the mind, and is similar to what is termed instinct in brutes. Any other cause than this, for such a belief among beings so simple, so unaccustomed to reason, so much inclined to follow the impressions of sense, we cannot assign.

Allowing it however to be traditionary, if we trace it to its source, we shall find, that it must be a remaining fragment of some original revelation. For the question will still retain, Whence did the nation, from which they received the tradition, derive it? If it were the deduction of their reasoning, it should seem that the belief which the humblest portion of reason gave to all mankind, must be founded in obvious truth. And it is prevalent among the most unenlightened pagans in some form or other, as, perhaps,

among christians, “ who dwell, like Uriel, in the sun.” Fantastic ideas, notions vague and wild, they may entertain, with respect to the mode of future existence. But it is in the great truth itself that they all agree.

The wretched slave torn from happiness, the bosom of his friends, and the deep and verdant groves of his sultry climate, by the barbarous Christian—spends a life of ignorance, servitude and toil, with patient resignation, and welcomes death in the hope that as soon as dissolved from the body, he shall be wafted by the winds across the ocean, to the resorts of his youth, to the fields and groves where he once roved at large, naked, free and happy ; and there he expects to meet his friends again. The Bramin believes in the preexistence of the soul, and that after death it shall animate another body, and shall descend lower, or ascend higher in the scale of being, according to the conduct of the probationer here. In the extensive empire of China, it obtained either in the form of transmigration, or that the soul was an emanation from God, and that death should reunite it to him again. The inhabitants of the dreary wilds of Kamtschatka was as firm in the belief of the doctrine as the first missionary who traversed these inhospitable regions to instruct the pagan how to render immortality a blessing. The Mahometan anticipates a sensual elysium of groves and streams,

and fruits and flowers, and of every indulgence which the heart can wish ; and there he hopes uncloying, sensual pleasure without end. The Jew closes his creed by acknowledging a resurrection of the body, and that after death it shall be reunited with the soul. The Christian expects, “ when he who is the believers life shall appear, to appear also with him in glory.”

Travellers have said that some tribes of savages have been found without any notion of future life. But a traveller, little attentive to the subject, and unacquainted with the language and modes of the people among whom he sojourns, will hardly be deemed sufficient authority to prove that they have none. They might not be able to convey the idea. He might not witness any of those religious rites and ceremonies that presuppose the doctrine. To form a decisive opinion, the traveller must have conversed with a majority of the tribe, and they must have affirmed their own disbelief, and that there was no such prevalent opinion among their tribe. But this does not appear to be the ground on which they form their opinion, but their having witnessed no ceremonies of a religious nature, and their hearing no direct assertions of belief in it. But every variety of the human race, with which we are fully acquainted, the wise and the ignorant, the

bond and the free, agree, in hoping or fearing, something beyond the grave.

Could we enumerate the various modes and forms, and circumstances, in which different nations suppose the soul will exist, it might indeed amuse, but it could not relate to the point in hand. For the simple fact, the general consent of mankind in the belief of future life, is all we have to ascertain. And “eternity by all as hoped or feared, shall be by all as suffered or enjoyed.”

It may appear strange, true as it is, that we must look for disbelievers in the doctrine, not among the simple and ignorant, not among pagans and barbarians, as we should suppose, but in countries illuminated with the full light of revelation, among philosophers “falsely so called,” and even among those who appear to regard that religion, which is our only sure hope for eternity. These disbelievers pretend in general a reverence for antiquity. They relinquish the bible for the opinions of the learned ancient philosophers. Could we recount the several opinions of learned Jewish and heathen philosophers, it would, we think, fully appear that infidelity has no claim to the sanction of antiquity.

That the doctrine was admitted in the earliest ages of the world appears from the remarkable prophecy of Seth, recorded by St.

Jude ; and from the testimony of the most ancient writers, Jewish and Heathen. It was either from the Indians or Egyptians that Pythagoras borrowed his belief in the transmigration of souls. And there had it obtained from time immemorial. Among the Jews it is said that the Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul. Certain it is, that they were in general poor, illiterate and contemptible, as it respected both their acquirements and moral characters. Josephus asserts that they were quarrelsome among themselves, and cruel and inhospitable to strangers. The same author observes that there were three religious sects among the Jews ; the Essenes, Sadducees and Pharisees. “ The Essenes truly believe in the immortality of the soul, and that the soul resembling in substance the most pure and subtle air, is incorruptible and immortal ; and by a kind of natural inclination or attraction, shut up in the flesh as in a prison. But when it shall be freed from these corporeal bonds, as out of a long slavery, it shall then ascend to the regions of immortal bliss. This opinion comports with the Grecian conceptions upon the same subject. They fancy their heaven beyond the ocean ; in a climate where there is neither rain nor snow, nor sultry heat, but gentle and refreshing gales ; and this they fancy the residence of the blessed. On the other hand the wick-

ed are condemned to impetuous tempests, killing frosts, and everlasting groans and pains. This much resembles their story of the Fortunate Islands, which are the places reserved for the entertainment of those glorious spirits, whom they call heroes and demigods. They have also a place assigned for the punishment of the wicked—a dreadful abode where Sisyphus, Tantalus, Ixion and Tityus and those who resembled them, suffer the most exemplary and awful punishment. They deduce these truths from the natural disposition of the soul to virtue, and its innate detestation of vice. For good men are made better in this life, by the hope of still higher enjoyment in a coming life. Besides, it is a strong check upon immorality and vice; when men believe, that though they escape human detection and punishment in this life, yet that divine vengeance will surely overtake them in another, and consign them to punishment duration without end. This is the philosophy of the Essenes, respecting the future existence of the soul, and few having imbibed it, ever recede from it. The Pharisees admitted also the immortality of the soul, and believed the transmigration of the souls of good men into bodies of a higher nature—but that the souls of the wicked

were transmitted to a state of everlasting woe.”*

The most sublime and enlightened conceptions, respecting the nature, and end of the human soul, next to those, which we receive from the revelation of Jesus Christ, were entertained by some of the Grecian Philosophers ; particularly by Plato and Socrates.

Socrates, the most enlightened of the Grecian Philosophers, was the first who banished those idle, useless and uninteresting disputes and speculations, respecting the constitution of nature, which, previous to his time, had been the sole object of philosophy, from the schools ; and in their stead introduced subjects of more immediate consequence to the happiness of mankind. He directed the whole scope of his philosophy to morals, to ascertain true notions respecting virtue, and vice, and the natural difference between good and ill. It was necessary, he knew, that virtue should have an adequate sanction in order to induce mankind to practice it. In order to find this sufficient sanction, he deduced the existence and perfections of God from irrefragable arguments ; and as a necessary consequence, taught his universal, and overruling providence. But even the omnipotence of the Almighty cannot find a sufficient sanction for virtue, if there were no life

* Vid. Jew. Anti. lib. ii. chap. vii.

after this. He therefore early recognized the immortality of the soul.

This doctrine he proved in a manner clear and distinct, powerful and convincing. The necessity, there was, that a future retribution should clear up the ways and dispensations of God, was an argument from which he inferred both the immortality of soul, and a future retribution. He exploded the foolish and fanciful Theogony, to prevent in his time; discarded polytheism, and taught the unity, and omnipresence of God. This doctrine, together with the hatred raised against him by his having severely reproved the pretended philosophers of his time, and the envy excited by his celebrity, was sufficient to originate an accusation against him before the magistracy of his country. He was there accused of introducing heresy, and doctrines subversive of the established religion. He received sentence of death. After having drank the hemlock, he began a memorable discourse with his friends upon the immortality of the soul, and state of rewards, and punishments. His remarks upon that state, into which he was so soon to enter, were peculiarly serious, solemn and affecting. A friend came to ask him, how he wanted to dispose of his remains. Even the calm and dispassionate Socrates was offended. He resented a question, which implied that he

must have some regard for that part of himself, which was not immortal.

His illustrious disciple Plato, notwithstanding the melancholy exit of his master, entered upon the same career. He collected whatever his predecessor had left, he enlarged his system, and brought it to as much perfection, as perhaps, the light of nature alone would admit. In the dialogue of Phædo he adduces the several arguments, which nature and reason suggested, for immortality. This he proves particularly, from the spirituality, and indivisibility of the soul; from its innate love of virtue, from the spirituality of its conceptions; and from our presentiments of immortality. In short all the natural arguments, that go to establish this great, and awful truth, are urged with a sublimity, vehemence and force, worthy of so elevated a subject. So majestic and forceful was his language, that it was said by the ancients, had the gods ever condescended to converse with men, they would have adopted the language of Plato.

The followers of Zeno admitted the spiritual nature of the soul, and its existence in a separate state, the only things which are difficult to imagine, but denied its eternal existence.

“Cicero, the celebrated orator, and philosopher of Rome was of the Academic school.

He defended all the great points of morality and religion, which his predecessors had advanced. The being of a God; a providence; the immortality of the soul; a future state of rewards and punishments; and the eternal difference between good and ill. With regard to these doctrines he has largely, and clearly declared his mind in many parts of his writings. He maintained, that there was one God or Supreme Being; incorporeal, eternal, self-existent, who created the world by his power, and sustained it by his providence. This he inferred from the consent of nations; the order and beauty of the heavenly bodies; the evident marks of counsel, wisdom, and a fitness to certain ends observable in the whole, and in every part of the visible world, and declares him to be unworthy the name of man, who can believe all this to have been made by chance, when with the utmost stretch of human wisdom we cannot penetrate the depth of that counsel which contrived it.

“ He believed also a divine providence constantly presiding over the whole system, and extending its care to all the principal members of it, with a peculiar attention to the actions and conduct of men; but leaving the minute and inferior parts to the course of general laws. This he collected from the nature and attributes of the Deity; his om-

niscience, omnipresence and infinite goodness ; that could never neglect or desert what he had once produced into being ; and declares, that without this belief, there could be no such thing as piety or religion in the world.

“ He firmly held the immortality of the soul, and its separate existence after death in a state of happiness or misery. This he inferred from the ardent thirst of immortality, which was always most conspicuous in the best and most exalted minds ; from which the truest specimen of their nature must be drawn ; from its unmixed and indivisible essence, which had nothing separable or perishable in it ; from its wonderful powers and faculties ; its principle of self motion ; its memory, invention, ingenuity, comprehension, which were all incompatible with sluggish matter.

“ The Stoics fancied that the soul was a subtilized, fiery substance, which survived the body after death, and subsisted through an immense period of time, yet not eternally ; but was to perish at last in the general conflagration. In which they allowed, as Cicero observes, the only thing that was hard to conceive, its separate existence from the body ; yet denied what was not only easy to imagine, but a consequence of the other, its eternal duration.

“ Aristotle taught, that beside the four elements of the material world, whence all other things were supposed to draw their being, there was a fifth essence, or nature, peculiar to God, and the soul, which had nothing in it that was common to any of the rest. This opinion Cicero followed and illustrated with his usual perspicuity in the following passage.

“ The origin of the human soul is not to be found any where on earth ; there is nothing mixed, concrete, or earthly in it. Nothing of water, air, or fire. For these natives are not susceptible of memory, intelligence, or thought ; have nothing that can retain the past, foresee the future, or lay hold of the present ; which faculties are purely divine, and could not possibly be derived to man, except from God. The nature of the soul, therefore, is of a singular kind ; distinct from these known and obvious natures ; and whatever it be that *feels and tastes, that lives and moves in us*, it must be heavenly and divine, and for that reason eternal. Nor is God indeed himself, whose existence we clearly discover to be comprehended by us in any other manner, than as a free and pure mind, clear from all mortal concretion ; observing and moving all things, and indued with an eternal principle of self motion. Of this kind, and of the same nature is the human soul.

“As to a future state of rewards and punishments, he considered it as a consequence of the soul’s immortality; deducible from the attributes of God, and the condition of men on earth; he considered this so highly probable, that we should not entertain a doubt of it. In this opinion he followed Socrates and Plato, for whose judgment he professes so great a reverence, that if they had given no reasons, where yet they have given many, he should have been persuaded, he says, by their sole authority. Socrates, therefore, as he tells us, declared in his dying speech, that there were two ways appointed for human souls at their departure from the body; that those who had been immersed in sensual pleasures and lusts, and had polluted themselves with private vices, or public crimes against their country, took an obscure and devious road, remote from the seat and assembly of the Gods; whilst those who had preserved their integrity, and received little or no contagion from the body from which they had constantly abstracted themselves, and in the bodies of men imitated the life of the Gods, had an easy ascent lying open before them to those Gods, from whom they derived their being.” In short, with the exception of the atheistical Epicurus and the Sceptics, the doctrine was generally admitted by all

the wiser, more virtuous and enlightened heathens, till the “sun of righteousness” arose, and brought “life and immortality to light.”

CHAP. VII.

Moral Arguments for a Future Life, from the Power of Conscience.

The devils also believe and tremble.—*St. James.*

WE derive a strong argument for future life from the power of conscience. Some contend, that conscience is an acquired principle; the child of national custom of pre-conceived notions, and of education. As none dispute, that an action is morally right or wrong, because it is so estimated in a certain place—those who entertain this opinion of conscience will not feel themselves bound to obey its dictates. They will rise above these confined prejudices, and will “walk in the way of their own heart, and the right of their own eyes.” But we imagine, it is self-evident that there are certain common notions respecting right and wrong, entertained by

all mankind ; that there is within us some innate, original and immutable principle, the perpetual advocate for virtue, and enemy of vice.

Thus, if we hear certain persons loud in asserting that certain actions are innocent, and that the voice within us, which clamors against them, is the consequence of prejudice and education, could we at the same time be certain, that they felt as much compunction on the commission of crime as we do, it would teach us that they did not believe themselves. That this is always the fact, the candid and honest among them will acknowledge. When we hear the youth boasting of having cured his fears of darkness, phantoms and ghosts, and yet find him fearful to travel alone in the night, we have ground to believe, that he claims more courage than is really his due ; that the first belief is still lurking in the recesses of his heart.

No education will ever satisfy a man's own mind, that treacherous murder, with malice aforethought, is an indifferent action. Indeed, every man who attends to his own feelings, will find a principle within him, co-existent with his reason, unextinguished and unextinguishable, the eternal friend of virtue, and enemy of vice. Now, whence has conscience this force ? It will be our attempt to shew, that it derives it from that instinctive

sense of future life, and future retribution, which God has interwoven deep in every thread of our constitution, so deep that it still lurks in the bosom even of the sceptic himself. This natural horror at crime cannot be the consequence of strong impressions, that vice will be punished in this life. We see vice, perhaps, as often flourishing, as goodness. The full discrimination between virtue and vice is not made in this life. This has been a fact of common observation. If this life be the whole of our existence, and if there be not a discrimination between virtue and vice here, why this internal alarm at quiet? An alarm, which no scepticism can quiet, which no infidelity can extinguish, which no guilty miscreant can erase from his mind! Wine, it is true, for a while may drown it. Deep and radical pollution, and long repeated crime may "sear" it, and render it callous and insensible. Dissipation, noise and madness may ring louder than its "still small voice," and for a while cause it to be disregarded. Sophistry and infidelity may blunt its force, and the secret wish, that the object of its fears may not be true, may almost induce the belief that it is not. Still the principle within "is not dead, but sleepeth." From time to time it awakens, like a giant, stronger from its slumbers. The calm is deceitful, and forebodes a storm. It still

rises above every weight thrown upon it, with a view to weigh it down. And it wounds the infidel, even while he pretends to disregard it.

Now let us suppose an infidel honest, and virtuous, except his infidelity, if it be a supposable case ; let him think, that he firmly disbelieves the doctrine of immortality, let us suppose this man in a sally of rage has murdered his neighbor ; a man useless, unconnected, and immoral ; a nuisance to society, and in opinion of all of no value to himself, or mankind. When the act is committed, when he meditates upon it, will his infidelity quiet his fears ! Will not the blood of the slain “ cry against him from the ground ! ” now whence this fear. He has not injured society. He has not injured the man. He has only consigned him to annihilation a few days before he would have gone in the ordinary course of nature. He will not be punished in this life, for he will not be detected, and brought before a human tribunal ; and God does not punish crimes in this life. He will not be amenable to him in another life ; for he disbelieves the fact. Upon his own scheme, we can conceive no possible cause for alarm or compunction ; we can assign no reason, why the reflection of the murder should discompose his mind in the smallest degree. Yet who will doubt that

his sleeping and waking dreams will be haunted by terror and despair. Could we for a moment ascertain his feelings, we should find, that although he was fearless of human detection, yet that his whole soul trembled with the fear of being continued in being after death, and being arraigned before the august, awful and enlightened tribunal of his God.

Why should a man have fear, except from some explicit or latent apprehension of future suffering ?

If the triumph of virtue over vice in this life do not appear, and if there were no life after this, what rational fear of crime can there be, except that of human detection ? Let the sceptic answer the question. Let him ask his heart, if he can commit a great and atrocious crime, and not feel a fear separate from that of human punishment ? If he reply that he should, we would further ask, to what apprehended danger or suffering, this fear looked, as its object ? We presume no other answer can be given, than some latent apprehension, or dread of a future life, and a day of retribution.

Thus it appears, that the hopes and fears of future life extend to all those actions, which are beyond the inspection of mankind. Thus it also follows, that there can be no motives to deter from all those crimes, which the

perpetrators are tempted to practice in secret, but those who look to eternity. Admitting then, that our doctrine were false, and that scepticism had made the discovery, what a wretch would he be, who would enlighten mankind, and snatch away every motive, that can deter from secret crime ! What a monster would he be, who would rob the poor, the wretched, the honest and the good of every hope, that can sweeten the cup of bitterness, alleviate the miseries of life, and blunt the sting of death !

Infidelity carries so many proofs with it of its ruinous tendency to individual happiness, and to society, and that annihilation is the vision rather of its wishes and hopes, than of its belief, that one would think it would be a creed for none but the infamous and abandoned, to whom annihilation would be an obvious blessing. And thus it appears, that every human being, who feels the power of conscience within him, has in that a standing proof of some instinctive apprehension of immortality.

The incapacity of any earthly happiness to satisfy the wishes of the mind, is also another proof, that we were formed for something which the present scene cannot supply. The arguments from this head cannot be better given, than in the dignified and awful strains

of him, whose thoughts were all upon the life to come.

“ Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life ;
 Or nature there imposing on her sons,
 Has written fables, and made man a lie.
 Why discontent forever harbor'd there ?
 Incurable consumption of our peace !

“ Resolve me, why the cottager and king ;
 He whom sea sever'd realms obey ; and he
 Who steals his whole dominion from the waste,
 Repelling winter's blast with mud and straw,
 Disquieted alike, draw sigh for sigh ;
 In fate so distant ; in complaint so near.

“ Is it, that things terrestrial can't content ?
 Deep in rich pastures will thy flocks complain ?
 Not so ; but to their master is denied
 To share their sweet serene. Man ill at ease,
 In this, not his own home ; this foreign field ;
 Poor in abundance ; famish'd at a feast ;
 Sighs on for something more, when most enjoy'd.
 Is heav'n then kinder to thy flocks than thee ?
 Not so—Thy pasture richer, though remote.
 In part remote, for that remoter part
 Man bleats from instinct. Tho' perhaps debauch'd
 By sense, his reason sleeps, nor dreams the cause.
 The cause how obvious, when reason wakes !
 His grief is but his grandeur in disguise ;
 And discontent is immortality.”

We commence life with weeping. Amidst fluctuating scenes of vanity we go on from hope to hope ; and from disappointment to disappointment. Each coming good we fancy will fill the void, we feel within us. But as soon, as we have it in possession, we find the delusion, find the disappointment, find that we have not obtained the necessary good ; and that we must still look forward

for something more. We have a void within us then, which nothing earthly can fill : And it proves that there is some where a gratification, adequate and complete ; or man is the only being in the world, that does not feel, and is not destined to feel a happiness suited to his nature.

CHAP. VIII.

WE shall, in continuation of this subject, continue our extracts from the venerable Dr. Young ; and exhibit in one view most of his arguments for the immortality of the soul, contained in his "*Night Thoughts.*" In them the reader will find united depth of thought, logical precision, and all the charms of poetry.

“ Nature, thy daughter, ever changing birth
Of thee, the great immutable to man
Speaks wisdom ; is his oracle supreme.
And he, who most consults her is most wise.
Lorenzo, to this heavenly Delphos haste ;
And come back all immortal ; all divine.
Look nature through, 'tis revolution all.
All change ; no death. Day follows night, and nights
The dying day ; stars rise, and set, and rise.
Earth takes the example. See, the summer gay
With her green chaplets, and ambrosial flow'rs,
Droops into autumn ; winter gray,
Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,

Blows autumn and his golden fruits away.
 Then melts into the spring, soft spring with breath
 Favonian, from warm chambers of the south
 Recals the first. All to re flourish fades ;
 As in a wheel, all sinks to reascend.
 Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.

“ With this minute distinction, emblems just,
 Nature revolves, but man advances ; both
 Eternal, that a circle. This a line.
 That gravitates, this soars. Th’ aspiring soul
 Ardent and tremulous, like flame ascends ;
 Zeal and humility her wings to heaven
 The world of matter, with its various forms
 All dies into new life. Life born for death
 Rolls the vast mass, and shall forever roll.
 No single atom once in being, lost
 With change of counsel, charges the most high.*

“ What hence infers Lorenzo ? Can it be
 Matter immortal ? And shall spirit die ?
 Above the nobler, shall less noble rise ?
 Shall man alone, for whom all else revives,
 No resurrection know ? Shall man alone,
 Imperial man ! be sown in barren ground,
 Less privileg’d than grain, on which he feeds ?
 Is man in whom alone is power to prize
 The bliss of being, or with previous pain,
 Deplore its period, by the spleen of fate
 Severely doom’d deaths single unredeem’d ?

“ If natures revolution speak aloud,
 In her gradation hear her louder still.
 Look nature through ; it is gradation all.
 By what minute degrees her scale ascends ?
 Each middle nature join’d, at each extreme
 To that above it join’d, to that beneath.
 Parts into parts reciprocally shot,

* The poet urges a strong argument for immortality. All the changes, that take place in the material world, only produce new modifications in the modes, or forms of the things, which they affect. Nothing is lost. The thing, which disappears in one shape, reappears in another, without losing its identity. And shall the substance, whatever it be, which supports thought and consciousness, be alone annihilated ?

Abhor divorce ; what love of union reigns ?
Here dormant matter waits a call to life.
Half life—half death, join there ; here life and sense ;
There sense from reason steals a glimmering ray.
Reason shines out in man. But how preserv'd*
The chain unbroken upward, to the realms
Of incorporeal life ? Those realms of bliss,
Where death hath no dominion—Grant a make
Half mortal, half immortal ; earthly part ;
And part ethereal.—Grant the soul of man
Eternal ; or in man the series ends.
Wide yawns the gap ; connexion is no more ;
Check reason halts ; her next step wants support ;
Striving to climb, she trembles from her scheme.
A scheme, analogy pronounc'd so true ;
Analogy, man's surest guide below.

“ Reason's progressive ; instinct is complete ;
Swift instinct leaps ; slow reason feebly climbs.
Brutes soon their zenith reach ; their little all
Flows in at once ; in ages they no more
Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy.
Was man to live coeval with the sun,
The patriarch pupil would be learning still.
Yet dying leave his lesson half unlearnt.

* The argument is here carried to its proper length. It has been said, that the vegetable and animal kingdoms run into each other, by those who imagine animal life may result from a certain configuration of particles of matter. But much as the gradation here mentioned may seem to take place, there is an everlasting boundary between animation and inanimation. And when it is said, that the animal and vegetable kingdoms run into each other, and that there are substances which belong partly to both, and wholly to neither, we should understand, that it is only owing to our incapacity to discern the infinite distinction. An animal, however minute its portion of sensibility, must be capable of pleasure and pain. The vegetable is infinitely removed from this. The sensitive plant may retire from the touch, and so may a spiculum of ice, but neither feel the cause that makes them retire. The Indian mandrake may resemble the human form ; but its feet are rooted to the ground. It neither perceives nor moves. There is as much difference between the barnacle, that adheres to a rock, and the plant, that seems to approach nearest to animal life, as between the latter and a man.

“ His immortality alone can solve
 That darkest of enigmas, human hope.
 Of all the darkest, if at death we die.
 Man's heart the Almighty to the future sets
 By secrets, and inviolable springs ;
 And makes his hope his sublunous joy.

“ Since virtue's recompense is doubtful here,
 If man dies wholly, well may we demand
 Why he is suffer'd to be good in vain ?
 Why to be good in vain is man enjoind ?
 Why to be good in vain is man betray'd ?
 Betray'd by traitors, lodg'd in his own breast,
 By sweet complacencies from virtue felt.
 Why whispers nature lies on virtue's past ?
 Or if blind instinct, which assumes the name
 Of sacred conscience, plays the fool in man,
 Why reason made accomplice in the cheat ?
 Why are the wisest loudest in her praise ?
 Can man by reason's beam be led astray ?
 Or at his peril, imitate his God ?
 Since virtue sometimes ruins us on earth,
 Or both are true ; or man survives the grave.

“ Or man survives the grave, or, Lorenzo, own
 Thy boast supreme, a wild absurdity.
 Dauntless thy spirit. cowards are thy scorn.
 Grant man immortal, and thy scorn is just.
 The man immortal, rationally brave,
 Dares rush on death, because he cannot die.
 But, if man loses all, when life is lost,
 He lives a coward, or a fool expires.
 A daring infidel, and such there are
 From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,
 Or pure, heroical defect of thought,
 Of all earth's madmen most deserves a chain.

“ When to the grave we follow the renown'd
 For valor, virtue, science, all we love,
 And all we praise ; for worth, whose noontide beam
 Enobling us to think in higher stile,
 Mends our ideas of ethereal powers,
 Dream we, that lustre of the moral world
 Goes out in death, lost in eternal sleep ?
 Why was he wise to know, and warm to praise,
 And strenuous to transcribe in human life

The mind Almighty ? Could it be that fate,
Just when the lineaments began to shine ;
And dawn the Deity. should snatch the draught,
With night eternal, blot it out, and give
The skies alarm, lest angels too might die.

“ The witnesses are heard, the cause is o'er ;
Let conscience file the sentence in her court.
Dearer, than deeds, that half a realm convey ;
Thus seal'd by truth the authentic record runs.

“ Know all ; know infidels, unapt to know,
'Tis immortality your nature solves ;
'Tis immortality decyphers man,
And opens all the mysteries of his make.
Without it, half his instincts are a riddle ;
Without it, all his virtues are a dream.
His very crimes attest his dignity ;
His sateless thirst of pleasure, gold, and fame,
Declares him born for blessings infinite ;
What less than infinite, makes unabsurd,
Passions, which all on earth but more inflames ?
Fierce passions, so mismeasured to this scene
Stretch'd out, like eagles wings beyond our nest,
Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
For earth too large, presage a nobler flight,
And evidence our title to the skies.

“ Heaven is all love ; all joy in giving joy ;
It never had created, but to bless.
And shall it then strike off the list of life
A being blest, or worthy to be so ?
Heav'n starts at an annihilating God !!

CHAP. IX.

Proofs of Immortality from Revelation.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.—*St. Peter.*

“The Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun.”

THE preceding proofs are drawn from unassisted reason. With infidelity and scepticism, they may have their just weight. They may be convinced, that there is ground to believe, that the present system is imperfect; that this life has an evident and marked reference to something which is to come. Even the Christian, we hope, will not deem that time mispent, which is past in collating the joint evidence of natural and revealed religion. If he find, that the greatest doctrine of Christianity, a doctrine, on which the whole fabric of morality and religion rest; a doctrine the most interesting and awful that can arrest the human attention, is consonant to reason, as well as revealed in the scriptures, it may renew his faith, and invigorate his hope.

In our opinion, it has been of incalculable injury to the cause of religion and truth, that our belief has been held up to view not only

as above reason, but almost contrary to it—that faith must often triumph over it. Why does a Christian believe the scriptures? When he first takes the volume in his hand, has he any more evidence that it is the result of divine inspiration, than any other book, which purports to be the word of God? Has he internal proof in his mind, that the volume is really what it purports to be? Does not his enlightened reason convince him, that it is attended with evidence strong and conclusive, clear and convincing, “powerful and authoritative” in the awful majesty of truth?

Has it not external evidence reluctantly given even by its enemies? Even its most inveterate enemy was obliged to admit the miracles of our Savior, but unwilling to allow the divinity of his mission, he attributes them to the power of magic. Has it not internal evidence from the general accordance of its numerous writers, though often illiterate, though in various countries and ages of the world? And even from the immaterial discordancies of different writers, while relating the same transactions, in the different lights in which they appeared to them? Discordancies like these, had it been the result of “art and man’s device,” would have been rigidly suppressed. Its morality also is dignified and pure; and its tendency to make

mankind useful and respectable here, and supremely happy in an immortality of unchanging felicity. Its prophecies also are perpetually fulfilling. Thus, then, we take our religion upon the ground of reason, evidence and truth. Why then should that reason, which induces us to believe the Scriptures, be thrown away after we have admitted them as the rule of our faith and practise. Does revelation supersede the necessity of the exercise of reason ? If religion be not a reasonable thing, why then believe it ? And if it be, why may we not admit reason, as the handmaid of faith ? Why must it be extinguished, like the brother of a Sultan, lest it should rebel and attempt usurpation of authority ?

It may then be a pleasing reflection to the pious and enlightened Christian, that the doctrine, on which rests all his hopes, is corroborated by the united testimony of reason and faith. Life and immortality are notwithstanding brought to light in the gospel.

Reason may penetrate through the deep and awful gloom, which envelops the grave ; and may catch a glimpse of the scene beyond. But its clearest discoveries go no further than to convince us of the simple fact of future life, leaving the mode and circumstances of existence, to immortal serious things, entirely in the dark. It remained for Jesus Christ

from heaven to change this glimmering and uncertain twilight, to the full and meridian light of assurance and conviction. Reason may teach us, that the designs of God with respect to his creature man, are not completed in the present life. It may convince us, that the soul is in its nature indisceptible and immortal. Analogy may point us to the general resurrection, that prevails through creation, and assure us, that there is no reason to believe, that man will be an exception. But it leaves us entirely in doubt whether this life will close the history of our changes; whether we are not destined to pass through other scenes of probation as painful and trying, as the present. It leaves us in doubt whether continuation of being will continue, or terminate human misery. From revelation alone we learn the solemn truth, that this life is the end of our probationary character; that in the next we shall commence an existence, which shall only change from glory to glory, if we render immortality a blessing; and it teaches us, what God requires of man in order to his obtaining eternal felicity.

Though the dispensation of the Jews related principally to temporal reward and punishment, yet is not, as some have said, destitute of intimations, which presuppose our immortality. It had a manifest regard to a broader, and more perfect dispensation to

come. Seldom therefore in the Oldtestament do we find mention made of another life. Yet it contains explicit declarations upon the subject.

In the most touching, solemn and affecting images, Job brings the event of death to view. He meditates “much, and often” upon the hour, which shall close earthly projects and plans, which shall terminate human expectations, and extinguish human hopes and affections; till at length the rational, and strong consolation of suffering merit brings comfort to his soul. He declares his certainty of immortality. “And, though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself; and mine own eye shall behold him, and not another. The dust shall return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.” A passage in Job intimates also, that the inquiry was common in those days. “If a man die, shall he live again.” “And many of them, that sleep in their graves, shall awake, some to the resurrection of life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt.” “Thy dead men shall live with my dead men.” “After two days he will revive us. In the third day, he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” These are a few of the direct assertions of that part of the scriptures, which has

been said to be entirely destitute of any insinuation, that the doctrine was then believed. In figurative allusions, in sundry forms, and diverse manners the great truth is held up to view.

But when we turn to that part of the scriptures, in which life and immortality are peculiarly brought to light, we are at once struck with the splendor of that full and strong light, which the gospel has thrown upon the subject. He, whose thoughts are seriously on the life to come, whose hope is immortality, will learn the full value of the gospel. He will be sensible, that there was a cause sufficient for the advent of Jesus Christ, had it been only to announce the single truth contained in the following declaration :
“ Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming, in the which all, that are in the grave, shall hear his voice, and come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.” A sentence so full of weight not only with respect to the fact, but also to the requisitions of God, in order that we obtain eternal life, that one would think, sectarians would leave their narrow creeds, and their trifling quibbles, and if they have talent and zeal, exert them both in the cause of our inestimable and common Christianity, which is our charter of immortality.

To cite every declaration of the truth of our doctrine, would be almost to transcribe the gospel. Almost every text opens a vista through the darkness of the “shadow of death,” which leads the prospect to an eternal scene. Every thing is spoken of, as bearing a serious and important relation to eternity. Human character and conduct is treated not as relating to human praise or censure, not as calculated to ensure temporal prosperity or adversity, but all, as relating to a coming life. Earthly prospects and pursuits are considered the delusions of a moment. For, in the language of the Apostle, “what is our life? It is even a vapor which appeareth but for a little while, and then vanisheth away.” Few of the ends of human pursuit are commensurate even with life. We are like rivers, which start up just on the verge of the sea, and roll down to the ocean.—The ocean of eternity!

Our true end is “glory, honor and immortality.” And the most uninformed Christian sits beside the bed of his dying friend, and speaks with precision and assurance of another life. He comforts him with the prospect of that world, where sorrow, and pain, and death are equally unknown, and where happiness is endless and perfect; on whose shores friends meet again—recom-

mence more pure and perfect attachments, and part no more.

We shall here quote some of those passages in which our doctrine is asserted in the Newtestament. “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.” “ Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”—“ And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance *and judgment to come, Felix trembled.*” “ Why should it be thought a thing incredible with God to raise the dead ?” “ Now is Christ raised from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

“ For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet.—The last enemy, that shall be destroyed is death : Else, what shall they do, which are baptized for the death ? If the dead rise not at all,”

“ But some will say, how are the dead raised, and with what body do they come ? Thou fool ! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him. And to every seed his own body. Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and we shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written death is swallowed up in victory. O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ?

“Knowing that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus. For we look not at the things, which are seen, and temporal, but at the things, which are not seen ; for the things, which are seen, are temporal ; but the things, which are not seen, are eternal. For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

“For we that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burthened, not for that we would be unclothed, but, clothed upon ; that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those, which are asleep ; that ye sorrow not ever as others, who are without hope. For if we believe, that Jesus died, and rose again ; even so them also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with

him. For we say unto you *by the word of God*, that we, who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them, which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we be *ever* with the Lord."

The closing book of the scriptures, is full of the same dignified, solemn and awful theme. The dead "small and great," stand before God. The material world is gone. The hopes of infidelity, and the sophistry and delusion of sin are blotted out together. The heavens are rolled together, as a scroll.—The great globe itself, dissolved. The voice from heaven proclaims, "blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. Even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Immortal life, eternal ruin—an eternal scene, existence interminable are the burden of the gospel. And to cite the passages, which either directly or implicitly assert the doctrine, would be to transcribe the New Testament. Thus time and nature, reason and revelation, point to the life to come.

The scriptures are serious in a serious cause. It is their object to state momen-

tous and awful truth. The fact itself of future life, they assert in the most direct and explicit terms. But the modes and circumstances are in general still behind the veil. Impertinent curiosity is foolish, if not sinful. It has already cost us enough. Heaven therefore has seen fit to wrap in inscrutable mystery, every thing which is not immediately useful, or interesting for us to know. And if men will not incline to virtue and religion, from the weight of motive now before their minds, neither would they, “though one rose from the dead.”

Great and astonishing, no doubt, will be the transition at death. Mortals would do well to premeditate the day ; when disrobed from the body, the soul shall venture upon a dark and unknown shore. Here the material world is seen no more. Visions, which in this life to the most abstracted mind appear like the imperfect images of a dream, will now appear in broad and full dimension, great realities. Thus the poet—

Thou must expire my soul, ordain'd to range
 Through unexperienced scenes, and mysteries strange.
 Amazing state ! no wonder that we dread
 To muse on death, to dwell among the dead.
 Death's black retinue sorely strikes the mind ;
 Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.
 Some courteous shade the secret then reveal ;
 Tell us what you have felt, and we must feel.
 You warn us of approaching death, and why
 Will you not teach us, what it is to die ?

But having shot the gulph, you love to view
Succeeding spirits plung'd along, like you.

When dire disease shall cut, or age untie
The knot of life, and suffer us to die ;
When after some delay, some trembling strife,
The soul hangs quivering on the verge of life.
With fear and hope she throbs, then sudden tries
Some strange hereafter, and some hidden skies.

But although “ it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet is the resurrection of the body clearly revealed in the scriptures, and that the coming life shall be to the good, a period of interminable felicity. Here, after the highest gratification, the mind is empty still. There is a void in the heart, which cannot be satisfied by any temporal felicity. The most expanded wishes of the soul shall have a full gratification in heaven. There shall be nothing to be wished but the continuation of that happiness, which must be as unchanging, as his character is, who gives it.

It has frequently been the elevated employment of great and pious minds, already in the suburbs of that city, “ which hath foundations to give a scriptural view of the happiness, of which they were so soon to partake. And amidst the disappointment, and vexation, and noise, and bustle, and folly of the world, it is almost the only resource remaining to the good, to anticipate their coming joys. The anticipation will smooth the brow, that earthly cares had discomposed. It will

sooth the heart, that was pained with disappointment and variety. It will give an equanimity, which will not be disturbed by "aught this scene can threaten, or indulge."

It is a very forcible argument for the heavenly origin of the scriptures, that they promise a spiritual reward to the faithful after death. An argument, which we think, has been too much neglected. The scriptures must be either of human or divine original. Had they been the result of "art and man's device," they would certainly have betrayed their origin, in holding forth to their believer, a reward similar in kind to what we enjoy in this world. Not another religion prevails among mankind, which does not propose sensual happiness, as the reward of heaven. And it would certainly strike the depraved mind, which would invent a falsehood and impose it upon the world, that the heaven of Mahomet was infinitely more alluring, than that of the Christian. His happiness will be altogether intellectual and spiritual. To enjoy it, his heart must be changed, and a dis-relish must be contracted for sensual and earthly pleasure. A reward infinitely unlike that, which would have occurred to the invention of an impostor.

The happiness of heaven will probably consist in the more immediate presence of God, the most august, amiable and awful of

beings, and in the society of all the great and good spirits, which have collected here from every province of his widely extended empire, in the reunion of friends, and the recommencement of more pure and constant attachments ; in a moral resemblance of the Deity, perpetually growing more bright ; and in the enlarged views, the ardent attachments, and the elevated intellectual pleasures of minds freed from every stain of moral pollution, purified and “ made white in the blood of the Lamb,” and sensible that their enjoyments will be increasing with the increasing ages of eternity.

“ The happiness of heaven is infinitely beyond our imperfect and earthly conceptions. It is a happiness not only perfect in degree, but perpetual in duration. As it is a perfect felicity, it must be the most refined and spiritual. It must consist in the extension of our knowledge, and the sublimation of our love. Our understandings will be enlarged and enlightened with a brighter display of the divine perfections, with a clearer knowledge of the divine works in the wonders of creation, of providence, of grace—while we shall stand on the pinnacle of the universe, and look abroad upon the immense theatre of the Creator’s goodness—while united in the bonds of indissoluble friendship, and glowing with the ardor of seraphic love, we shall

participate with the heavenly choir in swelling the song of unceasing gratitude, adoration and praise, to the eternal fountain and author of happiness. At the same time, while absorbed in this delightful employment, we shall insensibly grow into a resemblance of the Deity. We shall see God, and we shall be like him. And can greater happiness be conceived than to be like him, who is the inexhaustible source of felicity and perfection.

“ Beside, in the presence of God there is not only fulness of joy, but pleasures evermore. Indeed, without the addition of an eternal duration, the sum of the heavenly felicity must be deficient.

“ It would strike a damp on the joys of the blessed, to think a time, however remote, was fixed for the period of them. And the more exalted their felicities were, this thought would give proportionable pain.

“ Divine wisdom therefore hath so ordained, that while the false and empty delights of this world are temporary and transient—the truer and more substantial pleasures of the other, should be permanent as they are excellent—and that heaven should not only be an exceeding, but an eternal weight of glory, to possess the mind with a full and complete felicity.”

But the most faithful and affecting picture of future happiness, is drawn by the scriptures. "These are they, which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell in the midst of them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of them, shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."

But the full extent of the heavenly felicity, no thought can fathom, no finite mind comprehend. For "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor can it enter the heart of man to conceive" the full value of the joys of heaven.

CHAP. X.

“Bring forth your strong reasons.”

THE aggravated folly of infidelity and scepticism, consists in making their doubts of a future life, sufficient ground for an attempt to disprove it, and for such a course of conduct, as would be only reasonable, if they were certain of annihilation at death. To be certain, that consciousness and thought perish with the body at death, some person, of whose veracity we could not doubt, must have returned from the dead, and made the discovery. Thus the doctrine of immortality must be admitted before we can disprove it. We have no faculties, by which we can penetrate beyond the grave, so as to ascertain that the Agent is not still in being. Allowing infidelity the most it can claim, it has then nothing but probability in favor of annihilation at death. And this probability must be inferred either from analogy, or the natural effect of death. But, as we have seen the whole analogy of nature,* as

* The following lines are from the pen of the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, and appropriate to our subject :

Who shall disprove that hope ? Or who pretend
By subtle sophistry, that soul to rob
Of its main anchor, choicest privilege,
And noblest consolation, stead fast faith

far as we are acquainted with it, is directly in favor of immortality.

For as we cannot follow man beyond the grave, and prove that death is his destruction, so neither can we any other animal. And to follow any beyond the event, would be to presuppose their surviving it. Of this analogy nature is full. As we know

In great futurity's extended scene,
Eternity of being ! All things round
Arise in brightest proof. I see, and feel it
Through all my faculties, through all my powers
Pervading irresistible. Each groan
Sent from my sorrowing heart, each sealding tear
From my convicted eyes. Each fervent prayer
By meek repentance offer'd up to heaven
Assests my immortality ; proclaims
A pardoning Deity, and future world.

Nor less the thought, chill, comfortless, abhorr'd.
Of loath'd annihilation. From the view
Humiliating, mean, unworthy man
Almost unworthy reptiles, glad I turn,
And triumph in existence. Nay, each ill,
And every mundane trouble preaches loud
The same important truth. I read it fair,
And legibly engraved on all below.

So reason urges, while fair nature's self
At this sweet season* joyfully throws in
Her attestation lovely ; bids the sun
All bounteous pour his vivifying light
To rouse, and waken from their wintry death
The vegetable tribes. Fresh from their graves
At his resistless summons start they forth
A verdant resurrection. In each plant,
Each flower, each tree to blooming life restor'd,
I trace the pledge, the earnest, and the type
Of man's revival ; of his future rise
And vjictory o'er the grave.

nothing about the substance, on which the living powers depend, and as we can know none of the effects of death, except the decomposition of the body, so reason cannot offer a grounded presumption, that death is the end of our being.

It could easily be proved that the slightest probability of future life, ought to induce all to the same train of thought, and the same mode of conduct, as if it were demonstrably certain. For the sceptic will not pretend, that the smallest injury could result to him, if the belief were the conviction of his whole soul? But what will be his condition in another life, should he take his doubts for certainties, should he reject this awful truth upon other ground, than that of conviction? Should the issue prove his doctrine true, and should he adopt a christian belief and practice, he will gain a shield for his integrity; he will gain an asylum in trouble; he will gain a pleasing and useful delusion, which will enable him to be cheerful and happy in life, useful and respectable in society; and it will not fail him in the awful hour of death. But if the issue should find him wrong, and the Christian right, then is he indeed undone. Thus, as no man can loose, from a belief in the doctrine, and as no man can ever prove, that it cannot be true, and as the infidel will

be undone, should he reject it without conviction, if it prove true, therefore every man is bound by every tie of interest and prudence to act, as if it were true, to believe it to be true, and to countenance and support the belief in others.

Infidelity then has no claim to prudence of calculation. It has none to depth of thought, or abstraction of mind. Sceptics of the present day, sometimes allege, that a love of philosophy, a regard for demonstration, and an elevation above the credulity, and superstition of the vulgar, are their inducements to their belief. Why were not *Boyle, Bacon, Locke, Addison, Johnson,* and a thousand other venerable names, which have been transmitted down, why were they not sceptics? Why did their regard for religion always proportion itself to their advancement in science?

There is perhaps no trait in the character of infidels more insufferable, and disgusting, than their affectation of deep research, and profound sagacity. And the humble and pious Christian, must smile to hear our witlings, and smatterers, plume themselves upon their reason and philosophy? When they remember, that Isaac Newton not only adorned the religion of Jesus by his deportment, but even defended it with his pen.

But we shall be perhaps astonished to find that the *illumination* of these pretenders to philosophy, is generally only a mixture of conceit, ignorance, positiveness, and the desires of a heart contaminated with a deep, deadly, and settled impurity, which can be gratified with comfort only in the prospect of annihilation.

Yet humble and contemptible as are the means, by which infidelity has been promulgated in our country, one thing is too true, that its ravages in the moral world are awful and alarming. For now almost every wretch, who has not talent, nor industry, nor respectability, nor honesty, sufficient to enable him to succeed in any other profession or calling, immediately plunges into the foul and poisonous gulph of deism, infidelity and atheism, and soon emerges, like the serpent in the spring, with a new and splendid garb, a patriot, an infidel, and a philosopher !!

They who are seriously interested in the welfare of mankind, will deem any severities authorizable, while we speak of that class of people, whose uniform and assiduous task it is to rob mankind of all their hopes, and to unfetter the wicked from all their fears. For what would individuals, what would society be, if the hopes and fears of future life, and with them the love and fear of God were obliterated from every heart? Let us first con-

sider the situation of the wretched and solitary individual without God, and without hope in the world. He is perhaps poor, honest and virtuous. He is called by his destiny to incessant toil, to misery, and obscurity ; while he still regarded God, as his faithful, and unfailing friend ; while he still raised to heaven an eye radiant with hope, while by faith his views were beyond the grave, and rested on a day when a complete and just retribution should “ vindicate the ways of God to man,” even in the midst of toil, poverty, obscurity and suffering, the anticipation of coming joys soothed his heart, and made him happy. Reverse the scene ; conceive him bereft at once of all these “ strong consolations,” and what is he now ? He is a forsaken, hopeless wretch. His heart is cold as death, and his mind dreary as annihilation. If the force of his natural conscience be not strong, he will bend to those seductions which lurk around him. He will plunge into iniquity without remorse. He will go to crime as heedlessly as the “ ox goeth to the slaughter.” But if he be shielded by his integrity, deep and permanent in his aversion to vice, he will indulge despair. When misfortune besets him, he will destroy that life, which is his torment. He will feel, as did the wife of Job.—He will “ *curse God and die.*”

Society will exhibit a picture still more frightful. Without the hopes and fears of future life, human laws will be as weak and fragile, as the cords of Sampson. Crimes at first would be perpetrated in secret. But rulers and ruled are both unprincipled, profligate and sceptical. Both are actuated by the worst of human passions. "The fear of God is not before their eyes." They do not behold the eye of omniscience fixed on their hearts. The hidden springs of iniquity soon burst forth, and swoln by the torrent of general example, unite their force, and with irresistible violence sweep away all the mounds and ramparts of conscience, of human and divine law in the flood. Every wretch then does "what seemeth good in his sight." And anarchy, confusion and death, go forth "conquering, and to conquer."

So far from being a visionary theory, the world has seen this description realized, and more frightfully delineated in characters of blood. And should we not view every person, who labors to diffuse the poison of infidelity among mankind, as one, who is contributing his mite to facilitate the introduction of scenes like these.

What can be the object of the apostles of infidelity in attempting to promulgate their doctrines ! Do they even pretend to believe, that mankind would be more virtuous, and

society more happy in the belief, that there is no God, and that "death is an eternal sleep?" Why then do they promulgate the doctrines? Should not pity for the sufferings of mankind induce them to leave to the poor, the wretched and forlorn, the hopes of immortality, even if they knew them to be false and delusive? Who could brood, and perpetrate an injury so unprovoked, so black and cruel, as to rob the majority of mankind of their last resource, asylum and hope? "My soul come thou not into their secret place;" for in their malice they would deprive mankind of eternity.

CHAP. XI.

Reflections upon the importance of the Doctrine of Immortality.

"Believe and look with triumph on the tomb."

THE belief of immortality is the only radical cure for inordinate love of life, and fear of death. It delivers those, "who through fear of death were all their life in bondage." For what is death to him, who firmly believes, that it is the means by which he will be introduced to that rest, for which he was

perpetually sighing amidst the pains and disappointments, and vanities of life? On the other hand, what is not death to him who believes it to be the close of his being?

What will be the difference of character between the believers in these respective doctrines? It is a truth, that the man of annihilation may find it his interest to be a villain. But so cannot the man of eternity, who is preparing to appear before the supreme court of the universe. While his belief is in his mind he must live "soberly, righteously and godly in the present world."

No sentiment can be admitted to the heart so gloomy, as that of annihilation. The dreary wretch, who is a convert to the doctrine, can meditate in the most gloomy hours of autumn and winter, when the trees are robbed of their foliage, and their trunks are bare to the winds; when every object wears a gloomy and dejected appearance, he can even then meditate the hour when the spring shall return to them all their brilliancy, and freshness. "But when, he will say, will the flowing locks of youth again visit my head. To me there is no second spring. There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again. But when I fall, death is to me an everlasting sleep!" How different must the man of annihilation, and him of eternity seem in the scale of being.

The one is a being of yesterday, and not of tomorrow. He is diminutive in the scale of being, humbled in his conceptions of himself, and as diminutive in his deportment and conduct. The other has an elevated end, on which his eye is perpetually fixed, and to which his conduct and character perpetually tends. It is *glory, honor and immortality*. Heaven is his home. Eternity is the period of his duration. The Deity is the exemplar to which he is moulding his mind and his heart. Death breaks down the wall of partition, which intercepts his prospects into that blissful region where he is to be flourishing with eternity. Shielded with this belief, his integrity is incorruptible and irresistible. He will feel himself bound to exhibit a character not unworthy of his dignified nature. He will live a useful, respectable and happy life. He will die supported by the "strong consolations" of religion, and the protecting rod and staff of his God. He will unite with the kindred minds of the "spirits of the just made perfect in heaven ; and he will leave the" sweet remembrance of the just behind him.

The sons of scepticism and infidelity, if their practise correspond to their belief, will be riotous and sensual ; hypocrites in public, and wretches in secret ; they will be insignificant and contemptible, as is their creed,

through life ; they will feel the full horrors of death, without God, and without hope. On their monumental stone will be appropriate the language of the poet :

Beneath the lumber of demolish'd worlds,
 Deep in the rubbish of the general wreck,
 Swept ignominious to the common mass
 Of matter, never dignified with life,
 Here lie proud mortals : the sons of heav'n !
 The lords of earth ! The property of worms !
 Beings of yesterday, and not tomorrow,
 Who liv'd in terror, and in pangs expir'd.
 All gone to rot in dust, or, to make
 Their happy transit into blocks and brutes,
 Nor longer sully their Creator's name.

If man be immortal, if he shall never cease to be, if he shall never lose his present consciousness, if he is one day to be called before the high and enlightened tribunal of his God, “ what manner of persons ought we to be ?”

The doctrine of immortality being established, it becomes an inquiry of serious and awful moment, how we may render that immortality a blessing. And an answer to the inquiry will be found only in the volumes of revelation.

The contemplation of immortality calls forth all the better feelings of our nature. It will extinguish malice and envy from the heart. Pitiful must be that earthly ambition, which meditation upon death will not cure.

Deep must be that malice, which would follow its enemy beyond the tomb.

Our title to immortality is the only charter by which we can hold rational equality. Immortal beings are all equal, except their conduct differ. In view of our title to immortality all earthly expectations, prospects and hopes, diminish and decay. None but immortal joys deserve the pursuit of immortal beings.

“ Let us then hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments. For this is the whole duty of man.

‘ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’”



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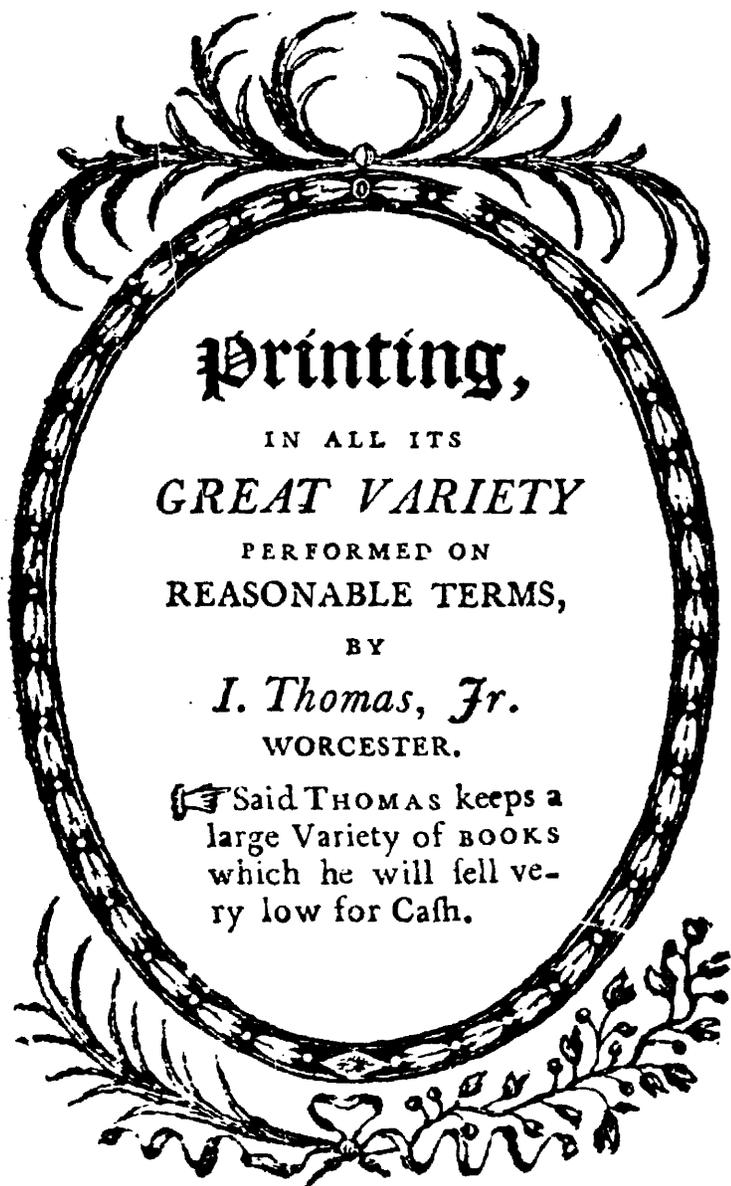
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goodness in this way. But the opinion of some friends, whose judgment he values, that another volume would be useful, and the request of several gentlemen, that certain discourses on particular subjects, might see the light, either by themselves, or as part of a volume, have induced him again to presume on the public candor. He has the rather been willing to comply with the advice of friends, as knowing that his time is short. An argument this, which they have pressed, and which he has felt. For this volume he has selected subjects which he thought highly important in themselves, and not unseasonable at the present time. He has aimed to treat them with perspicuity, and wishes they may merit the approbation of such as shall patronize them, and contribute to confirm the Faith, and promote the Piety of all who may read them.



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