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MEMOIR OF MR. JOHN WILLOCK,
ONE OF THE SCOTTISH RE-
FORMERS.

[Concluded from page 340.]

MR. WILLOCK, after he had finished his epistolary correspondence with Abbot Kennedy, continued in the town of Ayr, and its neighbourhood, till towards the end of May. His zealous friends, who were protecting him against the Archbishop of Glasgow, and other enemies, had resolved to accompany him to Stirling, if the trial, with which he was there threatened, should take place.

When they were informed that, May 11th, the monasteries in Perth had been demolished, and that the army of the Queen Regent, which consisted mostly of French troops, was on its march from Stirling to Perth, to avenge upon its inhabitants the cause of the monks and friars, they immediately resolved to go to the assistance of their Protestant brethren. The Earl of Glencairn, as commander-in-chief, having with him Lord Boyd, Lord Ochiltree, and many barons and gentlemen, marched from Ayr, at the head of twelve hundred cavalry,

and thirteen hundred infantry; and as Mr. Willock would have been in danger of his life, if left behind, he took him along with him.

The Popish party, having suspected that the congregation in the west would endeavour to assist their brethren at Perth, had taken care, with a view to impede their progress, to break down all the bridges, and to stop the passes at Stirling and six miles above it. The Earl was thereby reduced to the necessity of leading his army over the Highland muirs and mountains; which, however, he accomplished so expeditiously, as to bring them in good time, May 24th, to the neighbourhood of Perth. The Protestant camp was then a little way west from Perth, and the camp of the Queen Regent, about ten miles farther west, at the village of Auchterarder.

The arrival of so many friends from Ayrshire, who were now added to some thousands of men who had hastily crowded from the eastern provinces, gave great joy to the Protestants in the camp, and served to increase their courage. In consequence of the accession of strength which the Protestants had acquired, the

influence. I know, indeed, that this is the case: but they bear no proportion to the majority, who are sunk in infidelity and scepticism, and can do but little towards the diffusion of that divine light, and the spread of that glorious Gospel, by the resuscitating energy of which the Church of Geneva may again awake from the philosophic dreams of infidelity, and emulate the zeal, the piety, and the simplicity of former times."

In passing through Germany, Mr. R. visited Fribourgh, Kehl, Strasburgh, Manheim, Frankfort, Mayence, Coblenze, Cologne, and Aix-la-Chapelle. From thence he proceeded to Brussels, on his return to England: of course the field of Waterloo was not forgotten; and we shall conclude this article with the reflections which a visit to the spot suggested to Mr. R.

"The field of Waterloo is now rich in waving corn, ripening for the sickle of the husbandman. What a scene must it have been when death was the reaper, and gathered in his thousands of sheaves to the garner of the grave! And what a scene will it be again, when the trump of the archangel shall awake the sleepers that repose beneath its clods; and the mighty armies, that day annihilated, shall start up to life upon the plain on which they fell! I never heard a sermon so impressive as the silence that reigned around me on the field of Waterloo. I could not but connect their everlasting destinies with the thousands of the dead upon whose dust I trod. The eternity that seemed to open there upon my view, peopled with the spirits of the slain, was an awful scene. The bitterness of dying on the field of battle—the widow's cries—the orphan's tears—the agonies of surviving friendship—were all forgotten; I only saw the immortal soul hurried, unprepared, and perhaps blaspheming, into the presence of its God! I shuddered at the contemplation, and felt how deadly a scourge, how bitter a curse, is war!"

B. D.

MAN A RELIGIOUS AS WELL AS A RATIONAL CREATURE.

MAN is a rational creature, but there is a great variety in the exercises of the reasoning faculty. There is a period in life, in which the exercise can scarcely be said even to commence. In idiots and madmen the whole is irregular; and upon uncultivated minds reason sheds but a feeble light. Notwithstanding this, man is considered, by all, as a rational being.

Without extraordinary help we cannot have correct views of the perfections of Jehovah, or of the relation in which we stand to him; nor can the natural man yield that kind of homage to the true God, which is suitable to his character, or acceptable to his pure mind; yet man is naturally led to believe that there is a Divine Superior, and is susceptible of a sentiment of devotion to that mysterious character.

Although this subject may appear remote from those doctrines which interest more immediately the pious soul, it is not unprofitable to ascertain the truth respecting it, in as much as, the several parts of the system of morals and religion are intimately connected.

We therefore proceed to show.

That a human being must have some notions of God and religion, if he have the use of his natural powers, although he should be absolutely destitute of a supernatural revelation upon the subject.

Those who have endeavoured to propagate Atheism generally reject this sentiment. Some suppose, or rather teach, that the doctrine of a divine existence has

had its origin with designing men, in order to render it serviceable to their ambition. Others pretend to believe that it was suggested by the fears of the ignorant, and afterward supported by the cunning of seducers; but it is not with atheists we mean to contend in this discussion. Nor is it with pagans or deists, for they take the principle for granted. We reason with those who, believing the Scriptures, suppose that to a supernatural revelation alone, we are indebted for every idea of religion which exists in the mind of man. We shall therefore be justifiable in the legitimate use of arguments drawn from Scriptural premises, for the support of the hypothesis which we have proposed to demonstrate.

1. From the character of the Creator, considering the place he has assigned to man in the system of created being; it may be concluded that the human mind is by its constitution religious as wise as rational.

God is good, and wise, and powerful. Unfitness in his creatures to answer the end which he had in view in making them is hereby excluded. He made all these good, and this goodness implied a natural adaptation to the rank appointed them.

Man, the principal of terrestrial creatures, was made for the purpose of contemplating the divine perfections, of declaring in an intelligent manner the praises of the Creator, of knowing and feeling that in the enjoyment of God, supreme happiness could alone be secured to the soul. If these be the ends of his creation, he must have had in the primitive state natural ability to know so much of God as would be neces-

sary to answer this purpose, and a natural propensity to reverence his authority.

But if it was necessary in order to suit the first state of man, that he be thus qualified, it is equally inferable from the divine perfections that this natural capacity be not entirely destroyed in our fallen state.

Even in this estate of sinfulness and misery; we are accountable creatures. And were we to be favoured with no supernatural aids to devotion, we should be still under a natural obligation to serve God. Determining that this should be the case, it was necessary from his perfection, that God should continue even in fallen man a natural capacity of knowing that there exists a Superior, and some sentiment of fear before him. If it be a necessary consequence of the fall that all idea of God be lost, the creature man must then be in relation to God as an irrational animal, or even inanimate matter. Again, The individuals of our species were made for society. There is constitutionally in our minds a propensity to cultivate social intercourse. This principle is instinctive; it does not arise, from experience, nor is it communicated by instruction. It is not nature, but an adventitious perversion of it, which drives the misanthrope from the face of society, or causes the deluded monk to enclose himself in his solitary cell. However incapable man in his sinful condition is to discharge perfectly the duties which arise from his relation to man, natural affection, and the social principle, are still as essential to his mind as a heart and a head are to his body. Is man naturally furnished

with the faculties necessary to enable him to act in relation to man? and shall we suppose that in relation to God, he is totally destitute of a natural principle of action?

2. A view of the natural powers of the human mind will warrant us in forming the same conclusion. It would be foreign from our present purpose to introduce a discussion of all the intellectual and active powers of man. The human mind is formed by its intelligent Creator with various faculties capable of various exercises; among them, we may observe some which necessarily lead man to conceive of a divine existence. The *understanding* cannot but form the idea of *cause and effect*, and the *conscience* necessarily refers to a superior for a sanction to its verdict. Each of those facts requires some explanation, in order to render their force in the present argument perceptible.

The human mind, at a very early period of life, forms the idea of cause and effect. It is not couraged by philosophical systems, but is suggested by observation. We cannot divest ourselves of it: to embrace it, and to act upon it, is a law of our nature. The child, as soon as he can lisp, desires to know what has produced the effect which has excited his attention. He perceives the change, and he is by nature forced to refer it to some cause. He asks what the cause is? you may deceive him, but you cannot satisfy his curiosity, nor stop his inquisitiveness, but by referring him to some cause, supposed or real. Men must act upon this principle during the whole period of

their lives; and although philosophers would for ever lecture against human credulity, in this instance, they cannot prevail upon themselves or others, so far as to make them desert from proceeding upon it in all their actions. They may tell us, that what we have taken to stand in the relation of cause and effect, only occupy the relation of antecedent and consequent, without any natural tendency in the one to produce the other; and they may demonstrate in some instances this to be a truth; but that law of our minds which impels us to form the idea of cause and effect, is so connected with our existence, that we must cease to be men when it is absolutely destroyed. Ignorant minds are in danger, not of ceasing to proceed on this principle, but of applying it without examination. In accounting for the changes which they conceive beyond their own power to produce, they are apt to ascend too suddenly to the first cause. Incapable of connecting the links of argumentation into a long chain of reasoning, they refer every signal phenomenon to invisible agency; but there is little danger of their stopping short of a Divine Being until they have been otherwise instructed.

There is also such a power of the human mind as conscience. It is a moral sense.

Our bodily senses are capable of being affected by external objects. From this the mind is necessarily led to perceive the object which affected the bodily organ. To this perception we give an appropriate name. But besides the perception of the object through the bodily organ,

we have a secondary perception of pleasure or pain, of fear or admiration. As from my perception of an object of sight, I am convinced I have an organ of sight, the eye; so from the sensation of pleasure, I am convinced, that I have an internal sense capable of receiving pleasure, from the beauties of nature and art. The one of these senses is a part of myself as much as the other. My taste is natural to me, as well as my eye.

When I reflect upon my own actions, and compare them with some standard, the perception of their character is accompanied with a sense of approbation or disapprobation. This sensation admits of various degrees of pleasure and pain, which will be in proportion to the delicacy of the conscience, and the merit of the action, the perception of which gave occasion for its exercise. As the sight of an object implies the existence of an organ of sight, the effect just mentioned necessarily implies the existence of the faculty of conscience.

But if such a faculty exist, it must be natural or acquired, and even the possibility of making the acquisition implies that the human mind is so constituted by its author as necessarily to acquire the faculty of conscience, or to leave unexercised one of the most eminent and excellent powers of the soul. And the supposition of its remaining in a state of idleness, still implies the existence of a distinct power, on which the moral sense is engrafted. But what is this original faculty of the soul? No principle of our nature, unless we have an innate sense of Deity, can be a sufficient root to bear this noble branch.

It will ultimately amount, therefore, to the same thing; whether we consider conscience as a distinct power of the soul, or as the distinct exercise of a more general power; as itself an original principle of our constitutions, or as the acquisition of an original principle, unless we extricate ourselves from every difficulty, by stripping the mind of all its intellectual and active powers, and adopt the Godwinic definition of the mind, a *mere recipient of perceptions*. It is further to be observed, that if this faculty exist, it implies necessarily that we are naturally capable of forming an idea of a Supreme Being. As the sensation of pleasure occasioned by the sight of a beautiful object, implies a previous perception of the object, the exercise of moral sense implies my accountableness to an authority paramount to my own mind. Every sentiment of approbation or disapprobation of my own actions, refers to the will of a superior, as the standard which I am bound to adopt.

It is upon this supposition, that it can be said with truth, that God alone is Lord of the conscience.

From these premises we are warranted to conclude, that man, by the use of his natural powers, is capable of ascertaining the truth of a divine existence without the aid of an extraordinary revelation. The

3d. Argument we would use with those who deny this, is drawn from the universal prevalence of the knowledge of a divine existence.

No nation is without some notions of a superior being. The grossest superstitions, as well as the sublimest efforts of reason,

equally evince that men have some principle of religion.

Some men have laboured to make themselves and others believe, that there is no God ; but we have great reason to doubt their sincerity. We can have no evidence of it but their own testimony, and that is not admissible, inasmuch as they are otherwise unworthy of credit, and in this particular instance the interested party. There are, besides, circumstances in the history of professed atheists, which betray them. We have evidence of this in many instances, and we may presume the case of others was similar to that of those with whom we are best acquainted. The pressure of calamity, sudden emergencies, and even their philosophical systems, evidence their insincerity, as well as their infatuation, and convince us that they never really prevailed so far as absolutely to eradicate a sense of Deity from their own bosom.

It would be unnecessary now to collect evidences from the different ages and nations of the world, of their having some kind of religion. We shall proceed to the last argument intended to be advanced.

4. It appears from the Scripture revelation, that man is capable of knowing there is a God by the exercise of his natural powers.

The whole system of revealed religion proceeds upon this principle. It addresses men not only as rational, but also as religious creatures. "Him whom ye ignorantly worship declare I unto you." There is not a passage of the Old or New Testament which can be shown to flow legitimately from the hypothesis,

that there is no natural religions : but there are express testimonies in favour of the opposite sentiment. We shall quote only three passages.

1. Psalm xix. 1—4. *The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.* It would put ingenuity itself to the rack to find out means of evading the force of this declaration. The Psalmist intended in this Psalm to show the superior excellency of revelation over natural religion ; but clearly teaches that God is to be known, in some measure, from his works, through that knowledge which implies the conversion of a sinner, from the word. In the quotation we are taught that the visible heavens, and the succession of day and night, are sufficient evidences of a Divine existence. They "declare his glory" in expressive language. Shall it be said, the evidence is indeed sufficient, but man is naturally incapable of estimating its value ? The Psalmist prevents the objection. "There is no speech, or language, where their voice is not heard." All nations understand their testimony. Yea, "without speech or language," as some critics translate the words, without a voice, and addressed to the ear, "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The evidence which they give, is delineated in an impressive manner, in durable characters.

It is communicated through all the earth. It is intelligible to every rational inhabitant of this world. Will it be replied, the apostle Paul gives a different exposition of this passage, Rom. x. 18. *Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world*, referring to the Gospel preached by the apostles of our Lord?

The writer of the Epistle to the Romans, is, in this chapter, justifying, from the Old Testament, the admission of the Gentile converts into the church. He quotes this verse from the 19th Psalm, in order to give the Romans an idea of the general spread of the Gospel already among the nations, and justify the preaching of the word among those to whom God preached by his works. Again, we may be answered, the Apostle applies these words in a limited sense. We are certain the Gospel had not yet met with a universal reception; and therefore it may be supposed they are not intended for universal application by the writer of the Psalm. Our reply is, it is necessary to give force to the Apostle's argument, that the words be understood in the fullest extent. God speaks unlimitedly to all men by his works. Since the wall of partition is removed, why should we set any limits over which we shall not endeavour to preach the Saviour. The Romans were in no danger of mistaking the meaning. They knew that the Gospel had not yet been actually preached to all men; and they also knew that the works of nature held out the knowledge of a Creator and Supreme Governor, to all who have the natural powers of

men. But, lest it be supposed that Paul entertained on this subject a different opinion from David, or rather that the Spirit of inspiration gives contradictory testimony, we may quote a second passage of Holy Writ. Rom. i. 19, 20. *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* From these words the following inferences are deducible. 1. There are some truths respecting the Divine Being, which may be known by men. *Τὸ γνωστὸν τῷ θεῷ.* 2. Men have actually understood these truths. *It is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them*—*φανερὸν εἶναι ἐν αὐτοῖς.* 3. This communication was made, not by supernatural revelation but by his works. *For these things are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made.* *Τοῖς ποιήματι νοούμενα καθαρώς.* 4. The truths thus made manifest are the existence of a Deity, and the Divine Omnipotence, even his eternal power and Godhead. The apostle, then, teaches us in this chapter, that those who have been destitute of the aid of revelation, have notwithstanding been convinced of the existence of an eternal and omnipotent Being, by the works which they contemplated. We shall only observe further, that this confirms our argument, drawn from that law of our nature whereby we are irresistibly led to refer every effect to some cause, supposed capable of producing it; and proceed to quote one other portion

of Scripture. Rom. ii. 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.*

The persons spoken of are the heathen, *τα ἔθνη*. Of them it is said they are without the law, *μη νομοῦ ἔχοντες*. This law of which they are destitute cannot be the law of nature, for it is afterward said they have some remains of this. It cannot be the particular law of the Jews, for they do by nature its commands, but with respect to the ceremonial law this would be impossible. The law, which they have not, is the system of revelation, and although without it they perform some of its precepts—*τα τε νομῶ ποιοῦν*. They do things contained in the law, not from the aid of a traditional and obscure revelation, but by nature—*φύσει*. The constitution of their minds is such, as impels them to consider themselves in some degree accountable to a Superior. Depraved as they are, their souls are instinctively led to form such sentiments as have the force of a law. It is the law of nature—the voice of God, speaking through the constitutional principles of the law. *These having not the law, are a law unto themselves.* If this be the case, the conclusion is obvious. It discovers, that the Heathen have a natural capacity of discovering their accountability to a Superior. It shows forth the works of the law written in their hearts. It implies their

knowledge of a Supreme Being, and their consciences meanwhile are exercised in approving or disapproving of their actions. As the former text corroborated our reasoning from the ideas of cause and effect, this is assuredly calculated to confirm what has already been said on the nature of the moral sense.

These declarations of the apostle cannot easily be misunderstood, unless we be previously prejudiced in favour of contrary sentiments.

There are other testimonies of Scripture in favour of the hypothesis which we have adopted; but it is presumed those selected are sufficient to substantiate its truths; and unless we form the impious thought, that the writers of the Scriptures were themselves in an error, or coincided in a common sentiment of the age, we cannot resist their force. The Spirit who spoke by the prophets made the human mind, and is best acquainted with its powers. What he has published respecting them must be decisive. □

[To be continued.]

ROUSSEAU'S CONCESSION TO CHRISTIANITY.

“I acknowledge that the Majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me, the sanctity of the Gospel speaks forcibly to my heart.—Examine the works of the Philosophers, and their pompous phraseology.—How poor, how very poor in comparison! Is it possible, that a book at once so sublime and simple could be the production

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WE shall now take notice

II. Of some objections to this sentiment.

1st Object. There are atheists. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Eminent philosophers have called the truth in question. They were not deficient in natural abilities, and if by the exertion of its natural faculties the human must come to the knowledge of a divine existence, these men could not have doubted.

Ans. We have already denied that atheists are sincere in their professions. The fool saying in his heart, no God, is rather a proof of his earnest wish there was none, than of the sincerity of his atheism. Thus the apostle Paul seems to have understood, they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Rom. i. 28.

The greatest men are most in danger of following their own fanciful inventions to a distance from God, and from truth; and if it is possible they are sincere while communicating to paper their deceitful speculations, the

force of nature brings them back in spite of theories. The Bishop of Cloyne wrote and published a book, with a design to prove there was no material world. When he left his study, however, his theory was not sufficient to deprive him of common sense. He acted upon the fullest assurance of the fallacy of his system, Hume attempted to prove that there was no matter, no mind, no creature, no Creator, no real existence whatever. Was the eminent author of the History of England sincere in his profession of scepticism? What evidence can we have that he was uniformly sincere in his profession of atheism. Admit, however, the possibility of entire disbelief in a Supreme Being, and all this will prove is, that our mental organization is capable of derangement; that stubborn and repeated attacks upon the moral sense may injure it, and that some of our natural powers may be lost. If you will apply it more extensively, you lead to a manifest absurdity, upon your principles. If the objection be valid, no moral truth can be ascertained. Revelation itself, as well as the light of nature, would become incapa-

ble of conveying the idea of a God. Atheists exist where the light of revelation shines; and if their existence be an objection to the existence of any natural religion, it will be equally conclusive against the truths of the Christian system. That perversion of mind which would induce men to reject the God of the Scriptures, might be supposed sufficient to induce them to reject the God of nature, after having good evidence of his existence.

2d Object. We have no innate principles. All our ideas are from sensation and reflection. Arguments for natural religion, drawn from the nature of the human mind are therefore invalid.

Ans. The human mind is not destitute of innate principles. It is created with instinctive propensities, which are exerted by the various objects of thought.

Locke has indeed proved, that there are no innate logical propositions—that the infant is incapable of understanding subject and predicate, or of comprehending their connexion in the affirmation. This is all his reasoning proves, and from thence he very unjustly infers that there are no innate principles of action or belief in man. His followers, have fallen into the same error, and improving upon it, have progressed far out of his sight into the regions of extravagant absurdities. Godwin lays it down as an axiom in his political morality, that man has no innate principles, consequently is neither virtuous nor vicious as he comes into existence. And assuredly the consequence is warranted by the premises. The mind of man, happily, was not framed by philosophers, and they have generally

erred in the analysis of its powers. It is not like the dark closet of Locke, or the cavern of Plato, much less like the blank sheet of Condorcet and Godwin; but is constituted by its intelligent Creator with active powers and principles, which necessarily exert themselves when occasions for their exercise are presented. When I contend for the existence of innate principles, I do not use principle as synonymous to a logical proposition. A child does not know that a whole is greater than any of its parts. He does not know the meaning of the terms. But his mind is so formed, that as soon as he is capable of comprehending the meaning of the terms, he cannot possibly withhold his assent to the proposition. The law of his constitution, which impels him to this, I call an innate principle of belief. The principle is surely distinct from the proposition it embraces, as distinct as my seeing is from my eye, or my hearing from my ear. Man is so formed as to seek society with man, not merely on account of the convenience of a social life, but from an instinctive propensity to social intercourse. The law of his nature, which impels him to this, I call an innate principle of action—the social principle. It also is distinct from the intercourse it embraces.

The controversy about innate ideas is of vast importance to the interest of truth and godliness. The system of grace may be well understood, and piety well practised by those who are utterly strangers to this subject. But the theory of Christianity has been often misrepresented, and piety awfully checked, by the extravagant application of Locke's

philosophy of the human mind. It requires an acquaintance with the merit of the controversy, therefore, if not to propagate the truth and encourage godliness, at least to detect the sophistry by which it has been attempted to divert the mind from the simplicity of the Gospel.

Philosophers have long supposed, that ideas were real substances, airy shadows of the objects which they represented; that they entered into the mind through the senses, were the objects really perceived by the mind: there remained as realities distinct from the mind itself, and underwent innumerable alterations. Language highly metaphorical was adopted in its literal force, and metaphysics reared a huge pile of learned nonsense, upon a foundation which was a perfect nonentity. Consider idea, not as a substance within my spirit, but as the name given to an act of my mind about the object of thought, and the whole system of opposition suffers immediate dissolution. Speaking without figurative language, there are neither innate ideas, nor any idea at all in the mind. An idea is but a thought, a thought is the act of a thinking substance. To prove that ideas are not innate therefore is not entitled to high philosophical fame. It is a self-evident proposition. It identifies itself. It is as much as to say, the mind never thinks until it does think; never thinks without an object of thought. But to infer from this that the soul has no natural principle of action, which will necessarily exert itself when occasion offers for its exercise, is as absurd as to say, I have no eye, because

I cannot see when I am surrounded with total darkness.

From the denial of innate principles in the sense in which I have used the expression, have men of learning and piety attempted to tear the noble faculty of conscience from the catalogue of original powers, and to render devotion itself a mere adventitious circumstance, and not a natural principle of man.

Others have gone further astray from the very same cause, proceeding upon the same hypothesis. An error in a fundamental article of any system is always accompanied with this evil, that the more daring the genius, and accurate the powers of reasoning, the further will you deviate from truth, and the more extravagant will be your conclusions. Men of no mean penetration, learning, or piety, have branded with the name of vice many of the legitimate acts of our obedience to the law of our nature—the voice of God, speaking through the constitutional propensities of the human mind—a voice with which revelation is ever consistent, and which it is designed not to contradict but enforce. They have called my earnest desire and endeavours after personal salvation, my strong affection for those who are united to me by natural ties, my gratitude to my benefactor, by the name of vice; they have attributed them to a sinful selfishness, and have industriously endeavoured to persuade men to expunge them from the list of Christian duties or virtues. In their denial of innate principles you perceive the source of these absurdities. You discover the cause, not in the excess of meta-

physical refinement, but in the want of a previous examination of first principles ; in a fundamental error respecting the constitution which God hath given to human nature, a constitution which revealed religion uniformly addresses ; and which it is designed to repair, to sanctify, and to perfect.

3d Object. All the religious ideas of the heathen may be ultimately referred to a supernatural revelation. The instruction which Noah, an inspired teacher, gave to his offspring, was communicated by tradition to all nations. They have an opinion that God will forgive them, and the rites of superstition seem to be borrowed from the institutions of revelation.

Ans. Noah was indeed a preacher of righteousness ; and during his life, no doubt, taught the truth to his posterity. But it is not so certain that any knowledge depending on revelation could have continued so long, and for so many generations, independent of the light of nature. Upon this supposition the memory is the power to which these nations are indebted for religious knowledge. After an inspired writer has informed you that men did not like to retain God in their knowledge, that the heart of man is enmity against him, after your own experience of the feeble hold which this faculty takes of ideas in which the heart is not interested ; after the account that history gives us of sciences and arts once known, and afterward forgotten, do you think it possible, that such pains would have been taken by father or son, through so many successive generations, and that the memory

would be so accurate with respect to a subject to which the disposition has such malignant reluctance, as to retain universally the knowledge of God even as far as they do. That they have a general hope of pardon is true ; but a divine revelation is not necessary in order to account for this. It was the suggestion of Satan to our first parents, Ye shall not surely die ; and fallen Adam in his flight, in his fig-leaf covering, and in his equivocations and apologies, appears to have had some little hope, before the revelation of mercy was made to him. This sentiment is corroborated by the absolute ignorance of the heathen of the grand article of revealed religion, the mediator, Jesus.

The design of revelation was not to give men to understand that there was a God. They knew this. Nor that he was merciful, this was inferable in some degree from his benevolence ; but that his mercy could not be, consistently with his perfections, manifested unto men, except through a mediator, and that a Divine Redeemer was to be, granted men. How could the memory relinquish this capital article of revelation, and remember there was a God, if the natural powers of man had been as incapable of discovering the one as the other. Nay, how could men now under the light of the Gospel, so generally acquiesce in the truth of a Divine existence, and yet appear so inveterate against the doctrines of grace, unless the former were a part of natural religion, and the latter derived from another source. Will you reply, that some truths are more congenial

to our nature than others, and although they could not have been discovered by the light of nature, yet, when once revealed, they take so strong a hold of the mind as cannot be easily broken. You then are willing to adopt the hypothesis that the knowledge of religion among the heathen is to be attributed to the force of natural religion, called into exercise by supernatural revelation. It is possible that the mind might be so affected by powerful miracles, as to credit the information which it would receive of a Divine Being, of whose existence they formerly had no conception, but such an obscure revelation as the heathen can give to his son, respecting the existence of a God, an idea so alarming to the fears of the wicked, so destructive to the peace of man, and so contrary to the disposition of the depraved, would not be accredited, unless more palpable evidence were offered. No. Were it not that man is naturally a religious creature, were it not for the influence of natural religion, superstition itself could not exist. Irreligion, total atheism, would overwhelm the earth, and probably, the belief of a Divine Being existing at all would be confined to the breasts of the regenerate. But as it is, man cannot long divest himself of religious impressions. Absolute irreligion is as unnatural as universal corporeal blindness.

The principle of devotion, which is interwoven with our existence, can alone account for the continuance of any kind of religion among those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. This principle must operate, and although doctrines purely of revelation, be hated, ne-

glected, or forgotten, what is natural to man has continued amidst successive generations, in the darkness of ignorance and barbarism.

4th Obj. At a time when deism is prevalent, it is more safe to refer all religion ultimately to revelation. Men generally believe there is a God. This is granted by infidels. Show to them that this has proceeded from revelation only, and you have gained your point; you have honoured the Bible, and have demonstrated its authenticity.

Ans. This sentiment may be the error of a pious mind, but certainly not of a shrewd intellect, unhampered by prejudice, vigorously exerting itself in the investigation of truth.

Be not afraid the Scriptures will suffer from natural religion. Their dictates will coincide. The Scripture revelation implies the existence of natural religion, and comes from God to its aid. Natural religion requires us to embrace whatever assistance our Creator offers. Deny this, and you turn the Scriptures against themselves, you remove the foundation upon which their evidence rests, together with the necessity of their capital doctrines. Revealed religion teaches us that men will be judged according to the tenor of that law, the statutes of which they had an opportunity of knowing. Therefore they are without excuse, Rom. i. 20. Sin is a transgression of the law. Where there is no law there is no transgression. But if the fall of man have absolutely destroyed his capacity, so far as that the knowledge of a Divine existence would become

extinct from the human breast unless supported by a miraculous intervention of the Supreme himself, man must become divested of accountableness, and as it respects religion, be on a level with the brutes. All natural power of forming an idea of a God, of religion, or of accountableness, being lost, and no innate principle of morality in his constitution, the enmity of the heart to God could not possibly exist, nor could divine justice have any further claim on man than on the cattle which graze in the meadows, both being alike naturally destitute of a capacity even to ascertain his existence. Upon such principles, if man had been left without the aid of supernatural revelation, he could be under no law, he could be guilty of no transgression. The Judge could lay no hold of him at last, he must be justified without works, and without faith. This would at once overturn the whole fabric of Christianity, supercede the necessity of any revelations, and offer an easy victory to the enemies of divine justice and the doctrine of the atonement.

Having thus endeavoured to show, from the perfections of God, and from the nature of man, from the general consent of nations, and from the testimony of Scripture, that man is naturally a religious creature; and having investigated the principal objections to the existence of natural religion, let me excite you, reader, to admire, and bless the wisdom and goodness of God. He has given us an honourable rank in the system of being; he has not left us to wander in the desert with nothing but the faint torch

of nature's light, to direct our steps; he has favoured us with a revelation of his will, of his grace, of his Son, and of our own miserable condition. He has invited us cordially, exhorted us earnestly, and commanded us authoritatively to believe in his Son, that we might have life, and peace, and happiness, and glory. He has himself framed a perfect system of religion for us, he hath given us a fair and perspicuous edition of the law and the religion of nature, illustrated and enforced by additional articles. He has anticipated our fall, made suitable provision for our recovery, and described that provision in the Christian Revelation; yea, He has entered into a covenant with us, ordered in all things, and sure, whereby is secured, without possibility of failure, the aids of the Holy Spirit, to remove the ruins of our fall, repair all the original powers of human nature, restore them to the image, favour, and fellowship of God, as they were first formed, together with additional circumstances of elegance and splendour, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let this covenant be all our salvation, and all our desire. Let our talents, and our time, be employed in its service. Let our views, our desires, our purposes, and all our relative connexions, be rendered subordinate to this religion, which requires us to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits; let us devolve with confidence all our cares on the surety of the better Testament; and by the Divine Spirit, through Jesus the mediator, cheerfully consign our whole souls and bodies into the

arms of our Father who is in heaven, the God of nature, of grace, and of glory. □

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BAPTISM.—No. F.

THE IDENTITY OF BAPTISM AND CIRCUMCISION.

[Continued from page 351.]

The sign and seal of circumcision, which, as we stated in our last number, Abraham received for the confirmation of his faith in the promise of God, his seed, i. e. who professed his faith, were also commanded to receive. For his seed both connected with him by God, in this promise, and the consequent command. God calls himself the God of both, i. e. not only of Abraham, but of those who trod in his footsteps. In thus doing, he ensured to Abram the certainty that he would have a *seed*: not merely a natural offspring, but particularly a spiritual one. His *seed* the apostle to the Galatians calls the children of the *promise*. They are those who are redeemed by Christ the purifier; and those only. But as their *imitation* of Abraham, or the fact of their being his spiritual seed, can only be known by their profession and conduct: so the children of the promise, or the seed of Abraham, are those who professed Abraham's faith, and displayed his obedience. To them God promises to be **A GOD**: He declares his relation to them in this character, and their relation to Him as the seed. Not that we must conclude that all who professed Abraham's faith, or appeared to walk in his steps, were really the seed or the children of the promise. Some

were afar off, and still in their sins, spite of their profession and privileges. To them, then, God was not a God, in the sense that he was to others. They who died in this state, though the children of Abraham, as professing his faith, God will declare on the judgment-day "I never knew you." Yet, still they, whilst they retained their profession and obedience, and were not cut off, were, as the apostle calls them, the children of the covenant, which God made with Abraham. As such, they were in *visible* covenant-relation to God, according to his constitution. They composed the *visible* Church, and as such were known and recognized by the world. Which of them really and truly belonged to the Church, God only knew. He judges the heart; man judges from the words and conduct of his fellow-men. God's promise is made only to those whose hearts are right with Him. We must consider it as belonging to those who with the mouth confess the truth, and in their deportment conform to the truth. These remarks are sufficient to prevent a mistake on this subject.

Much confusion arises necessarily from not correctly understanding the meaning of the *visible* and *invisible* Church. The distinction is proper, and exists in fact; and yet there is but *one Church*—not two Churches. The invisible Church is not a body different from the visible Church. The *invisible Church*, i. e. the company of real believers, can only become visible by their profession of faith and obedience. They whose profession is false and insincere, belong no more to