

THE  
IMMORTALITY  
OF THE  
SOUL.

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CHAP. VIII.

The Immortality of the Soul depends on the conservative influence of God: Natural and moral arguments to prove that God will continue it for ever. The Soul is incapable of perishing from any corruptible principles, or separable parts. Its spiritual nature is evident by the acts of its principal faculties. The understanding conceives spiritual objects; is not confined to singular and present things: reflects upon itself: corrects the errors of the sense: does not suffer from the excellence of the object. Is vigorous in its operations when the body is decayed, which proves it to be an immaterial faculty. An answer to objections against the soul's spiritual nature. That the first notices of things are conveyed through the senses, does not argue it to be a material faculty. That it depends on the temper of the body in its superior operations, is no prejudice to its spiritual nature.

**H**AVING dispatched the consideration of the prime fundamental truth, that there is a most wise and powerful Creator of all things, I shall next discourse of the immortality of the human soul, and the eternal recompences in the future state.

In treating of the soul's immortality, I shall not insist on nice and subtle speculations, that evaporate and leave nothing substantial for conviction or practice: but consider those proofs that may induce the mind to assent, and work upon the will to make its choice of objects with respect to their endless consequences hereafter. And first, it must be premised, that immortality is

not an inseparable perfection of its nature; for it is capable of annihilation. Whatever had a beginning may have an end. God only hath immortality in an absolute sense, and communicates it according to his pleasure. The perpetual duration of human souls is a privilege that depends on his sustaining virtue, (without which they would relapse into a state of not being) and as freely flows from his power as the first moment of their existence. His will is the measure of their continuance. I shall therefore consider such things as strongly argue that God will not withdraw his conservative influence that is necessary to their immortality. The arguments are of two sorts, natural and moral. The first prove that God has made the soul incapable of death by any internal causes of perishing from its nature, and in that declares not obscurely that he will ever preserve it. The second sort are drawn from the divine attributes, from the ends of the Creator in making the soul, and the visible economy of providence in the government of the world, that are infallible, and will produce a sufficient conviction in minds equally inclined.

1. The soul is incapable of death by any internal causes of perishing in its nature. The dissolution of things proceeds from the corruptible principles of which they are compounded, and the separable parts of which they consist, and into which they are resolved. Therefore all mixed and material beings are subject to dissolution. But the human soul is a spiritual substance, \* simple without any disagreeing qualities, as heat and cold, moisture and dryness, the seeds of corruption. The essences of things are best discovered by their peculiar operations, that argue a real distinction between them, and from whence arise the different notions whereby they are conceived. The soul of a brute, performs the same vital acts as the soul of a plant, yet it is visibly of a more elevated nature, because it performs the functions of the sensitive life that are proper to it. The rational soul performs the same sensitive acts as the soul of brutes, but that it is of a higher order of substances, appears by its peculiar objects and immediate operations upon them.

The two principal faculties of the human soul are the understanding and the will, and the actions flowing from them exceed the power of the most refined matter however modified, and

\* Et quum simplex animi natura esset, neque haberet in se quicquam admixtum dispar sui, atq; dissimile, non posse eum dividi. *Cic. de Senect.*

transcend any principle that is only endowed with the powers of sense and imagination confined to matter.

To proceed orderly, I will first consider the mind with respect to the quality of its objects, and manner how it is conversant about them.

1. The conception of things purely spiritual, God, angels, separate souls, analogies, the differences, and various respects of things, argue it to be of a spiritual nature. For it is an evident principle, there must be an analogy between the faculty and the object. A material glass cannot represent a spirit; it has no receptivity to take into it an object without figure, colour and diversity of parts, the affections of matter. A spiritual object can only be apprehended by a spiritual operation, and that can only be produced by a spiritual power. The being of things is the root of their working. Now rarefy matter to the highest fineness, reduce it to imperceptible atoms, it is as truly matter as a gross body. For lightness and tenuity are as proper attributes of matter, as weight and density, though less sensible.

If a beast could apprehend what discourse is, it were rational. The soul therefore that understands the spirituality of things is spiritual; otherwise it should act *extra sphæram*. The intellectual eye alone sees him that is invisible, understands the reasons of truth and justice, looks beyond the bright hills of time into the spiritual eternal world, so that it is evident there is an affinity and likeness in nature between them.

2. Material faculties are confined to the narrow compass of singular and present things; but the mind abstracts from all individuals, their pure nature, and forms their universal species. The eye can only see a coloured object before it, the mind contemplates the nature of colours. It ascends above all the distinctions of time, recollects what is past, foresees what is to come. \* No interval of space or time can hinder its sight. Besides the † swift flight of the thoughts over sea and land, the soaring of the mind in a moment above the stars, as if its essence were all vigour and activity, prove that it is not a material power.

\* *Celer & dilis cognatus, omni mundo, & omni ævo. Par. Sen.*

† *Sic mihi persuasi, sic sentio, quum tanta celeritas animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot scientiæ, tot inventa, non posse eam naturam quæ res eas continet mortalem esse. Cic.*

3. Sense only acts in a direct way, without reflecting upon itself or its own operations. It is true there is an experimental perception included in vital and sensible acts; but it is far below proper reflection. The eye doth not see the action by which it sees, nor the imagination reflect on itself: for that being conversant only about representations transmitted through the senses, cannot frame an image of itself, and gaze upon it, there being no such resemblance conveyed by the mediation of the outward organs. But the rational soul not only contemplates an object, but reflects on its own contemplation, and retired from all commerce with external things, views itself, its qualities and state, and by this gives testimony of its spiritual and immortal nature.

4. The mind rectifies the false reports of the senses, and forms the judgment of things not according to their impressions, but by such rational evidence of which they are not capable. When the object is too distant, or the medium unfit, or the organs distempered, the senses are deceived. The stars of the brightest magnitude seem to be trembling sparks of light: but the understanding considers that the representations of things are imperfect and less distinct proportionably to their distance, and conceives of their magnitude accordingly. A straight oar appears crooked in the water, but reason observes the error in the refractions, when the image passes through a double medium of unequal clearness. Sweet things taste bitter to one in a fever, but the mind knows that the bitterness is not in the things but in the viciated palate. Moreover, how many things are collected by reason that transcend the power of fancy to conceive, nay, are repugnant to its conception? What corporeal image can represent the immensity of the heavens, as the mind by convincing arguments apprehends it? The Antipodes walk erect upon the earth, yet the fancy cannot conceive them but with their heads downward. Now if the mind were of the same nature with the corporeal faculties, their judgment would be uniform.

5. The senses suffer to a great degree by the excessive vehemence of their objects. Too bright a light blinds the eye. Too strong a sound deafs the ear. But the soul receives vigour and perfection from the excellence and sublimity of its object; and when most intent in contemplation, and concentered in itself, becomes as it were all mind, so that the operations of it as sensitive are suspended, feels the purest delights far above the per-

ception of the lower faculties. Now from whence is the distemper of the senses in their exercise, but from matter, as well that of the objects as the organ? And from whence the not suffering of the mind, but from the impressing the forms of objects, separated from all matter, and consequently in an immaterial faculty? For there is of necessity a convenience and proportion, as between a being and the manner of its operations, so between that, and the subject wherein it works. This strongly argues the soul to be immaterial, in that it is impassable from matter, even when it is most conversant in it. For it refines it from corporeal accidents, to a kind of spirituality proportioned to its nature. And from hence proceeds the unbounded capacity of the soul in its conceptions, partly because the forms of things inconsistent in their natures, are so purified by the mind, as they have an objective existence without enmity or contrariety; partly because in the workings of the mind, one act does not require a different manner from another, but the same reaches to all that is intelligible in the same order.

6. The senses are subject to languishing and decay, and begin to die before death. But the soul many times in the weakness of age is most lively and vigorously productive. The intellectual offspring carries no marks of the decays of the body. In the approaches of death, when the corporeal faculties are relaxed, and very faintly perform their functions, the workings of the soul are often raised above the usual pitch of its activity. And this is a pregnant probability that it is of a spiritual nature, and that when the body which is here its prison rather than mansion falls to the earth, it is not oppressed by its ruins, but set free, and enjoys its truest liberty. This made Heraclitus say that the soul goes out of the body as lightning from a cloud, because it is never more clear in its conceptions than when freed from matter. \* And what Lucretius excellently expresses in his verses is true in another sense that he intended;

*Cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,  
In terram; sed quod missum est ex Ætheris oris,  
Id rursus cæli fulgentia templa receptant.*

\* Καὶ Ἡρακλείτου ὥσπερ ἀστραπὴ νέφεος διατταμένη τοῦ σώματος.  
τῷ. Plutarch in Rom.

What sprang from earth falls to its native place :  
What heaven inspir'd releas'd from that weak tie  
Of flesh ascends above the shining sky.

Before I proceed, I will briefly consider the objections of some who secretly favour the part of impiety.

1. It is objected, that the soul in its intellectual operations depends on the phantasms, and those are drawn from the representations of things conveyed through the senses.

But it will appear this does not enervate the force of the arguments for its spiritual nature. For this dependance is only objective, not instrumental of the soul's perception. The first images of things are introduced by the mediation of the senses, and by their presence (for nothing else is requisite) the mind is excited, and draws a picture resembling, or if it please, not resembling them, and so operates alone, and completes its own work. Of this we have a clear experiment in the conceptions which the mind forms of things so different from the first notices of them by the senses.

The first apprehensions of the Deity are from the visible effects of his power, but the idea in which the understanding contemplates him, is framed by removing all imperfections that are in the creatures, and consequently that he is not corporeal. For whatsoever is so, is liable to corruption, that is absolutely repugnant to the perfection of his nature. Now the common sense and fancy, only powerful to work in matter, cannot truly express an immaterial being. Indeed as painters by their colours represent invisible things, as darkness, the winds, the internal affections of the heart, so that by the representations, the thoughts are awakened of such objects; so the fancy may with the like art shadow forth spiritual beings by the most resembling forms taken from sensible things. Thus it imagines the angels under the likeness of young men with wings, to express their vigour and velocity. But the mind by its internal light conceives them in another manner, by a spiritual form, that exceeds the utmost efficacy of the corporeal organs, so that it is evident the soul as intellectual in its singular and most proper operations, is not assisted by the ministry of the senses.

2. It is objected that the soul in its superior operations depends on the convenient temper of the body. The thoughts are

clear and orderly when the brain is composed. On the contrary when the predominancy of an humour distempers it, the mind feels its infirmities. And from hence it seems to be of a corporeal nature, depending on the body in its being, as in its working.

But this, if duly considered, will raise no just prejudice against its spiritual immortal nature. For,

(1.) The sympathy of things is no convincing argument that they are of the same nature. There may be so strict an union of beings of different natures, that they must necessarily be subject to impressions from one another. Can any reasons demonstrate that a spiritual substance endowed with the powers of understanding and will, cannot be united in a vital composition to a body, as the vegetative soul is in plants, and the sensitive in beasts? There is no implicit repugnance in this that proves it impossible. Now if such a complex being were in nature, how would that spiritual soul act in that body, that in its first union with it (excepting some universal principles) is a *rasa tabula*, as a white paper, without the notices of things written in it? Certainly in no other imaginable manner than as man's soul does now.

Indeed if man as compounded of soul and body, were a sensitive animal, and only rational as partaking of the universal intellect lent to individuals for a time, and retiring at death to its first being, as Averroes fancied, there would be no cause of such a sympathy: but the soul as intellectual, is an informing, not assisting form. And it is an evident proof of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, by this strict and sensible union, to make the soul vigilant and active, to provide for the convenience and comfort of the body in the present state, and that notwithstanding such a discord in nature, there should be such a concord in inclinations.

(2.) Though the mental operations of the soul are hindered by the ill habit of the body, yet the mind suffers no hurt, but still retains its intellectual power without impairing. A skilful musician does not lose his art that plays on a harp when the strings are false, though the music is not so harmonious as when it is justly tuned. The visive faculty is not weakened, when the air by a collection of gross vapours is so thick, that the eye cannot distinctly perceive distant objects. When by the heats of wine or a disease the spirits are inflamed, and made fierce and unruly,

and the images in the fancy are put into confusion, the mind cannot regularly govern and use them: when the fumes are evaporated, the brain is restored to its temper and fitness for intellectual operations, but the mind is not cured, that was not hurt by those distempers.

Briefly, the deniers of the soul's immortality, resemble in their arguings some who opposed the divinity of our Saviour. For as Apollinaris and Eunomius from Christ's sleeping so profoundly in a storm, instead of concluding that he was a real man, falsely inferred that he was not God: because sleep is not the satisfaction of a divine appetite, the Deity is incapable of it.\* But they considered not his more than human power in rebuking the winds and the sea with that empire, that was felt and obeyed by those insensible creatures: so those whose interest inclines them to believe that man is entirely mortal, alledge that he acts as a sensitive creature; for he is so, but consider not that he has also more noble faculties to understand objects purely spiritual, and God himself the most perfect in that order, which no material principle, though of the most subtile and finest contexture can reach unto. Besides, the more it is disengaged from matter, and retired from the senses, the more capable it is to perform its most exalted operations, and consequently by an absolute separation it is so far from perishing, that it ascends to its † perfection. For the manner how it acts in the separate state it is to no purpose to search, being most secret, and it will be to no purpose to find, as being of no influence to excite us to the constant and diligent performance of our duty. It is therefore a fruitless curiosity to inquire after it. But to imagine that because the soul in the present state cannot understand clearly without the convenient disposition of the body, therefore it cannot act at all without it, is as absurd as to fancy because a man confined to a chamber cannot see the objects without, but through the windows, therefore he cannot see at all, but through such a medium; and that when he is out of the chamber he has totally lost his sight.

\* Basil Seleuc. Orat. 2.

† *Mihi quidem nunquam persuaderi potuit animos dum in corporibus essent, mortalibus viveri, quum exissent ex his emori. Nec vero tum animum esse insipientem quum ex insipienti corpore evasisset, sed quum omni admissione corporis purus & integer esse cœpisset, tum esse sapientem. Cic. de Sen.*



## CHAP. IX.

The acts of the will considered. Its choice of things distasteful to sense, and sometimes destructive to the body, argue it to be a spiritual principle. The difference between man and brutes amplified. The spiritual operations of the soul may be performed by itself in a separate state. This is a strong proof God will continue it. The Platonic argument that man unites the two orders of natures, intelligent and sensible, immortal and perishing.

**T**HE acts of the will, that imperial faculty, prove it to be of a higher order of substances than the sensitive soul. The brutes are acted by pure necessity; their powers are moved and determined by the external application of objects. It is visible that all kinds of sensitive creatures in all times, are carried in the same manner by the potent sway of nature towards things suitable to their corporeal faculties. But the rational will is a principle of free election, that controuls the lower appetite, by restraining from the most pleasant and powerful allurements, and choosing sometimes the most distasteful things to sense. Now from whence arises this contention? If the rational will be not of a higher nature than the sensual appetite, why does it not consent with its inclinations? How comes the soul to mortify the most vehement desires of the body, a part so near in nature, so dear by affection, and so apt to resent an injury? And since it is most evident that sensitive creatures always with the utmost of their force defend their beings, from whence is it that the rational soul in some cases against the strongest recoil and reluctance of nature, exposes the body to death? If it depended on the body for subsistence it would use all means to preserve it. Upon the sight of contrary motions in an engine we conclude they are caused by diverse springs, and can such opposite desires in man proceed from the same principle?

If the rational soul be not of a sublimer order than the sensitive, it follows that men are beasts, and beasts are men. Now it is as impossible to be what they are not, as not to be what they are. But do the beasts reverence a divine power, and at

stated times perform acts of solemn worship? Is conscience the immediate rule of their actions? Will lectures of temperance, chastity, justice, arrest them in the eager pursuit of sensual satisfactions? Do they feel remorse in doing ill, and pleasure in doing well? Do they exercise the mind in the search of truth? Have they desires of a sublime intellectual good that the low sensual part cannot partake of? Have they a capacity of such an immense blessedness, that no finite object in its qualities and duration can satisfy? Ask the beasts, and they will tell you. Their actions declare the contrary. But the human soul has awful apprehensions of the Deity, distinguishes of things by their agreement or disconformity to his laws: its best and quickest pleasures, and most piercing wounding troubles, are from moral causes. What colour, what taste has virtue? Yet the purified soul is inflamed by the views of its most amiable, though not sensible beauty, and delighted in its sweetness. How often is it so ravished in contemplation of God, the great object of the rational powers, as to lose the desire and memory of all carnal things? What stronger argument and clearer proof can there be of its affinity with \* God, than that divine things are most suitable to it? For if the rational soul were of the same order with the sensitive, as it could not possibly conceive any being more excellent than what is corporeal, so it could only relish gross things wherein sense is conversant.

The sum of what has been discoursed of, is this, that by considering the different operations of man and of brutes, we may clearly discern the different powers of acting, wherewith the rational soul is endowed in the one, and the sensitive in the other. The soul in beasts performs no operations independent on the body, that serves it either as an instrument, or matter of their production: such are the use of the senses, nutrition, generation, all the internal work, and the preparing the phantasms, without which they would be far less serviceable to man. It is not strange therefore that it perishes with the body, there being no reason for its duration in a separate state, since it is fit only to act by the ministry of the body. But the soul of man, besides the operations that proceed from it as the form of the body it

\* Hoc igitur Argumentum habet Divinitatis sue, quod illum Divina delectant. Senec.

animates, such are all common to man with plants and animals, understands, discourses, reflects on itself, that are acts proper to its nature, and included in its true conception, whereby it is distinguished from that of brutes. Indeed the exercise of sensitive operations depends so absolutely on its union with the body, that they cannot be performed, nor conceived as possible, without its presence, and the use of corporeal organs. But the more excellent operations that proceed from the higher faculties, where-with it is endowed not as the form of a material being, but as a spiritual substance, such as subsist for ever without any communion with bodies, so entirely belong to it by the condition of nature, that for their production it is sufficient of itself. The understanding and will are angelical powers, and to know and will, and to be variously moved with pleasure or grief according to the qualities of objects suitable or disagreeing, are proper to those natures that have no alliance with bodies. It follows therefore, the soul, in its separate state, may contemplate, and delightfully enjoy intellectual objects, or torment itself with reflection on things contrary to its will: nay, it understands more clearly, and is affected more strongly than before. For these operations during its conjunction are not common to the body, but produced by it in the quality of a mind, and are then most vigorous and expedite, most noble and worthy of it, when the soul withdraws from all sensible things into itself, and is most raised above the manner of working that is proper and proportioned to the body. And from hence it is reasonable to conclude that it survives the body, not losing with it the most noble faculty, the mind, that is peculiar to it, nor the necessary instrument of using it. For as the universal providence of God supports the lower rank of creatures in their natural life, so long as their faculties are qualified for actions proper to that life, we may strongly argue that his conservative influence will not be withdrawn from the human soul that is apt and capable in its own nature to exist, and act in a separate state. In short, the understanding and elective powers declare its descent from \* the Father of spirits, whose image is engraven in its nature, not as in brittle glass, but an incorruptible diamond.

I shall add to the natural arguments an observation of the

\* Τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ ὁμοιότατον. *Plato.*

Platonists, that of all other philosophers approach nearest the truth in their discourses of God and the soul, of the majesty of the one, and the excellence of the other: they observe that the unity of the world is so closely combined in all its parts, the several beings that compose it, that between the superior and inferior species there are middle natures, wherein they meet, that no vacuum may interpose in the series of things. This is evident by considering that between inanimate bodies and living, insensible and sensible, there are some beings that partake of the extremes, and link them together, that the order of things not being interrupted, the mind by continual easy degrees may ascend from the lowest to the highest in perfection. And from this just and harmonious proportion that is proper to essences, the intelligible beauty and music of the world arises, that is so pleasing to the considering mind. Now what band is there to join the two ranks of beings intelligible and sensible, but man that partakes of sense, common with the beasts, and understanding to the angels. For this reason they give him the mysterious name of Horizon, the ending and union of the two hemispheres, the superior and inferior, the two orders of natures, immortal, and mortal, which shall perish.

## CHAP. X.

The moral arguments for the soul's immortality. The restless desire of the soul to an intellectual eternal happiness, argues it survives the body. The lower order of creatures obtain their perfection here. It reflects upon nature, if the more noble fails of its end. That wicked men would choose annihilation, is no proof against man's natural desires of immortality. The necessity of a future state of recompences for moral actions, proves the soul to be immortal. The wisdom of God, as governor of the world, requires there be rewards and punishments annexed to his laws. Eternal rewards are only powerful to make men obedient to them in this corrupt state. Human laws are no sufficient security of virtue, and restraint from vice.

2. **I** Will now consider the moral inducements to confirm our belief that God will preserve the soul in its being and activity hereafter. And of this we have sufficient evidence by internal light, the natural notions of the Deity, and by many visible testimonies in the order of his providence, and government of the world.

1. The restless desire of the soul to an intellectual and eternal felicity not attainable here, is a strong argument that it is reserved to a future state. The understanding is inclined to the knowledge of truth, the will to the fruition of goodness; and in what degree soever we discover the one, and enjoy the other in our present condition, we are not content. As one that is burnt up with such a thirst that only an ocean can quench, and has but a little stream to refresh him. God is the only satisfying object of the rational faculties; and here our conceptions of him are so imperfect, that we approach nearer the truth by denying what is inconsistent with his nature, than in affirming the proper perfections of it. And the communications of his love to us inflame the soul with new desires of fuller enjoyment. This desire of happiness is essential to man, as man. Now it is universally acknowledged that nature is not a vain principle, it produces no superfluous inclinations in any sort of creatures, much less in man, and in that which is most proper to him, and in order to the raising him to his perfection. The natural motion of a stone has a centre where to rest; plants arrive to their full

growth and beauty; the beasts have present satisfaction, and are happy animals. But man, in whom the two lower lives, and the intellectual are united, is here only in his way to happiness, his best endeavours are but imperfect essays towards it.

Now if the soul does not survive the body, and in a separate state obtain its desires, it will reflect upon nature for imprudence or malignity, in dealing worse with the most noble order of visible beings. The beasts excel man in the quickness and vivacity of the powers of sense, being their perfection, and in him subordinate faculties, and are more capable of pleasure from sensible things; and reason his eminent prerogative, makes him more liable to misery. For man ardently aspiring to a spiritual happiness, that here he cannot enjoy, much less hereafter if the soul perish, is under a remediless infelicity. His mind is deceived and stained with errors, his will tormented with fruitless longing after an impossible object. But if we unveil the face of nature, God appears (who is the author of our being, and of this desire so proper to it) and we cannot suspect, without the highest impiety, that he would make all men in vain, and deceive them by a false appearance. But he gives us in it a faithful pre-sage of things future and indiscernible to sense, to be enjoyed in immortality. This argument will be the more forceable if we consider that holy souls, who excel in knowledge and virtue, do most inflamedly long for the enjoyment of this pure felicity. And is it possible that the Creator should not only endow man with rational powers, but with virtues that exalt and enlarge their capacity to render him more miserable? To imagine that he cannot, or will not fully and eternally satisfy them, is equally injurious to his perfections. It therefore necessarily follows that the soul lives after death, and fully enjoys the happiness it earnestly desired whilst in the darkness of this earthly tabernacle.

Add further, that man alone of all creatures in the lower world understands and desires immortality. The conception of it is peculiar to his mind, and the desire of it as intrinsic to his nature as the desire of blessedness. For that blessedness that ends is no perfect blessedness, nor that which every one desires. Man alone feels and knows that his nature is capable of excellent perfections and joys. Now if he shall cease to be for ever, why is this knowledge and desire but to render him more unhappy, by grief for the present shortness of life, and by despair of a future

immortality? In this respect also the condition of the beasts would be better than of men. For though they are for ever deprived of life, yet they are incapable of regret, because they cannot by reflection know that they possess it, and are without the least imagination or desire of immortality. They are alive to the present, but dead to the future. By a favourable ignorance they pass into a state of not being, with as much indifference, as from watching to sleep, or from labour to repose. But to man that understands and values life and immortality, how dark and hideous are the thoughts of annihilation? Let him enjoy all possible delights to sense, or desirable to the powers of the soul, how will the sweetness of all be lost in the bitterness of that thought that he shall be deprived of them for ever? How frightful is the continual apprehension of an everlasting period to his being, and all enjoyments suitable to it? \* After that a prospect of eternity has been shown to him, how tormenting is the thought that he must die as the stupid ox, or the vilest vermin of the earth, and with him the fallacious instinct of nature that inclined him to the most durable happiness? If it were thus, O living image of the immortal God, thy condition is very miserable! † What the Romans wished in great anguish for the loss of Augustus, that he had not been born, or had not died, is more reasonable in this case: it were better that the desire of eternal life had not been born in man, or that it should be fulfilled. If it be objected that many men are not only without fear of annihilation, but desire it, therefore immortality is not such a privilege that the reasonable creature naturally aspires to. I answer; the inference is very preposterous, for the reason of their choice is, because they are attentive to an object infinitely more ‡ sad and afflictive, that is, a state of everlasting torments, which the guilty conscience presages to be the just recompence of their crimes. So that inclosed between two evils, an eternal state of not being, and an eternity of misery, it is reasonable to venture on the least, to escape the greater. But supposing any hopes of future happiness, they would desire immortality as an

\* *Mors ita terribilis, quorum cum vita omnia extinguuntur. Cic.*

† *Utinam aut non natus esses, aut non morereris.*

‡ *Plerosq; conscientia meritorum, nihil esse post mortem, magis optare, quam credere. Malunt enim extingui, quam ad supplicia reparari. M. Fel.*

excellent benefit. As one that has lost the pleasure and taste of life, by consuming sickness, and sharp pains, or some other great calamities, may be willing to die, but supposing a freedom from those evils, the desire of life as the most precious and dear enjoyment would strongly return. And that the desire of immortality is natural, I shall add one most visible testimony. For whereas the lower sort of creatures, that finally perish in death, are without the least knowledge of a future estate, and are therefore careless of leaving a memorial after them: on the contrary, men are solicitous to secure their names from oblivion, as conscious of their soul's surviving in another world. This ardent passion, not directed by higher principles, excites them to use all means, to obtain a kind of immortality from mortals. They reward historians, poets, orators, to celebrate their actions. They erect monuments of durable brass and marble, to represent the effigies of their faces: they endeavour by triumphal arches, pyramids, and other works of magnificence, to eternize their fame, to live in the eyes, and mouths, and memories of the living in all succeeding times. These indeed are vain shadows, yet argue the desire of immortality to be natural. As it is evident there is a natural affection in parents to preserve their children, because when they are deprived of their living presence, they dearly value and preserve their dead pictures, though but a poor consolation.

2. The necessity of a future state, wherein a just retribution shall be made of rewards and punishments to men according to their actions in this life, includes the soul's immortality. For the proof of this I shall lay down such things as certainly establish it.

1. The first argument is drawn from the wisdom of God in governing the reasonable world. In the quality of Creator he has a supreme title to man, and consequently is his rightful governor, and man his natural subject. Now man being endowed with free faculties, the powers of knowing and choosing, is under a law clearly impressed on his nature by the Author of it, that strictly forbids moral evil, and commands moral good. And to enforce the authority of this law, the wisdom of the law-giver, and the temper of the subject requires, that willing obedience should be attended with certain rewards, and voluntary disobedience with unavoidable punishments. For man being so



framed as to foresee the consequences of his actions, the inward springs of hope and fear work and govern him accordingly. And these necessary effects of virtue and vice must be so great, as may rationally induce man to reverence and observe the law of his Maker, in the presence of the strongest temptation to the contrary. Now if we consider man in this corrupt state, how averse from good, and inclined to evil, how weak his directive faculty, how disordered and turbulent his passions, how many pleasures are pressing on the senses, to precipitate his slippery disposition into a compliance, it is very evident, that besides the rules of morality, eternal reasons are necessary to preserve in him a dutiful respect to God. Take away the hopes and fears of things hereafter, what antidote is of force against the poison of inherent lusts? What can disarm the world of its allurements? How can man, void of innocence, and full of impurity, resist the delights of sin, when the inclinations from within, are as strong as temptations from without? How greedily will he pursue the advantages of this mortal condition, and strive to gratify all the sensual appetites? The Romans when the fear of \* Carthage, that aspired to a superiority in empire, was removed, presently degenerated from military valour and civil virtues, into softness and luxury. So if man were absolved from the fear of judgment to come, no restraint would be strong enough to bridle the impetuous resolutions of his depraved will. If there were no evil of punishment after death, there is no evil of sin but will be continued in till death. And man, who by nature is incomparably above, by vice would be incomparably beneath the beasts: insomuch as joining to their natural brutishness, the craft and malice of wit, he would become more monstrously (that is, designedly and freely) brutish. Now is it conceivable that God, to keep his subjects in order, should be constrained to allure them with a beautiful deceit, the promise of a heaven that has no reality, or to urge them by the feigned terrors of a hell, that is no where? This is inconsistent with his wisdom, and many other attributes.

If it be objected, That human laws are a sufficient security of virtue, and curb from vice.

\* *Remoto Carthaginis metu, sublataque Imperii æmula non tam gradu, sed præcipiti cursu a virtute descitum, ad vitia transversum est. Patere.*

I answer, This is apparently false : For,

(1.) Sovereign princes are exempted from temporal penalties, yet their faults are of the greatest malignity by the contagion of their examples, and the mischief of their effects. Their actions are more potent to govern than their laws. Innumerable perish by the imitation of their vices. Now to leave the highest rank of men unaccountable, would cause a great disorder in the conduct of the reasonable creature, and be a spot in the divine providence.

(2.) Many sins directly opposite to reason, and injurious to the divine honour, are not within the compass of civil laws. Such are some sins that immediately concern God, the disbelief and undervaluing his excellencies ; and some that immediately respect a man's self, as sloth, luxury, &c. And all vicious principles that secretly lodge in the heart, and infect it with deep pollutions, and many sins that break forth, of which the outward acts are not pernicious to the public.

(3.) Many eminent virtues are of a private nature, as humility, meekness, patience, a readiness to forgive, gratitude, for which there are no encouragements by civil laws ; so that they are but a weak instrument to preserve innocence, and restrain from evil.



## CHAP. XI.

The justice of God an infallible argument of future recompences. The natural notion of God includes justice in perfection. In this world sometimes virtue and vice are equally miserable. Sometimes vice is prosperous. Sometimes good men are in the worst condition. The dreadful consequences of denying a future state. God's absolute dominion over the reasonable creature, is regulated by his wisdom, and limited by his will. The essential beauty of holiness, with the pleasure that naturally results from good actions, and the native turpitude of sin, with the disturbance of the mind reflecting on it, are not the complete recompences that attend the good and the wicked.

2. **T**HE second argument arises from the divine goodness and justice. God as universal sovereign is supreme judge of the

world. For judicature being an essential part of royalty, these rights are inseparable. And the natural notion of the Deity includes justice in that perfection, as infinitely excels the most just governors on the earth. This gives us convincing evidence for recompences hereafter. For there is no way of proof more certain, than by such maxims as are acknowledged by all to be undoubtedly true by their own light. In the motives of intellectual assent, the mind must finally rest on some that are self-evident, without depending as to their clearness on any superior proof; and are therefore called first principles, the fountains of discourse. Now that God is most righteous and equal in his judgment, before whose throne man must appear, that he will by no means condemn the innocent, nor justify the guilty; that he is so pure and holy that he cannot suffer sin unrepented of, to go unpunished, is a prime truth, declared by the voice of nature. The weakest twilight of reason discerns the antipathy of this connexion, an unjust God indifferent to good or evil. Never any sect of idolaters formed such an unworthy deity, that was absolutely careless of virtue and vice, without distinguishing them in his affections and retributions: this were to debase him beneath the most unreasonable men, for there is none of such an impure mind, so perfect a despiser of moral goodness, but has some respect for virtue, and some abhorrence of vice in others, especially in their children. From hence it certainly follows, that as virtue and the reward, sin and the punishment, are allied in a direct line by a most wise constitution; so it is just that the effects should truly correspond with the quality of men's actions. If they reverence God's laws, it is most becoming his nature and relation to make them happy: if they abuse their liberty, and violate his commands, it is most righteous that they should feel the effects of their chosen wickedness. Now if we look only to things seen, we do not find such equal distributions as are suitable to the clear light wherewith God has irradiated the understanding of man, concerning his governing-justice.

1. Sometimes virtue and vice are equally miserable here. In common calamities is there a difference between the righteous and the wicked? Is there a peculiar antidote to secure them from pestilential infection? Or a strong retreat to defend them from the sword of a conquering enemy? Have they secret pro-

visions in times of famine? Are not the wheat and tares bound in a bundle and cast into the same fire.

2. Many times the most guilty offenders are not punished here. They not only escape the justice of men, by secrecy, by deceit or favour, by resistance or flight, but are under no conspicuous marks of God's justice. Nay, by wicked means they are prosperous and happy.

3. The best men are often in the worst condition, and merely upon the account of their goodness. They are oppressed because they do not make resistance, and loaden with sufferings, because they endure them with patience. They are for God's sake made the spectacles of extreme misery, whilst the insolent defiers of his majesty and laws enjoy all visible felicities. Now in the judgment of sense, can holiness be more afflicted if under the displeasure of heaven, or wickedness more prosperous if favoured by it? But this is such a monstrous incongruity, that unless we abolish the natural notions of the divine excellencies, it cannot in the least degree be admitted. If therefore we confine our thoughts to human affairs in this life, without taking a prospect into the next world, where a new order of things presents itself, what direful consequences will ensue? This takes away the sceptre of providence from the hands of God, and the reverence of God from the hearts of men, as if the present state, were a game wherein chance reigned, and not under the inspection and disposure of a wise, just and powerful governor. If there be no life after death, then natural religion in some of its greatest commands, as to self-denial, even to the suffering the greatest evils, rather than do any unjust, unworthy action, and to sacrifice life itself when the honour of God and the public good require it, is irreconcilable to that natural desire and duty, that binds and determines man to seek his own felicity in conjunction with the glory of his Maker. But it is impossible that the divine law should foil itself, that contrary obligations should be laid on man by the wise and holy lawgiver. And what terrible confusion would it be in the minds of the best men? What coldness of affection to God, as if they were not in the comfortable relation of his children, but wholly without his care? What discouragements in his service? What despair in suffering for him? What danger of their murmuring against providence, and casting off religion as a sour unprofitable severity, and saying, "Surely I have cleansed my heart

in vain, and washed my hands in innocency;" or exclaiming with Brutus in a desperate manner, when he was overcome in battle, and defeated of his design to recover Rome from tyranny; *O infelix Virtus! itane, cum nihil nisi nomen esses, ego te, tantam rem aliquam exercui?*

And the enemies to holiness restrained by no respects to a superior power, will obey their brutish lusts as their supreme law; and if such diseases or troubles happen that the pleasant operations of life cease, they may release themselves by a voluntary easy death, and fall into a sleep never to be disturbed; so that they would be esteemed the only happy persons.

In short, if we only regard things as they pass in the sensible world, we shall be in danger of being over-tempted to atheism, and to rob God of his glory and worship, and that faith, fear, love and obedience that are due to him. Of this I will produce only two examples. Diagoras saw a servant of his stealing from him, and upon his denial of the theft, brought him before the statue of Jupiter thundering, and constrained him to adjure Jupiter for the honour of his Deity, and of justice and fidelity, to strike him dead at his feet with thunder, if he were guilty of the fact, and after three times repeating the dreadful oath, he went away untouched without harm. Upon the sight of this Diagoras cried out, as in the Poet;

———*Audis*

*Jupiter hæc, nec labra moves, cum mittere vocem  
Debueras vel marmoreus, vel ahæneus? \**

———*Do'st hear*

*This Jove, not mov'st thy lips, when fit it were  
Thy brass or marble spoke?*

And whereas he should have been convinced that a statue could not be a god, he impiously concluded that God was nothing but a statue; and from that time was hardened in irreclaimable atheism. So that other † atheist reports of some of the Romans,

\* *Juvenal. Satyr. 13.*

† *Alii in ipso capitolio fallunt, & fulminantem pejerant Jovem; & nos scelera juvant. Plin. lib. 2.*

that they successfully deceived by false oaths, even in their most sacred temple in the presence of their supreme deity, the repugnant avenger of perjury. And because vengeance did not immediately overtake guilt, he acknowledged no other god but the world and nature, unconcerned in the governing human affairs. The disbelief of the future state strikes through the vital principles of religion, that there is a God, the rewarder of men's good or evil actions.

It may be objected, that God's dominion over the reasonable creature is absolute: for man owes to him entirely his being, and all that his faculties can produce, so that without reflection on justice, God may after a course of obedience, annihilate him.

To this I answer. The sovereign dominion of God in its exercise towards men is regulated by his wisdom, and limited by his will, that is holy, just, and good. Hence though the creature can challenge nothing from God as due to its service, yet there is a justice of condescence that arises from the excellencies of his own nature, and is perfectly consistent with the liberty of his essence, to bestow the eminent effects of his favours on his faithful servants. His holiness inclines him to love the image of it in the creature, and his goodness to reward it. His government is paternal, and sweetened by descending love in many favours and rewards to his obedient children. There is a resemblance of our duty to God, and his rewards to us in the order of nature among men. Parents may require of their children entire obedience, as being the second causes of their natural life. And children may expect from their parents what is requisite for their welfare. Now God, who is the father of men will be true to his own rules, and deal with them accordingly, but in a manner worthy of his infinite greatness. There is not the least obligation on him, but his unchangeable perfections are the strongest assurances, that none of his shall obey him to their final prejudice. It is a direct contrariety to his nature, that men for conscience of their duty should part with temporal happiness in hopes of eternal, and lose both.

It may be objected, that such is the essential beauty of holiness that it should ravish our affections without ornament or dowry, that it is its own reward, and produces such a sweet agreement in the rational faculties, as fully compensates the loss of all lower delights, and sweetens the troubles that befall a vir-

tuous man in the sincere practice of it. And on the contrary, that such is the native foul deformity of sin, as renders it most odious for itself, that it is its own punishment, being attended with inward disquiets and perplexities, much exceeding all its seeming pleasures. Therefore we cannot certainly infer there will be future recompences. But this receives a clearer answer.

1. It is true, that holiness is most amiable in itself, and in true comparison infinitely excels all the allurements of sin.

2. It is true, that as natural actions that are necessary to preserve the species or the individuals, are mixed with sensible pleasures, as an attractive to the performance of them; so there is joined to actions of virtue that are most excellent, a pleasant complacency of a superior order to all carnal pleasures. But it is a frigid conceit that this is the entire reward. For, first, besides the inward satisfaction that naturally results from the practice of virtue, there is an excellent good, that is properly the reward of the supreme governor of the world. We have an example of this in human justice, which is an image of the divine. For those who have been eminently serviceable to the state, besides the joyful sense arising from the performance of heroic actions for the good of their country, are rewarded by the prince with great honours and benefits.

3. This inward joy is not here felt by all holy persons. In this militant state, after vigorous resistance of carnal lusts, they may change their enemies, and be assaulted with violent fears, and instead of a sweet calm and serenity fall into darkness and confusion. The soul and body in the present conjunction mutually sympathize. As two things that are unisons, if one be touched and moves, the other untouched, yet moves, and trembles. The \* cause is from the vibration the sound makes in the air, and impresses on solid bodies, moving them according to the harmonious proportion between them. Thus the soul and the body are two strings tempered to such a correspondence, that if one be moved, the other resents by an impression from it. If the body be sanguine, or choleric, or melancholy, the soul by a strange consent feels the motion of the humours, and is altered with their alterations. Now some of excellent virtue are oppressed with melancholy. Others are under strong pains that dis-

\* *Tanta vis est convenientiæ, ut rem insensualem sponte se movere faciat, quia ejus sociam constat agitatam. Cassiodor.*

turb the free operations of the mind, that it cannot without supernatural strength delightfully contemplate what is a just matter of content. The stoical doctrine, that a wise man rejoices as well in torments, as in the midst of \* pleasures, that it is not in the power of any external evil to draw a sigh or tear from him, that he is sufficient in himself for happiness, is a philosophical romance of that severe sect, an excess unpracticable, without cordials of a higher nature than are compounded by the faint thoughts of having done what is agreeable to reason. All their maxims are weak supports of such triumphant language. It is true in a body disordered and broken with diseases and pains, the mind may be erect and composed, but it is by virtue of divine comforts from the present sense of God's favour, and the joyful hopes of eternal felicity in his presence hereafter.

4. Those who suffer the loss of all that is precious and dear in the world, and with a cheerful confidence submit to death, that, singly considered, is very terrible to nature, but attended with torments is doubly terrible, and all to advance the glory of God, cannot enjoy the satisfaction of mind that proceeds from the review of worthy actions, if their being is determined with their life. Now that love to God expressed in the hardest and noblest service should finally destroy a man, is not conceivable.

To render this argument more sensible, let us consider the vast multitude of the martyrs in the first times of christianity, more easy to be admired than numbered. It would be a history, to describe the instruments of their cruel sufferings, invented by the fierce wit of their persecutors, the various tortures to destroy life with a slow death, such as were never before inflicted on the guiltiest malefactors. All which they willingly endured, with an invariable serenity of countenance, the sign and effect of their inward peace; nay with triumphant expressions of joy. Now to what original shall we attribute this fortitude of spirit? Were such numbers of all conditions, ages, sects, induced by rash counsel, by frenzy of passion, by a desire of vain-glory, or any like cause, to part with all that is precious and amiable in the world, for swords, and fire, and crosses, and wheels, and racks, to torment and destroy their bodies? No human reasons, nei-

\* *Quare sapiens si in phalaridis tauro peruratur, exclamabit dulce est, ad me nihil pertinet, Senec.*



that the virtue nor vice of nature, generosity nor obstinacy could possibly give such strength under such torments. This was so evident, that many heathen spectators were convinced of the divine power miraculously supporting them, and became proselytes of christianity, and with admirable cheerfulness offered themselves to the same punishments. Now this is an extrinsic testimony incomparably more weighty than from a bare affirmation in words, or a mere consent of judgment, that there is an unseen state infinitely better, and more durable than what is present, the hopes of which made them esteem the parting with all sensible things, measured by time, not to have the shadow of a loss. And this was not a mere naked view of a future blessedness, but joined with an impression of that sweetness and strength, that consolation and force of spirit, that it was manifest, heaven descended to them, before they ascended to heaven. From hence they were fearless of those who could only kill the body, but not touch the soul. As the breaking a crystal in pieces cannot injure the light that penetrated and filled it, but releases it from that confinement. So the most violent death was in their esteem not hurtful to the soul, but the means to give it entrance into a happy immortality. Now is it any degree credible that when no other principle was sufficient to produce such courage in thousands, so tender and fearful by nature, that the divine hand did not support them, invisible in operation, but most clearly discovered in the effects? And can it be imagined that God would encourage them to lose the most valuable of all natural things, life itself, and to their great cost of pains and misery, if there were not an estate wherein he would reward their heroic love of himself, with a good that unspeakably transcends whatever is desirable here below?

Though vice in respect of its turpitude, be the truest dishonour of man, and be attended with regret, as contrary to his reason, yet there is a further punishment naturally due to it. Malefactors besides the infamy that cleaves to their crimes, and the secret twinges of conscience, feel the rigour of civil justice. And if no physical evil be inflicted as the just consequent of vice, the viciously inclined would despise the moral evil, that is essential to it, as an imaginary punishment. And when the remembrance of sin disturbs their rest, they would presently by pleasant diversions, call off their thoughts from sad objects.

Supposing no other punishment but what is the immediate effect of sin, the most vicious and guilty would many times suffer the least punishment. For the secret worm of conscience is most sensible, when vice is first springing up, and has tender roots. But when vicious habits are confirmed, the conscience is past feeling the first resentments. There are many instances of those who have made the foulest crimes so familiar as to lose the horror that naturally attends them. And many that have been prosperous in their villanies, die without tormenting reflections on their guilt. So that if there be no further punishments, we must deny the divine providence, of which justice is an eminent part.

## CHAP. XII.

Two arguments more to prove future recompences. It is not possible for civil justice to dispense rewards and punishments according to the good and evil actions of men. All nations agree in the acknowledgment of a future state. The innocent conscience is supported under an unjust sentence, by looking to the superior tribunal. The courage of *Socrates* in dying, with the cause of it. The guilty conscience terrifies with the apprehension of judgment to come. *Tiberius* his complaint to the senate of his inward tortures. An answer to the objection, that we have not sensible evidence of what is enjoyed, and what is suffered in the next life. Why sin, a transient act, is punished with eternal death.

IT is not possible for human justice to distribute recompence exactly according to the moral qualities of actions, therefore we may rationally infer there will be a future judgment. This appears by considering,

1. That many times those crimes are equally punished here, that are not of equal guilt: because they proceed from different sources, that lie so low as the strictest inquisition cannot discover. And many specious actions done for corrupt ends, and therefore without moral value, are equally rewarded with those wherein is the deepest tincture of virtue. The accounts of civil

justice are made by the most visible cause, not by the secret and most operative and influential. Therefore a superior tribunal is necessary, to which not only sensible actions, but their most inward principles are open, that will exactly judge of moral evils according to their aggravations and allays, and of moral good according to the various degrees that are truly rewardable.

2. No temporal benefits are the proper and complete reward of obedience to God. Not the proper; for they are common to bad and good: but the reward of holiness must be peculiar to it, that an eminent distinction be made between the obedient and rebellious to the divine laws, otherwise it will not answer the ends of government. And they are not the complete rewards of obedience. For God rewards his servants according to the infinite treasures of his goodness. The sensible world, a kingdom so vast, so rich, so delightful, is enjoyed by his enemies. We may therefore certainly infer he has reserved for his faithful servants a more excellent felicity, as becomes his glorious goodness.

3. The extremest temporal evils that can be inflicted here, are not correspondent to the guilt of sin. Men can only torment and kill the body, the instrument and less guilty part, but cannot immediately touch the soul, the principal cause, by whose influence human actions are vicious, and justly punishable. From hence it follows, that supposing the wicked should feel the utmost severity of civil laws, yet there remains in another world a dreadful array of misery to be endured as their just and full recompence.

In testimony of this truth, that the souls of men are immortal to rewards and punishments, not only the wisest men but all nations have subscribed. The darkest Pagans have acknowledged a Deity and a providence, and consequently a future judgment. Indeed this spark was almost drowned in an abyss of fables: for in explicating the process and recompences of the last judgment they mixed many absurd fictions with truth: but in different manners they acknowledged the same thing, that there remains another life, and two contrary states according to our actions here. Of this we have a perfect conviction from the immortal hopes in good men, and the endless fears in the wicked. The directive understanding that tells man his duty, has a reflexive power, and approves or condemns with respect to the supreme court, where it shall give a full testimony. Hence it is that con-

science so far as innocent, makes an apology against unjust charges, and sustains a man under the most cruel sentence, being persuaded of a superior tribunal that will rectify the errors of man's judgment: but when guilty, terrifies the offender with the flashes of judgment to come, though he may escape present sufferings. Of this double power of conscience I shall add some lively examples.

Plato represents his admirable Socrates after an unjust condemnation to death, in the prison at Athens encompassed with a noble circle of philosophers discoursing of the soul's immortality, and that having finished his arguments for it, he drank the cup of poison with \* an undisturbed courage, as one that did not lose but exchange this short and wretched life for a blessed and eternal. For thus he argued, that there are two ways of departing souls leading to two contrary states, of felicity and of misery, those who had defiled themselves with sensual vices, and given full scope to boundless lusts in their private conversation, or who by frauds and violence had been injurious to the commonwealth, are dragged to a place of torments, and for ever excluded from the joyful presence of the blessed society above. But those who had preserved themselves upright and chaste, and at the greatest distance possible from the contagion of the flesh, and had, during their union with human bodies, imitated the divine life, by an easy and open way returned to God from whom they came. And this was not the sense only of the more virtuous heathens, but even some of those who had done greatest force to the human nature, yet could not so darken their minds, and corrupt their wills, but there remained in them stinging apprehensions of punishment hereafter. Histories inform us of many tyrants that encompassed with the strongest guards have been affrighted with

\* Et quum pœne manu sua mortiferam teneret poculum, loquutus est, ut non ad mortem trudi, verum in cœlum videretur ascendere. Ita enim censebat, itaque disseruit, duas esse vias, duplicesq; cursus animorum e corpore excedentium. Nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminassent, & se totos libidinibus dedissent, quibus cæcati, vel domesticis vitiis & flagitiis se inquinassent, vel in republica violanda fraudes inexpiabiles concēpissent, his devium quoddam iter esset seclusum a concilio deorum. Qui autem se întegros castosque servassent, quibusque fuisset minima cum corporibus contagio, seque ab his semper sevocassent, essentq; in corporibus humanis vitam imitati deorum, his ad illos a quibus essent profecti facilem reditum patere. *Tull. de Socrat. lib. 1. Tusc. quest.*

the alarms of an accusing conscience, and seized on by inward terrors, the forerunners of hell, and in the midst of their luxurious stupifying pleasures have been haunted with an evil spirit, that all the music in the world could not charm. The persons executed by their commands were always in their view, showing their wounds, reproaching their cruelty, and citing them before the high and everlasting judge, the righteous avenger of innocent blood. How fain would they have killed them once more, and deprived them of that life they had in their memories? But that was beyond their power. Of this we have an eminent instance in \* Tiberius, who in a letter to the senate opened the inward wounds of his breast, with such words of despair, as might have moved pity in those who were under the continual fear of his tyranny. No punishment is so cruel as when the offender and executioner are the same person. Now that such peace and joy are the effects of conscious integrity, that such disquiets and fears arise from guilt, that incomparably exceed all that is sweet or afflicting in the world, is a convincing argument that the divine providence is concerned in the moral actions of men whether virtuous or wicked done here. That the righteous God has rewards and punishments infinitely above all the good and evil things of the present state; and consequently that the comforts of holy souls are the firstfruits of eternal happiness, and the terrors of the wicked, are the gradual beginnings of sorrows that shall never end.

Before I finish this discourse it will be requisite to answer two objections that infidels are ready to make.

1. They argue against the reality of future recompences; that they are invisible, and we have no testimony from others who know the truth of them by experience. As Alexander's soldiers after his victories in the east, refused to venture over the ocean with him for the conquest of other kingdoms beyond it, alledging, *facile ista finguntur quia oceanus navigari non potest*. The seas were so vast and dangerous that no ship could pass through them. Whoever returned that was there? Who has given testimony from his own sight of such rich and pleasant countries? Nothing can be more easily feigned that it is, than that of which

\* Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant, quin tormenta peccatoris suasque penas ipse fateretur. *Tacit.*

there can be no proof that it is not. And such is the language of infidelity: of all that undertook that endless voyage to another world, whoever came back through the immense ocean of the air to bring us news of such a happy paradise as to make us despise this world? Do they drink the waters of forgetfulness, so as to lose the memory of the earth and its inhabitants? If there were a place of endless torments of the millions of souls that every day depart from hence, would none return to give advice to his dear friends to prevent their misery? Or when they have taken that last step, is the precipice so steep that they cannot ascend hither? Or does the soul lose its wings that it cannot take so high a flight? These are idle fancies. And from hence they conclude, that none ever return, because they never come there, but finally perish in the dissolution of the body, and are lost in the abyss of nothing: when they cease to live with us, they are dead to themselves. And consequently they judge it a foolish bargain to part with what is present and certain for an uncertain futurity. Thus they make use of reason for this end, to persuade themselves that men are of the same nature with the beasts, without reason.

To this I answer:

(1.) Though the evidence of the future state be not equal to that of sense as to clearness, yet it is so convincing, even by natural light, that upon far less men form their judgments, and conduct their weightiest affairs in the world. To recapitulate briefly what has been amplified before; is there not a God the maker of the world? Is there no counsel of providence to govern it? No law of righteousness for the distinction of rewards? Are there not moral good and evil? Are reason, virtue, grace, names without truth, like chimæras of no real kind, the fancies of nature deceived and deceiving itself? Are they only wise among men, the only happy discoverers of that which is proper and best, and the *all* of man, who most degenerate to brutishness? Shall we judge of the truth of nature in any kind of beings, by the monsters in it? What generation of animals has any show of veneration of a deity, or a value for justice, either peace or remorse of conscience, or a natural desire of an intellectual happiness in life, and an eternal after death? Is there not even in the present state some experimental sense, some impressions in the hearts of men of the powers of the world to come?

These things are discernible to all unprejudiced minds. And can it be pretended that there is not a sufficient conviction that men and beasts do not equally perish?

(2.) There is a veil drawn over the eternal world for most wise reasons. If the glory of heaven were clear to sense, if the mouth of the bottomless-pit were open before men's eyes, there would be no place for faith, and obedience would not be the effect of choice but necessity, and consequently there would be no visible discrimination made between the holy and the wicked. The violent inclinations to sin would be stopt as to the act, without an inward real change of the heart. If the blasphemer, or false swearer were presently struck dumb, if the drunkard should never recover his understanding, if the unclean wretch should immediately be consumed by a hidden fire, or his sinning flesh putrefy and rot away; if for every vice of the mind, some disease that resembles it in the body were speedily inflicted as a just punishment, the world indeed would not be so full of all kinds of wickedness, so contagious, and of such incurable malignity. But though in appearance it would be less vicious, yet in truth and reality not more virtuous. For such a kind of goodness, or rather not guiltiness of the outward sinful act, would proceed not from a divine principle, a free spirit of love to God and holiness, but from a low affection, mere servile fear of vengeance. And love to sin is consistent with such an abstinence from it. As a merchant that in a tempest is forced to cast his goods into the sea, not because he hates them, for he throws his heart after, but to escape drowning. Now that the real difference between the godly and the impious, the just and unjust, the sober and intemperate may appear, God affords to men such evidence of future things that may satisfy an impartial considering person, and be a sure defence against temptations that infect and inchant the careless mind, and pervert the will, to make a foolish choice of things next the senses for happiness. Yet this evidence is not so clear, but a corrupt heart may by a secret, but effectual influence, darken the understanding, and make it averse from the belief of unseen things, and strongly turn it from serious pondering those terrible truths that control the carnal desires.

(3.) How preposterous is this inference? Departed souls never return, therefore they have no existence, therefore we are

but a breath of wind that only so long remains in being, as it blows; a shadow that is only whilst it appears; let our hours then that are but few, be filled with pleasures; let us enjoy the present, regardless of hereafter, that does not expect us. Philosophy worthy of brutes! But prudence will conclude if the condition of souls that go hence be immutable, and in that place where they arrive, they must be for ever, it should be our chiefest care to direct them well: if upon our entrance into the next world eternity shuts the door upon us, and the happiness and misery of it is not measured by time, but the one excludes all fear, the other all hope of change, it is necessary to govern all our actions with a final respect to that state. This is to discourse as a man according to the principles of right reason.

2. If it be objected that it seems hard that a transient sin should be punished with eternal torments: a clear and just answer may be given.

This conceit in men proceeds from a superficial deceitful view of sin in the disguises of a temptation as it flatters the senses, without a sincere distinct reflection on its essential malignity. From hence they judge of their sins, as light spots, inevitable accidents, lapses that cannot be prevented by human frailty, errors excusable by common practice. Thus the subtlety of Satan joined with the folly of men represents great sins as small, and small as none at all, to undervalue and extenuate some, and to give full license and warrant to others. And thus deceived, they are ready to think it disagreeing to the divine goodness to punish sin so severely as it is threatened. But did they with intent and feeling thoughts look through the pleasing surface into the intrinsic evil of sin, as it is rebellion against God, and the progeny of a will corrupted by its own perverseness and pernicious habits; they would be convinced, that God acts in a manner worthy of his nature, in the ordaining and inflicting eternal punishment on impenitent sinners. And it is observable that most dangerous effects follow by separating these two in the minds of men. For if they consider eternal death without respect to the merit of sin, they easily conceive of God as incompassionate, an enemy to his creature, that is pleased with its misery. And such fearful conceits, such black melancholy vapours congeal the heart and stupify its active powers, and cause a desperate neglect of our duties, as if God would not accept our



sincere endeavours to please him. But if on the other side, they regard their sins abstracted from the dreadful punishment that ensues, they form the notion of a deity soft and careless, little moved with their faults, easy and indulgent to pardon them. Thus, the sensual presummer becomes secure and incorrigible in his wickedness. But we must consider these two objects as most strictly joined; the judgment of God with respect to sin that always precedes it, and sin with respect to the punishment that follows it, in the infallible order of divine justice. And thus we shall conceive of God becoming his perfections; that he is gracious and merciful, and loves the work of his hands; but that he is holy and just, and hates sin infinitely more than men love it. These are the two principal ideas we should form of God, with respect to his moral government, and are mainly influential on his subject. For the correspondent affections in us to those attributes, are a reverend love of his goodness and tender apprehension of his displeasure, the powerful motives to induce us to the practice of holiness, and avert us from sin.

Now that the divine law is not hard in its sanction, forbidding sin upon the pain of eternal death, will appear by a due representation of the essential evil of sin. This is discovered by considering.

(1.) The glorious object against whom it is committed. It is a rule universally acknowledged, that from the quality of the person offended, the measure and weight is taken of the offence. Now as the nature and perfections of God, so his dignity and majesty is infinite, and from hence the transcendent guilt of sin arises. The *formalis ratio* of sin is disobedience to the divine law, and the least breach of it, even a vain thought, an idle word, an unprofitable action, is in its proper nature a rebellious contempt of the authority of the wise and holy Law-giver. Now that a poor worm should dare to rebel against the Lord of heaven and earth, and if it were possible dethrone him, what understanding can conceive the vastness of its guilt? No finite sufferings in what degree soever are equal reparation for the offence. After the revolution of millions of years in a state of misery the sinner cannot plead for a release; because he has not made full payment for his fault, the rights of justice are not satisfied.

If it be objected, that this will infer an equality between all sins.

I answer, Though there is a great disparity in sins with respect to their immediate causes, circumstances, complicated nature and quality, by which some have a more odious turpitude adhering to them, yet they all agree in the general nature of sin, relating to the law of God, and consequently in their order to eternal death. The least disobedience has as truly the formality of sin, as what is so in the supreme degree. This may be illustrated by a comparison. As the parts of the world compared with one another, are of different elevation and greatness; the earth and water are in the lowest place, and but as a point to the celestial orbs, that are above the highest regions of the air; yet if we compare them with that infinite space that is without the circumference of the heavens, they are equally distant from the utmost extent of it, and equally disproportioned to its immensity. For greater or less, higher or lower, are no approaches to what is infinite. Thus there are several degrees of malignity in sins, compared one with another, but as they are injurious to the infinite and incomprehensible majesty of God, there is the same kind of malignity, and so far an equality between them. Rebellion in the least instance, is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness in the smallest matters, is as idolatry; that is, the least sin is as truly repugnant to the divine law, as those that in the highest manner are opposite to the truth and glory of the Deity. And from hence their proportion to punishment is not distinguished by temporal and eternal, but by stronger or remissier degrees of torment, by suffering the rods or scorpions of justice in that endless duration.

It is a vain excuse to say that God can receive no hurt by sin, as will appear in a case of infinitely a lower nature. The counterfeiting of the broad-seal does no hurt to the person of the king, but it is injurious to his honour and government, and the offender incurs the guilt of high-treason, and is punished accordingly.

(2.) Consider man's relation to God as the creator and preserver, who gives him life and innumerable benefits, who confers on him the most shining marks of his favour, and this unspeakably enhances the guilt of sin against God, by adding ingratitude to rebellion, the abuse of his goodness, to the ignominious affront of his majesty. The degrees of guilt arise in proportion to his duty and obligations. For man then to turn enemy against his

father and sovereign, to deprave and pervert his gifts, to deface his image, to obscure his glory, justly provokes his extreme anger. If in the judgment of mankind some heinous offenders, as parricides, the assassins of kings, the betrayers of their country, contract so great a guilt as exceeds the most exquisite torments that the criminal can endure, and no less than death, that for ever deprives of all that is valuable and pleasant in this natural life, is an equal punishment to it; what temporal sufferings can expiate sin against God? For besides the transcendent excellence of his nature, infinitely raised above all other beings, there are united in him in an incomparable degree, all the rights that are inherent in our parents, princes, or country, for benefits received from them. And may he not then justly deprive ungracious rebels for ever of the comforts of his reviving presence?

(3.) The necessity of eternal recompences to excite a constant fear in men of offending God, makes the justice of them visible. For (as it has been proved before) whilst they are clothed with flesh and blood, the disposition inclining from within, and the temptation urging from without, if the punishment of sin were not far more terrible than the pleasures of it are alluring, there would be no effectual restraint upon the riots of the carnal appetite. Now if civil justice, for the preservation of society, wisely decrees such penalties for offences as are requisite to maintain the honour of laws that are founded in equity, either by preventing, or by repairing the injury done to them; is it not most righteous that the supreme Lord of the world should secure obedience to his most holy laws, by annexing such penalties as are necessary to induce a reverence of them in his subjects, and to execute the sentence in full severity upon presumptuous transgressors? Without this the divine government would be dissolved.

(4.) Eternal life, and eternal death are set before men, to encourage them to obedience, and deter them from sin, so that none dies but for wilful impenitence. And can there be the least aspersion of unjust rigour cast on God's proceedings in judgment? If it be said, it is so contrary to the most inviolable inclinations of nature, that no man can choose his own destruction: to that a full answer may be given, it is true man cannot divest reason and sense so as to choose directly and intentionally eternal misery, but virtually and by consequence he does. For the deliberate

choice of sin as pleasant or profitable, though damnable in the issue, is by just interpretation a choosing of the punishment that attends it. And to make it clear, that sinners are in love with perishing, let us consider.

1. The inestimable reward of obedience they refuse. It is a felicity worth as much as the enjoyment of God himself, and as durable as eternity. Now what is put in the balance against heaven? "Only this world that passes away with the lusts thereof." And it argues a violent propension in the will to carnal things, when the little fleeting pleasures of sense (how empty, how vanishing!) outweigh in the competition the substantial everlasting blessedness of the spirit. And what a vile contempt is it of the perfections of God, that such base things, such trifling temptations should be chosen before him? Were it not visibly true, reason would deny the possibility of it. It is as if the wife of a prince should prefer in her affections before him a diseased deformed slave. Or, as if one should choose the food of beasts, hay, acorns, or carrion, before the provisions of a royal table. This is no hyperbole, no exaggeration: but the reality, infinitely exceeds all figures. And is it not perfectly reasonable that sinners should inherit their own option?

2. This rejecting of eternal life by sinners, is peremptory against the best and often renewed means to induce them to accept of it. They are allured by the sweetest mercies, urged by the strongest terrors, to forsake their beloved lusts and be happy. And "till the riches of goodness and forbearance are despised," they are not past hopes. For though the sentence of the law be decisive upon the first act of sin, yet it is not irrevocable but upon impenitence in it. But when sin has such an absolute empire in the will, that no obligations, no invitations can prevail with it, it is manifest, that obstinacy is an ingredient in the refusal of heaven. And is it not most just that an obstinate aversion from God should be punished with an everlasting exclusion from his glory? This will clearly vindicate divine justice, and render sinners excuseless in the day of accounts. God will overcome when he judges, and every mouth be stopped. This will be a fiery addition to their misery, and feed the never-dying worm. For by reflecting upon what they have irrevocably lost, and what they must for ever suffer, and that by their own wretched choice, the awakened conscience turns the most cruel fiend against itself.

“In hell there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Extreme misery, and extreme fury, despair and rage, are the true characters of damnation.

(5.) The defilement contracted by sins in the present life, cleaves to him that dies in his sins for ever. An habitual pravity possesses the soul, and expresses itself in direful blasphemies against the righteous Judge. And are not such polluted wretches for ever unworthy of the favour of God, and communion with him? Is it not most reasonable, the justice of God, should continue in its terrible effects, as long as the injustice of man remains invincible. *Æquum est, ut is qui nunquam desinit esse malus, nunquam desinat esse miser.*



## CHAP. XIII.

What influence the doctrine of the future state should have upon our practice. It must regulate our esteem of present things, And reconcile our affections to any condition here, so far as it may be an advantage to prepare us for the better world. The chiefest care is due to the immortal part. The just value of time, and how it should be improved. It is the best wisdom to govern our whole course of life here, with regard to eternity that expects us.

**I** WILL now briefly show what influence this principle of natural religion should have on our practice. It is not a matter of pure speculation, but infinitely concerns all. For whatever inequality there is between men with respect to temporal accidents in the present state, yet there is no difference with regard to things future. Their souls are equally immortal, and capable of the same blessedness, and liable to the same misery. It is most necessary therefore to reflect upon what so nearly touches us.

If the eternal state hereafter were not an infallible truth, but only a probable opinion, and the arguments for and against it were so equal, that the understanding remained in suspence, yet

the importance is so vast, either to enjoy for ever the clear vision of God, or to be cast into an everlasting hell, that prudence requires all possible diligence in whatever is necessary, to obtain the one, and escape the other. But this doctrine is not merely within the terms of probability, but is clear by irrefutable evidence. And if those profane miscreants who endeavour by frigid raileries to expose the serious care of salvation to scorn, and by trifling arguments would fain weaken their assent to this great truth, had not lost the human property of blushing, they would be covered with confusion, whilst they contradict not only what the wisest and best men have unanswerably proved, but what their very opposition confirms. For the doubting of the soul's immortality, is a strong argument that it is immortal. Because, only a spiritual being, and therefore not liable to dissolution and death, is capable of reflecting whether it shall continue for ever.

It does not require subtilty of wit, or strength of reason to draw out the proper uses of this doctrine, as gold from the mines by digging into the bowels of the earth; but the consequences are clear and sensible to all that will duly consider things. If in the next world there are good things and evil things, great as the possessing or losing an infinite felicity, and lasting as eternity, and distant from us no farther than death is from life, that is, than a lighted candle from being blown out that is exposed to all the winds, it is absolutely necessary to regulate ourselves in the present state by a continual respect to the future. - As the travellers in the desert of Arabia (that is all sand, moveable by every blast, so that no visible path remains to prevent their wanderings) observe the stars to direct them in their journey to the place they intend. "Thus we must look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen, eternal above, to conduct us safely through this material mutable world to felicity. More particularly,

1. This should regulate our judgment of all temporal things. Worldly happiness is but a picture, that seen by sense, the false light of the present time has an alluring appearance, but if looked on by faith, the true light of eternity, it is discovered to be a disfigured and unamiable confusion of spots. This unbinds the charm, and discovers the vanity and illusion of whatever is admirable in the eyes of flesh. Can any carry the least mark of honour, one farthing of their treasures, any shadow of their beauty,

one drop of their pleasure with them to another world? As in the night all colours are the same, the crimson cannot be distinguished from black, nor purple from green: when the light is withdrawn that gave them life, they cease to be visible, and are buried in the same indifferent obscurity. So in the state after death, the most remarkable differences of this world are no more. And is that worthy of our esteem that attends us for a little time, and leaves us for ever? Can that be our happiness that when we die and cease to be mortal, ceases to be ours? If man did only live to die, and there were an absolute end of him, present things were more valuable in the quality of an earthly felicity, as being his all; but if he die and live in another world, and all that in the language of the earth (full of improprieties and mortal Solecisms) we call ours, must be left at the gates of death, the entrance of eternity, they cannot be the materials of our happiness.

Seneca, contemplating the beauty and greatness of those orbs of light above, cast down his eyes to find out the earth hardly visible at that distance, and breaks forth into a philosophical disdain: is it this to which the great designs and vast desires of men are confined? Is it for this there is such disturbance of nations, wars, and shedding of blood? O folly, O fury of deceived men! to imagine great kingdoms in the compass of an atom, to raise armies to divide a point of earth with their swords! It is just as if the ants should conceive a field to be several kingdoms, and fiercely contend to enlarge their borders, and celebrate a triumph in gaining a foot of earth, as a new province to their empire. And from hence he excites men to ascend in their thoughts, and take an intellectual possession of the material heavens, as most worthy of their minds. \* But the soul that raised by faith looks beyond the starry heavens, how much more justly is it filled with noble wonder at the divine and truly great things in the spiritual world, and looks down on the lower scene of things, and all that has the name of felicity here, as sordid and vile? The foresight that within a little while this world shall be dissolved, and time shall be no more, makes it not seem to be in the eyes of a believer that great thing, as it is represented to the rest of men. He looks upon those who shine in pomp, and flow in pleasure, and

\* *Sursum ingentia spatia in quorum possessionem animus admittitur.*

think themselves happy, to be as a beggar in a dream, that thinks himself rich in treasures: for present things are only coloured with the appearance of felicity, and are as vanishing as the fictions of fancy. While carnal men will believe nothing but what they see, feel and enjoy by their senses, and embrace mere shadows as solid felicity, he considers them with compassion. For it is with them, as with one that in the rage of a fever, laughs, sings, triumphs. Tell him that he is not himself, he thinks you are mad for saying so. Tell him when his fiery spirits shall be wasted, and that heat of blood that makes him so lively and strong, shall decline and cool, he will be in extreme danger of death; he replies he was never in better health. But who envies him that happiness which he seems to enjoy? None but one that is a mad-man like him. Nay, a father, a brother, a friend look on him with a mourning eye and heart: for he is only happy in his own conceit, and that conceit proceeds from his distraction. Thus the power of truth is victorious in sober men, and does not suffer them to be cheated with the false show of goods that respects the body. No credit is given to the appearance of sense, when reason discerns the deception, and judges otherwise. And thus the clear infallible light of faith directs the judgment of things present with respect to the eternal interest of the soul. This makes a believer prefer severe wisdom before the sweetest follies, unpleasing truth before all the dear deceits of sensual persons.

In short, faith removes the thick curtain of sensible things, that intercepted the eye of the mind, and its first effect is to show the incomparable disproportion between what is present and what is future: and this is as great as between the living of a few years, and an incorruptible state; between the wretched enjoyment of things that cannot satisfy the senses, and the enjoyment of an universal good that can fill all the desires of the soul; as between an inch of time and entire eternity; between nothing masked with a false appearance, and infinite felicity.

2. The consideration of the soul's immortality should reconcile our affection to all things that may befall us here, so far as they are preparatory for our well-being in the future state. The original principle from whence are derived all rules for practice, and of main influence upon our comforts is, that man is created for a supernatural happiness hereafter, and that present things



are to be chosen or refused with respect to our obtaining of it. For the means, whatever they are in their absolute nature, yet considered as such in order to an end, are qualified and become either good or evil, as conducive to it, or unprofitable, and prejudicial. A way that is thorny, or dirty, or steep, or stony, is good if it leads me to my country where I can only live happily. On the contrary, a plain flowery carpet way is bad, that leads me from it. Now since the present life conveys us to another, poverty or riches, sickness or health, splendour of name or obscurity, an high or a low condition become good or evil to us, and accordingly are eligible, as they prepare us for our last and blessed end, or divert us from it. If the clearness of this principle be obscured, we shall stumble every step, and wander from the way of life. But duly considered, it makes us judge of things as they are, not as they appear. This unravels the doubts of the entangled mind, corrects the mistakes of the erring eye, levels the greatest difficulties, clears all the objections against providence, and makes an afflicted state not only tolerable, but so far amiable as it promotes our supreme happiness. Let us consider the two worlds, the visible wherein we are, and the invisible, to which we are going, and impartially compare what is proper to the one and the other; the present and the future, the sensible and divine, the apparent and real, the transitory and perpetual happiness. And what reference these two worlds have to man, the one serves him only as a passage, the other is his ever-blessed country. Therefore whatever the present state has of sweet or bitter, whatever is desired or feared, as it passes with time, should little move us. Who is there, unless disordered in his mind, that when the sun is present in its full lustre before his eyes, rejoices to have, or is sorry that he has not a candle, that he may see more clearly? And this life to eternity is not so much as a spark of light to the sun, and accordingly the prosperity or adversity of it should not transport us to an excess of joy or sorrow, but with an equal temper of mind, and calm affections, we should receive the dispensations of providence.

3. How just is it that the soul should have the pre-eminence in all respects above the body. The one is the fading offspring of the earth, the other of an heavenly extraction, and incorruptible nature. When \* Phereides the Assyrian first taught among

\* *Quis nunc extremus idiota, vel quæ subjecta muliercula non credit animæ*

the Grecians the doctrine of the soul's immortality, his discourse so prevailed on Pythagoras of Samos, that it changed him from an *Athleta* into a philosopher. He that before wholly attended upon his body to make it excel in strength or agility, that he might contend victoriously in the olympic games, then made it his business to improve and advance his soul in knowledge and virtue. And if the glimmering appearances of this great truth were so powerful upon him, how much more should the clear and certain discoveries of it be operative to make us chiefly regard the interest of our immortal part.

The state of nature requires, that reason should have the supremacy in man, and sense should obey; but if the lower part tyrannizes over the superior, and that which was so offensive to Solomon, to see servants on horseback, and princes walking on foot, be verified in a more ignoble sense, it is the greatest degeneracy and vilification of the human nature. Now the predominant object discovers what is the ruling faculty. If sensual things have the superior esteem and love, sense reigns. And what a contumely is it to man, when the understanding, that was made to contemplate objects of a spiritual sublime nature, is principally exercised for the acquiring of earthly things, and the affections that are capable of enjoying heavenly delights, run with a full stream in the channels of concupiscence. As if the reasonable soul were not for higher ends than to be the slave of the body, to be employed to digest the confused chaos of meats and drinks wherewith it is filled to give it a quicker perception of its pleasures, and keep it from corruption for a time. If sensual wretches could obtain what the unclean spirits desired of our Saviour, when dispossessed of the man in the gospel, they would request in their last hour when they are ready to be cast out of the body, permission to enter into the swine, and wallow in mire and filthiness. This is an indignity equally dishonourable and pernicious. As it was said of Caligula, *Nec servum meliorem, nec deteriorem dominum*, while a subject none more obedient, but when advanced to the throne he became the reproach of the empire, and plague of the world: so while the body obeys the sanc-

immortalitatem? Quod apud Græcos olim primus Pherecides Assyrius cum disputasset, Pythagoram Samium illius disputationis novitate permotum, ex *Athleta* in philosophum convertit. Nunc vero quæd ait maro, *Amomum Assyrium* vulgo nascitur, *Aug. Ep. ad. Vol.*

tity and sovereignty of the mind, it is an useful instrument, but if it usurp the government, the spirit is depressed in the most ignominious captivity, and man becomes like the beasts that perish. Briefly, the common fountains of temptation are pleasure and pain that affect the outward senses, and till the soul has an established dominion over the body, it is continually exposed to ruin by fleshly lusts that war against it.

The proper business of man is to purify his spirit from all pollutions, to adorn it with all graces in order to its everlasting communion with the Father of spirits. And though in this state of union with flesh, he cannot be always contemplative, nor exercised in the highest and noblest work, but must relax his intense thoughts by refreshing intermissions, yet all that is allowed the body, must be only to make it more ready and disposed for the service of the mind. But alas! the soul that should be incomparably dearest to us, in respect of its preciousness and danger, is neglected, as the only despicable or safe thing belonging to us: Of the twenty-four hours in the day, how much is wasted on the body, how little is given to the soul? As if all the time were lost that is spent on it, when it is truly gained. What an unequal division is this? Can there be imagined a more hurtful and monstrous profuseness, and covetousness in the same persons? If the body be shaken with diseases, what are they not willing to do, or patiently to suffer, to recover lost health? Long and rigorous diets to overcome some obstinate humours, potions distasteful to the palate, and painful to the stomach, sweatings, bleeding, the knife and the fire, to cut off the gangrened part, and sear the vessels, and many more sharp remedies it is counted prudence to suffer, to preserve the life of the body. And can that be preserved always? No. All this is done not to escape, but to delay death for a time. If we are so solicitous that the mortal body may die a little later, shall we not be more diligent and careful that the immortal soul may not die for ever?

4. This should make us set a just value upon time, and consecrate it to those things that are preparatory for the future state of blessedness. Indeed the present life, though spun out to the utmost date, how short and vain is it? But as it is the price of eternity, and our well-being hereafter depends upon it, it is

above all esteem precious. When \* Popilius by order of the Roman senate, required Antiochus to withdraw his army from the king of Egypt, and he desired time to deliberate upon it, the Roman drew a circle with his wand about him, and said, *In hoc stans delibera*, give a present answer before you move out. Thus eternity, whose proper emblem is a circle, a figure without end, presents to us life and death, that after a short time expects all men, and here we must make our choice. And shall a mortal coldness possess us in an affair of such importance? We cannot so fast repair the ruins of the body, but that every day death makes nearer approaches, and takes away some spoils that cannot be recovered, and will shortly force the soul to leave its habitation; and shall we not secure a retreat for it in the sanctuary of life and immortality?

Can any make a covenant with death? Is it to be overcome by the strength of the young, or appeased by the tears and supplications of the old? It is equally invincible and inexorable. The greenest age is ripe for dying; the fruit that does not fall is plucked and gathered. Every one is under the same sentence, and so far equally disposed to die. None can assure himself the continuance of a day, and shall we be desperately careless of our main concernment? Shall we waste this invaluable treasure in idleness, or actions worse than idleness? Shall we spend it to purchase transient vanities? The gaining the whole world is not worth the expence of this light of life. It was given us for more excellent ends, to work out our own salvation, to secure our everlasting interest. How should we redeem every hour, and live for heaven? This is our chief and indispensable affair, and the neglect of it for a day, is of infinite hazard. Our season is short, our omission irreparable. If we could clip the wings of time, and stop its flight, there might be some pretence for delay; but the sun drives on apace, we cannot bid it stand still one hour. † Our diligence in improving time should be equal to its swift motion. We should speedily draw from it what is necessary, as from a rapid torrent that will quickly be dried up.

It was a wise answer to one that asked why the ‡ Lacedemo-

\* Liv.

† Cum celeritate temporis utendi velocitate certandum: tanquam ex torrente rapido, nec semper, casuro cito hauriendum est. *Sensc. de brevitt. vit.*

‡ Plut. Apoth.

nians were so slow in passing capital judgments ; why so many examinations taken, so many defences permitted to the accused ; and after conviction and sentence, such a space of time before execution ? The reason of it is, because an error in that case is incorrigible. They might kill the living, but could not revive the dead. Now, since after death is inflicted on the guilty soul it is lost for ever, how should it stop men in the voluntary and precipitate condemnation of themselves, by the wilful rejecting of the grace that is offered to them upon their present acceptance ?

To draw to an end ; it follows from what has been discoursed, that it is the most necessary and highest point of wisdom, to conduct our lives with a respect to the tribunal above, that will pass a righteous and unchangeable sentence upon men for all the good and evil done here. The consequence is so manifest and palpable that nothing but perfect madness can deny. If there be a spark of reason, a grain of faith, the mind must assent to it. For if prudence consist in the choice and use of means to procure the good we want, and in preventing the evil we justly fear, certainly according as the good is more noble and difficult, or the evil more dangerous and destructive, the more eminent is the wisdom in obtaining our end. Now what is the chief good to which all our desires should turn, and our endeavours aspire ? What are crowns, sceptres, robes of state, splendour of jewels, treasures, or whatever the earth has in any kind or degrees of good ? They are only the little entertainments of the body, the viler part of man : but the perfect and perpetual fruition of God, is the blessedness of the soul, and infinitely excels the other. And proportionably it is not the loss of temporal things that is the greatest evil, but the losing heaven and the immortal soul is above all degrees of valuation. Now it is strange to amazement, that those who profess to believe these things should live in a constant opposition to their belief. How vigorously do they prosecute their secular designs ? They build estates, and make provisions *tanquam semper victuri*, as if they were \* eternal inhabitants here. But how remiss and cold are they in order to heaven, and to escape the wrath to come ? Libertines are uniform and regular according to their principles ; they are infidels,

\* *Omnia tanquam mortale stimetis : Omnia tanquam immortales concupiscitis. Sen. de. brev. vit.*

and live as infidels. There is no contradiction between their thoughts and actions. The remembrance of death rather inflames than checks their appetites to sinful pleasures; as the sprinkling water does not quench the fire, but makes it more fierce. They know they shall continue here but a short time, and resolve to make the best of it for carnal purposes. But infinite numbers of those who in title are citizens of another world, and declare their belief of a future state, yet are as careless to prepare for it, as if the great judgment, and the dreadful eternity that follows, were romantic fables. They are believers in their minds, and infidels in their lives. From whence comes this monstrous composition of two extremes, so contrary and difficult to be united, as the sun and darkness, or fire, and water in their actual forms? For men to believe there is a heaven, and to be in love with the earth; to believe an everlasting hell shall be the reward of sin, and yet to go on in sin? O the sottish folly of men! What enticing sorcery perverts them? Is it because temporal things are sensible, and present, and eternal things are spiritual and future? But how graceless and irrational is this? Has not the soul perceptive faculties as well as the body? Are not its objects transcendently more excellent? Is not its union with them more intimate and ravishing? Must the sensual appetites be heard before reason, and the soul be unnaturally set below the respects of the body? If the most splendid temptations of the flesh are but dross to the happiness of the spirit, is it not true wisdom to distinguish and despise them in the comparison? For this end God has placed us in the world, that with equal judgment we may balance things, and preferring the great and solid good before a vain appearance, our choice may be unconstrained, and his mercy take its rise to reward us. And how foolish is it to neglect eternal things because they are future? Is it not a common complaint that life is short, that it flies away in a breath? And if death be so near, can eternity be so distant? Besides, do men want an understanding to foresee things to come? In their projects for this world, how quick-sighted and provident are they, to discover all probable inconveniences afar off, and lay the scene to avoid them? And is reason only useful in the affairs of the body, and must sense, that cannot see an hands-breadth beyond the present, be the guide of the soul? Well, though the most powerful reasons, the most

ardent exhortations, and stinging reprehensions cannot prevail with the sons of the earth now to be apprehensive of the evils that threaten them, but they live in a blind manner regardless of the soul, yet in a little while extremities will compel them to open their eyes. When they are departing hence, with one foot upon the brink of time, and the other lifted up to enter eternity, how will they be astonished to see the distance between this world and the next, which seemed to them so wide, to be but one step? The present life, that in their imaginations would never end, and the future, that would never begin, (so intent were they for the provisions of the one, and neglectful of the other) behold the one is gone, and the other come. Time is at their back with all its vanities, and eternity before their faces with its great realities. How are their thoughts and discourses changed in that terrible hour, that will decide their states for ever? They did foolishly for themselves, but then speak wisely for the instruction of others. How piercing and quick are their apprehensions then of heaven and hell, which before were neglected as unworthy of regard, or only touched the surface of their souls? What amazement, what dejection of spirit to find themselves in a sad unpreparedness for their great account? The remembrance, that for the poor advantages of time, they forfeited eternal glory, and ventured on eternal misery, cuts more sorely than the pangs of death. But suppose they harden their hearts to the last minute of life, and are more stupid than the beasts that tremble upon a precipice, at the sight of extreme danger, yet a minute after death (O the heavy change!) when they shall feel themselves undone infinitely and irrecoverably, what fierce and violent workings will be in the mind? What a storm of passions raised? But when repentance will be with perfect sorrow, without the least profit. There are no returns to the possibility of mercy.

I will conclude this discourse with a passage from the most humble and excellent St. Austin. He bewails, in his confession, his long bondage under sin. His carnal lusts adhered as closely to him, as the ivy twines about the oak, that there can be no separation without eradicating it, and plucking the bark off the tree. He felt an inward continual combat between the flesh and spirit. He often shook the chain wherewith he had voluntarily bound himself, but had not the resolution to break it. And thus

for a time his judgment abhorred what his affections were inclined to, and he was neither victorious nor vanquished. But when God was pleased by his omnipotent grace to set him at liberty, the last and most violent assault of the flesh, and that which made his conversion most difficult was this; his youthful lusts presented themselves to his imagination, and as that impure mistress did with chaste Joseph \* shook the garment of his flesh, and whispered, Will you renounce us? Shall there be a divorce between you and your ancient loves for ever? Shall not this or that desire of the senses be contented for ever? And what was that for ever? It only signified the short remainder of his time after thirty-three years, which was then his age. And this is the most effectual hinderance of the reclaiming of sinners still. They will not be induced to make an irrevocable, unreserved dedication of themselves to God, and firmly to resolve never to taste forbidden sweets more, but always abhor the relish of them. But if it be so hard and intolerable always to abstain from unlawful pleasures, and much more to suffer pain in the short space, the moments of this life, that it seems an eternity to corrupt nature, what will it be in the true eternity to be deprived of all good, and tormented with all evils, despairing of release, or quenching one spark of that terrible fire? "O that men were wise, to consider their latter end," and the consequences of it, their mortality and immortality.

\* *Succutiebant vestem meam carneam, & murmurabant dimittisne nos? & a momento isto non erimus tecum ultra in æternum? & a momento isto non licebit tibi hoc. & illud ultra in æternum?*