

Systematic Theology

A COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF
NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION

John Brown of Haddington

Introduction by
Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson



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A
COMPENDIOUS
VIEW
OF
NATURAL AND REVEALED
RELIGION.

IN SEVEN BOOKS

BOOK I. Of the Standard of all Religion, the Law of Nature, in its Foundation and Contents; the Insufficiency of the Light of Nature to render a Man truly virtuous and happy; the Possibility, Desirableness, Necessity, Propriety, Reasonableness, Credibility, Divine Authority, Properties, and Parts of that Revelation which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

BOOK II. Of God, the author, object, and End of all Religion, in his Perfections, persons, Purposes, and Works.

BOOK III. Of the Bonds of Religious Connection between God and Men, the Covenant of Works and Grace, in their

Origin, Parties, Parts, and Administrations in time and through eternity.

BOOK IV. Of Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, in his Person, Offices, and States.

BOOK V. Of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Spiritual Comfort, Eternal Glory.

BOOK VI. Of the Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace by means of the Law, the gospel, and Ordinances thereof.

BOOK VII. Of the New Covenant Society or Church, in her Constitution, Members, Offices, and Government.

BY THE REV. JOHN BROWN,
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL OF HADDINGTON

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A
COMPENDIOUS
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OF
NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

BOOK I.

OF THE REGULATING STANDARD OF RELIGION, NATURAL
AND REVEALED.

CHAP. I.

Of the LAW of NATURE.

AS the law of nature must necessarily correspond with the nature of God, who imposeth it, and of men, who are subjected to it, and with their relations to each other; these must be carefully considered, in order to our obtaining a proper knowledge of it.

Beginning with our *own nature*, as next to us:—We can form no idea of a *substance* distinct from its most obvious essential qualities, as they are necessarily included in every adequate conception of it.—By reflection upon that which passeth in our own minds, we obtain the simple idea of *thought*, and so conceive of SPIRITS as *thinking substances*: and, by sensation, we perceive body to be a *solid and extended SUBSTANCE*. Thus knowing the *essential properties* of spirits as well as of bodies, and being incapable to comprehend the inward constitution of both, we have at least as much certainty of the existence of spirits as of bodies,—though by our more habitual attention to the surface of matter, we are apt to imagine, that we more thoroughly understand its nature.

From inward consciousness, and from our observation of the actings of others around us, we perceive, that the *human soul* is

a spirit endowed with powers of *perception, judging, and reasoning*, as well as of recollecting and retaining ideas;—and with a power of *willing, choosing, desiring, delighting in, or disliking and hating*;—and even a power of moving at least the external parts of our body by means of the nerves,—and of receiving impressions from them, when objects around appear *rare, good, or evil*. Nevertheless, it must not be imagined, that our *understanding and will are different parts* of our soul, but are the same soul considered as exercising *different powers*.

It is evident that our soul is most closely *united* with our body, though we cannot comprehend the mode of it. Motions in our brain and nerves excite ideas in our mind; and passions in our soul excite motions in our body. The indisposition of our body often disqualifieth our mind for exercising its powers in a regular and lively manner. In sleep, in frenzies of our brain, or in some nervous distempers, our mind acts in a disorderly manner.—On the other hand, intense thinking disqualifies our body for acute and ready sensation.—But we cannot determine whether human souls be formed with different degrees of spiritual powers; or, whether the difference of capacity observable among men ariseth from the different constitution of their bodies, and climates in which they live. Nor can we say, whether our soul is immediately united with and resides in the *brain*, in which, 1. All these nerves on which our sensation depends, do terminate. 2. All the diseases that deprive us of our sensation are seated. 3. A small disorder in the brain renders the agency of the soul very weak or irregular, as in the case of idiots and madmen. 4. When any nerve is cut or hard tied, it retains its sensation only in that part which is next to the brain. 5. If our brain be lost or sore wounded, our life ceaseth:—Or, whether the soul be immediately united to and reside in the *heart*, in which the last remains of life are perceived.

Some learned men contend, That all our ideas of material objects are produced by *sensation*, and our ideas of spiritual objects by *reflection*, the latter rectifying the mistakes of the former;—and that we have no *innate ideas*, as we gradually acquire new ideas; and can form none of sensible objects, without the exercise of the correspondent senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching. Others contend, That all our ideas have their origin in our mind itself; and that our sensation and reflection are no more than means of exciting them.—It is certain, that our mind cannot forbear assenting to several primary axioms of knowledge: as, *that nothing can be, and not be, at the same time; that nothing can give that which it hath not; that there is a God, &c.* It is no less certain, that the same external qualities of objects often excite different ideas in different persons; or, in the same persons at different times.

That which is pleasant, comely, &c. to one, may be disagreeable to another, or even to the same person at another time.

Some contend, That human souls neither do, nor can exist *without actual thinking*, any more than bodies can exist *without extension*, and that no soul can awaken or excite itself to the *actual exercise* of thought. Others maintain, That they can cease from thinking for a time, as in deep sleep, strong apopleptic or paralytic distempers,—as infants, who have few ideas, sleep much.—It is certain, that in our present mortal state our soul thinks worst when it seems most abstracted from our body, as in dreams, &c. and that *personal identity* cannot consist in *continued consciousness* of thinking or of the same actions; for, none are conscious of their lying in their mother's womb or of their being born, and nevertheless were the *same persons* as they are afterward at full age: But it must consist in our having the same soul united with a body, which is the same in some essential respects.—No wonder that I know so little of God, when the most learned men appear to know so little of themselves. Never let me dare to make my weak and indistinct perceptions a standard for judging of his unbounded excellencies.

The human MEMORY is an intellectual power of *recollecting* or *retaining* our ideas, and is called *good*, when it quickly recollects and strongly retains them. Its condition much depends on that of our body, whether it be in health, free from sleep, &c. It is best in youth, or when we are brisk and lively; or, when our ideas are attended with remarkable pleasure or pain. Nay, the pleasure or pain which attends our ideas, when conceived in our mind, renders our time or duration sensible shorter or longer. A violent blow upon the head, which disorders the brain, sometimes erazeth all former ideas, that nothing which hath been experienced can be remembered.

The AFFECTIONS OR PASSIONS of the human soul are its dispositions toward, or in opposition to, those objects of which it thinks. They originate from, or are exerted by sensation or reflection;—by ideas recollected, or by apprehensions of approaching good or evil: and cannot be excited, or hindered, by an act of our will, any more than the internal parts of our body can be governed by it.—They are diversified and distinguished into love, hatred, joy, grief, hope, fear, wonder, astonishment, &c. according as the objects which excite them appear to us *good, evil, rare, dreadful, &c.* and according to the apprehended *degrees* of that goodness, evil, or rarity, &c. and according to the apprehended presence, absence, or futurity of these objects.

An *acquired mental habit* is that easiness and readiness of thinking or willing in such a particular manner, which is pro-

duced by frequency of thinking and willing in that form. It depends much on our memory's furnishing us with recollected ideas, and with views of the relation between causes and effects, antecedents and consequents, &c. and on its readily presenting the motives which influence us to such particular forms of thinking. Hence, if our memory be weakened or ruined, so, ordinarily, are our mental habits:

FREEDOM of WILL is either *natural*, when we are not invincibly determined in our choice towards this or that particular thing; or *external*, when no forcible restraint put on our body or mind, hinders our choice; or *philosophical*, when we have a prevalent disposition to act according to the dictates of our reason; or *moral*, when no superior, by his forbidding or commanding authority, interferes in the regulation of our acts.—Our common and continued consciousness, that we have by nature a *liberty of choice*, or of acting agreeably to our own apprehensions or inclinations;—our frequent preferring of one thing to another, even without well knowing why we do so; and the rewardableness and punishableness of our actions by God, plainly manifest that we have this *freedom of choice* in our will.

The human soul is *immediately* created by God in that *very act which unites* it to its respective body. No man ever remembered of his being in a pre-existent state, in which, had it been, it behoved his unembodied soul to have been very active. It is absurd to pretend, that it pre-existed in animalcules of generating matter. The existence of such, or the formation of the human body from them, hath never been proved; nor can be, without supposing a stifling or extinction of millions of souls in the conception of every infant.

The human soul is *immortal*, existing and acting in a future state. 1. It is immaterial. Thoughts, even about the most trivial objects, can never proceed from matter, be it formed, figured, and circumstantiated as it will. 2. Equity requires that men be rendered happy or miserable, according as they are virtuous or vicious. Since, therefore, there is so little obvious difference between the righteous and wicked in their present life in this world, there must be a future, an eternal state, in which every man shall receive the reward of his conduct. 3. The inward joys which attend virtue in this life cannot sufficiently and openly vindicate God's present form of providence, in prospering the wicked and afflicting the virtuous. 4. Good men, especially under sufferings, are encouraged in virtue by the prospects of a future, an eternal reward of it. 5. Human souls being formed capable of great improvements, and having an eager desire after happiness, it cannot be thought

that they were thus formed merely for their transient, and almost half brutal condition in this world. 6. Men have *generally*, if not *universally*, believed the existence of a future state, even when it promised little happiness to themselves. On this belief much of their idolatry, necromancy, &c. depended. 7. Since men's consciences chiefly impress them with the apprehensions of future rewards and punishments, it is inconsistent with God's infinite wisdom, equity, and truth, that there should be nothing at all answerable to these apprehensions. 8. If there were no future state of rewards and punishments, wicked men would have it in their power to rob the virtuous of much of their reward by quickly murdering them;—and to prevent God's punishment of vice, by quickly dispatching themselves or their fellows in wickedness.—Nor would it be proper that God should be obliged, by miraculous preservation, to prevent their robbing others of, or avoiding themselves, their correspondent reward.

The EXISTENCE OF GOD is no less evident than our own. 1. All nations, Heathens, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians, harmoniously consent that there is a God, who created, preserves, and governs all things. Even the most stupid Hottentots, Saldanians, Greenlanders, Kamtchatkans, and savage Americans, are, upon the most accurate inspection, found to believe this.—This persuasion of the existence of God is least discernable where, and in those, that through ignorance are almost similar to beasts, which plainly manifests it to be an inseparable ingredient of Reason.—Now, what prejudice of fear, of fancy, or of education, could answer the taste of every nation, every person, in every age of the world, in favour of this persuasion, if it were not well founded? How could any one Prince impose it on all men? Or, When and where did several princes meet to contrive and establish it? Or, If princes or priests imposed the belief of this on others, as a state-trick to keep them in awe, how came they also to believe it themselves? 2. There is a natural impression of the existence of God on the minds of all men, *i. e.* an indistinct idea of a *Being of infinite perfection*, and a readiness to acquiesce in the truth of his existence, whenever they understand the terms in which it is expressed. Whence can this impression proceed, but from the power of truth itself, even in the minds of such, whose affections and carnal interests dispose them to believe the contrary? 3. The creation of all things plainly manifests the existence of God. The innumerable alterations and manifold dependence, every where observable in the world, manifest that the things which exist in it, neither are, nor could be, *from eternity*:—It is self-evident, that they never could form themselves out of nothing,

or in any of their respective forms: and that CHANCE, being nothing but the *want of design*, never did, nor could, form or put into order any thing, far less such a marvellous and well connected system as our world is.—Though we should absurdly fancy MATTER to be *eternal*, yet it could not change its own form, or produce Life or Reason, nothing being capable to confer that which it hath not in itself, either formally or virtually. Moreover, when we consider the diversified and marvellous forms of creatures in the world, and how exactly their forms and stations correspond with their respective ends and uses;—when we consider the marvellous and exact machinery, form, and motions of our own bodies, and especially when we consider the powers of our soul,—its desires after an infinite good, and its close union with, and incomprehensible operations on our bodies, we are obliged by the light of evidence to admit a Creator of infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness.—Though we can conceive a succession, a very long succession of animal production, we cannot conceive how that production could be effected by the animals themselves, independently of any other; and still less, how that successive production could extend unto a proper eternity, or commence without the agency of a self-existent, self-sufficient, almighty, infinitely wise and benevolent Creator.—It is further observable, that a tradition of the Beginning of the world hath every where prevailed among mankind. 4. The providential upholding and government of all things;—the motions of the heavenly luminaries, exactly calculated for the greatest advantage of our earth, and its inhabitants;—the exact balancing and regulating of the meteors, winds, rain, snow, hail, vapour, thunder, and the like;—the regular and never-failing returns of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, day and night;—the astonishing and diversified formation of vegetables,—the propagation of herbs, almost every where, that are most effectual to heal the distempers of animal bodies in that place;—the almost infinite diversification of animals and vegetables, and their pertinents, that, notwithstanding an amazing similarity, not any two are exactly alike; but every form, member, even feather or hair of animals, and every pile of grass, stalk of corn, herb, leaf, tree, berry, or other fruit, hath something peculiar to itself;—the making of animals so sagaciously to prepare their lodgings, defend themselves, provide for their health, produce, protect, and procure food for their young;—the direction of fishes and fowls to, and in such marvellous and long peregrinations, at such seasons, and to such places as best correspond with their own preservation and the benefit of mankind:—the stationing of brute animals by sea or land, at lesser or greater distances, as is most suited to the safety, subsistence, or comfort of man-

kind,—and preventing the increase of prolific animals, which are hurtful, and making the less fruitful ones, which are useful, exceedingly to abound;—the so diversifying the countenances, voices, and hand-writings of men, as best secures and promotes their social advantages;—the holding of so equal a balance between males and females, while the number of males, whose lives are peculiarly endangered in war, navigation, &c. is generally greatest;—the prolonging of men's lives when the world needed to be peopled, and now shortening them when that necessity hath ceased to exist;—the almost universal provision of food, raiment, medicine, fuel, &c. answerable to the nature of particular places, cold or hot, moist or dry;—the management of human affairs relative to societies, government, peace, war, trade, &c. in a manner different from, and contrary to, the carnal policy of those concerned;—and especially the strangely similar, but diversified, erection, preservation, and government of the Jewish and Christian churches,—clearly manifest the existence of an infinitely wise, patient, and good God, who preserves and governs the world, and every thing in it. 5. The miraculous events which have happened in the world, such as the overflowing of the earth by a flood,—the confusion of languages,—the burning of Sodom and the cities about by fire and brimstone from heaven,—the plagues of Egypt,—the dividing of the Red Sea,—raining manna from heaven, and bringing streams of water from flinty rocks;—the stopping of the course of the sun,—quenching of the violence of fire,—shutting of the mouths of hungry lions,—raising of the dead,—healing of diseases, even the most desperate, without any application of natural remedies,—terrible apparitions in the air, or on the earth, before the overthrow of cities or nations,—also irrefragably demonstrate the existence of God. 6. His existence no less clearly appears from the exact fulfilment of so many, and so particularly circumstantiated predictions, published long before the events took place, viz. predictions concerning mankind in general;—the descendants of Noah, Lot, and Abraham;—Canaanites, Syrians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans,—Arabs, Turks,—Jesus Christ; Antichrist; New Testament church. It is impossible that these predictions, which were so exactly fulfilled in their respective periods, and of the fulfilment of which there are, at present, thousands of demonstrative and sensible documents in the world, could proceed from any but an all-seeing, and infinitely wise, and almighty Governor of the world. 7. The existence of God further appears from the fearful punishments which have been inflicted upon persons, and especially upon nations, when their immoralities became excessive, and that by very unexpected means and instruments,—as in the drowning of the old world,—destruction of Sodom and Gomor-

rah,—plagues of Pharaoh and his servants,—overthrow of Sennacherib and his army,—miseries and ruin of the Canaanites, Jews, Syrians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and others. 8. The existence of God may be further argued from the terror and dread which wound the consciences of men, when guilty of crimes, which other men do not know, or are not able to punish or restrain; as in the case of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, Roman emperors; and while they earnestly labour to persuade themselves, or others, that there is no God. Hence their dread of thunder, or to be alone in the dark, &c.

This God, who maketh, upholds, and governs all things, must necessarily be SELF-EXISTENT, INDEPENDENT, and absolutely ETERNAL. Being the cause of every thing besides himself, he can neither be produced by them, nor depend on them.—As he existed before, and gave being to every one of them, he must be all-sufficient in, of, and to, himself, and to each of them.—None of them, particularly man, whose origination is so late,—whose dependence on inferior creatures is so great,—whose form of body and temper of mind are so changeable, can profit Him, who is the Universal Maker and Manager of ALL things.

God is UNCHANGEABLE. Being *self-existent* and *absolutely eternal*, he can have no principle of change in himself. The existence, essence, and agency, of all other beings being derived from Him, none of them can, in the least, operate towards any change in, or of Him.—Without supposing Him to have been once deficient, and so not God, He cannot be changed to the better. Without becoming deficient, and so ceasing to be God, He cannot be changed to the worse.—Both are equally absurd.

God is ALMIGHTY. 1. He hath never shewed any mark of weakness. 2. He made, upholds, and governs multitudes of creatures, nay of mighty creatures. 3. By the influence of his power, even in an act of his will, he made all things of nothing; and by it he upholds and governs them. 4. His power cannot be limited *from within* himself, as he is *all-sufficient*; nor from without himself, as all the power of creatures proceeds from, and is subordinated to him, and oweth its whole efficacy in the production of effects to his concurrent influence. No creature can retain or exert any power, independently of God, without becoming God, and so depriving him of his godhead:—and no effect can exist without his willing of it.

God is INFINITE. 1. Being self-existent and independent, he is as great, in every respect, *as he can be*. 2. All creatures depending on him, none of them can set bounds to his excellency. 3. His upholding and governing of all creatures necessari-

ly requires his presence with them all, and every where. 4. Being from all eternity, his nature is infinite in duration, and so must necessarily be infinite in every other excellency. 5. His forming of all things from nothing, necessarily required an *infinity* of wisdom, power, and goodness;—the distance between *nothingness* and their present existence being *infinite*.
 —The belief of God's infinity, instead of discouraging, strongly encourageth us to the diligent contemplation of Him, —as much important and delightful truth concerning him, may be known, though he can never be fully and comprehensively known by us.

God is **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** in his excellency, purposes, and works. 1. We have but very imperfect knowledge of ourselves,—What our soul or our body is;—and how the one is united to, or acts upon the other;—how our ideas are treasured up or recollected in our memory;—whether we always think or not;—how dreams are produced;—how all the difficulties relative to human liberty may be solved;—how our nerves affect our soul in frenzies;—how we breathe;—how the motion of our blood and muscles is effected, &c. Nay, we cannot so much as discern the inward substance, or all the properties, of any creatures.—How absurd then the hope to have comprehensive conceptions of the infinite excellencies of God! 2. God's perfections are infinitely superior to those of creatures, even where there is some similarity between them. 3. In his *self-existence*, *absolute eternity*, *omnipresence*, of which we certainly know him to be possessed, and his being determined to act from himself, God is infinitely unlike to us, as well as infinitely transcends our comprehension. 4. No reason of ours can controvert, but God may have in his nature millions of excellencies or perfections which are not in the least marked in his works of creation or common providence.

There is but **ONE** GOD. 1. The light of nature affords no marks of a plurality of Gods. 2. The remarkable unity of design which appears in the works of creation and providence, manifest, that the Creator and manager of all things is but **ONE**. 3. As God necessarily possesseth infinite excellency, no independent excellency is left to any other. 4. One Being of infinite perfection being sufficient for the making and management of all things,—no necessary and self-existence, and so no godhead, is left for another. 5. God being unchangeable, he can have no rival or competitor of equal power or wisdom.

God is a **SPIRIT** possessed of an infinite understanding and will. 1. Of necessity it behoved him to be self-moved in the creation of all things. 2. The form of every creature, and of all taken together, plainly manifests deep thought exercised in the contrivance and formation of them. 3. Nothing material

could produce such thought, or form such thinking substances, as we find ourselves to be. 4. Nothing but a spiritual and incorporeal substance could be every where present to uphold and govern all things.—Hence it follows, That though God may appear in a visible form, his nature is not visible, nor ought any human passions to be ascribed to him; for, 1. Some passions; as Fear or Grief, &c. imply weakness and present imperfection in happiness. 2. The excitement or operation of our passions is inseparably connected with some commotion of our animal nature.

God hath a perfect KNOWLEDGE of himself and all things else. 1. He is an infinite Spirit, and therefore must have an understanding infinitely extensive. 2. He makes, upholds, and governs all things,—and therefore must necessarily know his own fulness of excellency and influence, and their respective conditions, and the most proper manner of adapting his influences to them, answerably to their need and advantage. 3. To suppose him ignorant of any thing, would reflect dishonour on him unworthy of godhead.—He knows *future contingencies*. 1. If he knew them not, his wisdom and knowledge must be gradually enlarged, as these events shall occur, which is contrary to his infinity and unchangeableness. 2. Without the exact knowledge of them, he could not have exactly foretold them, as he hath often done. 3. If he knew them not, his providential regulations concerning them, and every thing connected with them, must depend on the free will of his rational creatures, or even on mere chance. 4. If sagacious men shrewdly foresee future events, how can they be in any respect hid from God, our infinitely wise Maker, preserver, and governor?

God is infinitely WISE. 1. In creation he hath clearly formed all things most answerable to their manifold and diversified ends. 2. In providence every thing is so managed, as to accomplish the most important purposes, and to promote the most important ends: and great events are effected by the most unlikely means. 3. There is not the least mark of folly or weakness of judgment in any thing he doth.

God is perfectly HOLY, and his nature infinitely contrary to all impurity and vice. 1. There is real virtue found among his rational creatures, which must necessarily originate from him. 2. Holiness is the highest perfection of rational creatures, rendering them happy in themselves, and amiable and useful to others. 3. God, having a perfect knowledge of all the relations of things one to another, cannot deviate from holiness, through ignorance. 4. Being infinitely powerful, God hath nothing to deter or hinder him from the possession or pursuit of holiness. 5. Being perfectly happy in himself, he hath nothing to expect

by the indulgence of moral evil. 6. Having therefore no temptations to unholiness, he could not without drawing on himself the most uneasy reflections and the highest dishonour, altogether inconsistent with godhead, indulge it in the least, or in any respect deviate from moral rectitude.

God is infinitely GOOD and BENEVOLENT, inclined to promote the happiness of his creatures, in every proper form and method. 1. Much goodness and benevolent instinct is to be found among his creatures, in this world. 2. Innumerable instances of kindness to his creatures appear in his providence. 3. We know of no bad thing in this world, from which real good may not be extracted: nor have we any evidence that God would have permitted *moral evil*, if he had not intended to bring good out of it. 4. All the evil which we observe in this world, originates from men's abuse of the freedom of their own will. And if men by their own fault introduce moral evil, that penal evil, which follows, becomes a real good to God's creatures in general,—even as the punishment of malefactors is necessary for the real advantage of a state. 5. God may be good, nay, infinitely good, though he be not bound to render every creature happy to the uttermost. A magistrate may be very good and benevolent, though he do not adopt all his subjects to be his children or heirs. 6. Reason admits that there may be many and large regions of creation, perfectly free from all evil, moral or penal, and that this world in its present situation is good enough for sinful men. 7. Benevolence and goodness, being the glory of rational creatures, must also be the glory of the godhead. 8. Being self-sufficient, God can have no reason or temptation to promote the causeless misery of his subjects, nor can his perfections and happiness admit of his having any inclination, or making any attempt towards it.

As God's making and upholding of all things necessarily infer his right to be their sole *supreme governor*,—He is perfectly JUST in all his dealings with men. 1. He imposeth no law upon them, but that which originally they had full power to obey. 2. Equity therefore requires, that He, as their Supreme Governor, should treat them with kindness or severity, as their virtue or their vice demands. 3. Having no temptation to it, God cannot act unjustly without defiling his nature, and dishonouring himself to the uttermost, which is absolutely incompetent with godhead. 4. Already, in manifold instances, we see the virtuous rewarded and the wicked punished. 5. Though some of God's dispensations of providence appear to smile on the wicked and frown on the virtuous, yet it must be admitted, that we often mistake with respect to men's real characters, and that we are apt to think there is a great deal more happiness in ease, wealth, or honour, and more unhappiness in afflictions, than really is.

6. A future eternity of rewards or punishments may sufficiently balance any apparent inequality of providences in this life.

God is perfectly TRUE, sincere in all his declarations, and inviolably faithful to all his engagements of promises or threatenings. 1. His holiness in himself, and his goodness and equity toward his creatures, require such candour and faithfulness. 2. All the sincerity, truth, and faithfulness, or disposition of heart or conscience to approve it, found among rational creatures, necessarily originate from God. 3. God hath no temptation to dissimulation, falsehood, or treachery; and hence could not indulge it in his conduct, without an inconceivable vitiosity of nature, absolutely inconsistent with godhead.

FROM these views of the nature of God and man, and of the relations betwixt them, it necessarily follows, that his honour and our enjoyment of him ought to be aimed at, as our CHIEF END, in every thing we do,—in due subordination to which the advancement or maintenance of our own life, health, honour, pleasure, or profit, may and ought to be intended.—The CHIEF GOOD proper to be proposed for the end of our conduct must necessarily be desirable in itself;—must be complete, including deliverance from all evil, and the fruition of all possible felicity;—must be sufficient to satisfy all reasonable desires, and render its possessors perfect in every thing truly excellent;—must be of infinite value and usefulness, capable to render all men happy at once;—and must be evidently eternal, that there may be no ground to fear that it should fail or be lost.—It is therefore manifest, that *riches* cannot be this *chief good*, as they are not desirable for themselves,—do not enter into our souls,—do not render men either virtuous or happy,—nor is the enjoyment of them either certain or perpetual. Nor can worldly *honours* be this *chief good*,—as we have not these so much in ourselves, as in the imagination of others; nor doth the enjoyment of them render us either better or safer; nor is it either certain or permanent. Nor can *bodily pleasures* be this *chief good*,—as these are often inconsistent with our true honour and usefulness, and enervate and corrupt our body while they weaken and vitiate our mind. Nor can *knowledge* be this *chief good*, as, of itself, it neither renders men virtuous nor happy. It cannot protect from a multitude of real evils; nor is the permanent continuance of it certain. Nor can even *virtue* itself be this *chief good*, as, though it render our mind better, and make us more useful in the world, it doth not exempt us from a multitude of real disasters, inward or outward.—It therefore remains, that God alone, who is infinitely perfect,—desirable in himself,—sufficient to render all rational creatures happy,—and is absolutely unfading and eternal,—of whom the

full enjoyment includes perfect freedom from all evil, and possession of every thing good,—and so necessarily renders us perfect in virtue, honour, and happiness,---must be our CHIEF GOOD:

FROM the preceding hints concerning our own nature, and the nature of God, and our absolute dependence on him as our Creator, Preserver, and Governor,—it is no less manifest, that the *declared will* of God as our moral Governor, must be the *sole standard and rule* of all our qualities and actions, religious and moral; and that there can be no lawful authority in the world, but what is *derived* from him, and that no laws or engagements of men can bind themselves or others, but *in subordination* to his authority and will.—By virtue of the perfection of his nature, God cannot but will that we should be and act in agreeableness to those relations, in which we stand connected with himself, or with our fellow-creatures. Such deportment is manifestly reasonable, comely, profitable, and honourable. But, some things which are very proper and necessary in some circumstances, may be very unfit and even vicious in other circumstances. That which is proper in health, may be unlawful in trouble. That which is duty in necessary self-defence, may be very criminal in any other case. That which is very becoming in magistrates, as enacting of laws, punishing of criminals, and raising of armies and the like, would be very improper in private persons.—This will of God *manifested to men's reason*, and representing the moral fitness of their qualities, thoughts, words, or actions, is called the LAW OF NATURE. And to be and act according to it, is ordinarily called VIRTUE; and to be and act contrary to it, is called VICE. But some by VIRTUE mean only the duty which we owe to ourselves and fellow-creatures; and call the duty which we owe to God; RELIGION.

To render any of our actions *truly virtuous*, 1. We must have a knowledge of the moral fitness of things, and even of the moral fitness of that particular act. 2. We must have a formed design to act according to that moral fitness, from regard to the authority of God. 3. The act must be performed freely and of choice, and with affection and delight. 4. A good act performed, notwithstanding much opposition, is *not a little virtuous*; but it is most virtuous, when there is no inward opposition at all made to the performance of it. 5. The less selfish our views be, in performing good acts, and the more regard to the authority and honour of God and the real good of our fellow-creatures, they are the *more virtuous*.—Thus, to constitute an act *truly virtuous*, it must originate from a virtuous *principle* or *habit*, be influenced by right *motives*, performed in a right *manner*, and directed to a right *end*.

The principal exercises of RELIGION, or virtue, respecting God, which the law of nature requires, are, 1. To contemplate him as the *reason and pattern* of our conduct. 2. To adore him with our soul and body as one *possessed of infinite perfection*. 3. To love him as one *infinitely amiable and benevolent*. 4. To observe and acknowledge his manifold and diversified providences, and act answerably to them. 5. To acquiesce in the whole of his will as wise and good. 6. To consider and trust in his power, wisdom, and goodness. 7. To be chiefly careful to please him, and to imitate him in his moral excellencies, who is infinitely perfect in himself, and on whose favour and the enjoyment of him, our true happiness wholly depends. 8. Cordially to listen to, believe, receive, and obey every further declaration of his will, which he is pleased to make to us.

VIRTUE respecting men is either *personal* or *social*. In PERSONAL VIRTUE, I. Great care must be taken to fill our mind with useful knowledge. II. In order to prevent both moral and penal evil, we ought frequently to examine and consider our circumstances and conduct. III. We must never allow our body to want any thing that is necessary for its real preservation and welfare, and never indulge it in any excess of meat, drink, ease, or pleasure.—SELF-MURDER, whether it be instantaneous or gradual, directly or indirectly committed, hath a dreadful criminality in it. It implies the want of all proper reverence of God, the Lord of our life: It injures the church or state, by robbing it of a member, and introducing a pernicious example. It entails distress and infamy upon living relations. It manifests a mind shamefully weak and incapable of bearing adversity; and dying in an act odious to God, we presumptuously rush on eternal misery.—No intention of thereby avoiding torture, disgrace, or lascivious rapes can excuse it. Patient enduring of torture or disgrace, in a good cause, is a glorious instance of virtue; patient bearing of them in the just punishment of our crimes, is a debt, which we owe to the laws, the justice, and the welfare of our country. The suffering of a *real rape* hurts neither our conscience nor our character; and therefore ought to be borne as a *trial of virtue*.—GLUTTONY in eating too much,—in eating without proper appetite,—in eating with too much greed or delight,—or indulging improper inclinations towards delicacies,—is a most beastly vice, in which men live as if they were destitute of souls,—gradually murder their body,—stupify their mind,—abuse their food, to the dishonour of God the bestower of it,—and rob the poor and their relations, of that which was laid out to gratify their lust.—DRUNKENNESS, in the too indulgent, too frequent, or too extensive use of intoxicating liquor, includes every evil of gluttony. It also produceth furious passions, improper discoveries

of secrets, reproach of neighbours, reviling or affronting of God and religion. It leads to profane swearing, cursing, quarrelling, uncleanness, dishonesty, and murder. IV. Great care ought to be taken for the proper management of our passions, which are merely natural, and for the mortification of those that are vicious. These passions include, 1. ADMIRATION, which is excited by things apprehended as marvellous or rare. It is useful, when it leads to meditation and cordial choosing of God;—when it imprints the remembrance of useful things on our mind, —or disposeth us to an earnest application to proper studies. But it is hurtful, when it is excessive;—when it leads to the choice of insignificant trifles, or of any thing before due examination of it;—when it hinders our application to more useful objects or exercises;—or, when we admire ourselves, or admire even useful things, chiefly for their novelty. 2. LOVE, which disposeth our heart towards union with, kindness to, and delight in its objects. It fixeth only on such persons or things, as, and in so far as, we apprehend them agreeable, and so renders our soul courageous and pleased in the prosecution of its purposes. But it becometh criminal, when we esteem, desire, or delight in, creatures, more, or as much as, in God himself; or in a manner which tends to lessen our love to him, or, as if they were any part of our chief good;—or, when bad things are loved; or good things, more than is meet;—or, when it hinders our impartial examination of ourselves, or makes us overvalue that which belongs to us; when it tempts us to procure that which we think good for ourselves, at the expence of our neighbours, or renders us too indulgent of our own desires, and too susceptible of flattery from others. Love to our neighbours, when fixed and mutual, is called *friendship*, which mightily promotes reciprocal sympathy, assistance, supply, and comfort. As it ought to be founded upon clear conviction of proper excellency and usefulness, we ought never to choose any for our friends, who are unknown, impious, debauched, outrageous, loquacious, selfish, covetous, ambitious, luxurious, inconstant, contentious, quarrelsome, or whimsical. And, when we have fixed on friends, we ought to rejoice in their welfare, approve them in every thing laudable, indulge them in every thing safe, readily offer them our best advice and assistance, whenever it is necessary, study to please them in all things lawful, carefully keep their secrets, kindly and seasonably warn them of their dangers, faithfully reprove their faults, judge very charitably of all their actions, never unnecessarily complain of them to others, especially behind their back,—and never neglect or contemn old friends for the sake of new ones.—LOVE OF GLORY or power, when it exceeds due bounds, is called *Ambition*, which, by feeding on airy applause, renders men proud; frequently produceth

contentions, and leads to base, cruel, or fraudulent methods of obtaining the things desired. Excessive *love of riches* in studying to obtain them, is called *Avarice*; and in retaining of them is called *churlishness*. In either of these forms it placeth them in God's room, marks discontentment with his providence, injures our neighbour, taking or withholding his right from him, torments and enslaves our own soul, opposeth all proper love to God, or trust in him, and all love and equity towards our neighbour; and hence produceth much folly and ruin.—Love of corporeal, or even intellectual pleasure, when it exceeds due bounds, marks great pride, selfishness, and meanness of spirit, and often issueth in fearful mischief to ourselves, or our neighbours. 3, 4, 5, 6. JOY and GRIEF, HOPE and FEAR, which are virtuous, when they are fixed on proper objects and duly proportioned to them. 7. PITY to the distressed, which originates from mistakes of that which these objects endure, or from a natural tenderness of constitution, or from true love and friendship;—and is only virtuous, when it leads us to sympathize with proper objects, to help and comfort them in a proper manner. 8. SHAME, which proceeds from fear of blame or contempt—and is virtuous, when it disposeth us to blush on account of that which is sinful, indiscreet, imprudent, or unsuitable to our character and circumstances in the world,—and when it makes us diligent in well-doing, and cheerful in necessary suffering for righteousness sake. 9. EMULATION, which is good in so far as it means a desire to be equal, and superior, to others, in virtuous tempers or actions;—but is most wicked and abominable, in so far as it means an envying or grieving at the virtue, honour, wealth, pleasure, or other advantages, of our neighbours,—as it improves the honour or happiness of others, as a mean of tormenting ourselves,—condemns God's most holy, wise, just, and good distribution of his favours,—wastes our natural constitution, and tempts us to murder ourselves or others, &c. 10. HATRED, unless in so far as it is fixed upon sin as its object, is the reverse of God's infinite benevolence, banisheth love, meekness, humility, and patience, from our heart; and it is a fearful source of our contempt, reproach, and murder, of our neighbours. 11. RESENTMENT of indignities done to God, or of injuries done to churches or nations, answerable to our stations, and conducted in a proper manner, is good; but resentment of private injuries real or supposed, manifests much weakness and baseness of spirit, fills our mind with tormenting fears, cares, and contrivances;—robs us of the delightful pleasure and high honour, of forgiving affronts and injuries, and of returning good for evil, and often hurrieth us into fearful disorders and dangers. 12. ANGER is criminal, when it is not directed against, and exercised in a manner destructive to vice;

and especially when it kindles into *wrath, rage, and fury*.—Sinful anger originates from pride, suspicious humour, excessive credulity, selfish and carnal affections—and it discomposeth our mind, and disfigures our body, and being awakened by mere trifles, it frequently issueth in murder, blasphemy, and like horrible mischiefs. 13. PRIDE, if placed among the passions, is a most mischievous one. It can take occasion from virtue, or any other good thing, as well as from ignorance and self-love, to exercise itself. It disposeth us to exalt ourselves at the expense of our neighbours, and even of God himself, and to attempt to pull down every opposer,—and strongly tempts to rashness, error, insolence, wilfulness, presumption, despair, and even self-murder.— *Wilfulness*, is that form of pride, through which we obstinately adhere to persons, principles, or practices, without any consciousness of their excellency. It is always *vicious*, manifesting much ignorance and self-conceit, and ordinarily disposing men to a malicious persecution of their opponents. V. In order to prevent the hurt of our soul or body from *idleness*, we ought alway to choose and diligently employ ourselves in some honest and useful business, answerable to our circumstances of knowledge, ability, wealth, and inclination, and calculated to promote the honour of God, and the real happiness of our neighbours around. VI. To prevent our rashly engaging in arduous or dangerous enterprizes,—vain expectation of excessive regard from others, and immoderate sense of injuries received,—we ought carefully to cultivate an humble opinion of ourselves, and, for this purpose, frequently and seriously to ponder our own wants, weaknesses, follies, and faults.— These six Rules represent the personal virtues of Prudence, Consideration, Temperance, Chastity, Fortitude, Contentment, Meekness, Moderation, Diligence, and Humility.

SOCIAL VIRTUE consists, 1. In carefully forbearing, preventing, or removing, every thing that may be grievous or hurtful to our fellow-creatures, except when it is necessary to promote some greater good. 2. In earnestly labouring, in our respective stations, to promote their real welfare.—This virtue is called *disinterested*, when we prefer the advantage of others to our own.

HUMANITY towards brutes, in carefully forbearing every form or degree of cruelty to them, is implied in social virtue. In this we imitate God, who is good to all, and shew a proper regard to his creatures, and our fellow-partakers of his bounty in creation and providence. We may, nevertheless, in a duly tender manner, kill these animals for our own nourishment. 1. The happiness of men, who are more important ani-

mals, is hereby promoted. 2. By this means these slaughtered animals obtain a more quick and easy death. 3. To balance that pain which they suffer from men in their death, many of them are treated more kindly and nourished more delicately, in order to render them more agreeable food. 4. By increase of eatable animals, and giving their flesh so agreeable a relish to our taste, God seems to indicate the lawfulness of our killing them for food. 5. If none of them were killed for food to man, their excessive increase might deprive us of other means of our subsistence, and even endanger our health and life.

But social virtue much more strongly requires **KINDNESS** toward men, in doing every thing which can promote their life or health, except when the public welfare requires particular persons to be punished. 1. Human life is too valuable to be taken away, without a reason more honourable to God the giver, and more advantageous to the public, which is interested in it, than the preservation of it could be. 2. Natural instinct, if not terribly debauched, shrinks with horror from shedding of human blood without absolute necessity. 3. No man, except in a frenzy, wishes his own life or health taken from him. 4. The taking away our neighbour's life unjustly, robs his relations and neighbours of the important advantages which they might have received from the preservation of it.

Social virtue requires **EQUITY** towards all men, in doing to them every thing respecting their property, as we could reasonably wish they would do unto us in similar circumstances. But here it must be remarked, 1. That before property be fixed by any possession or agreement, every man may justly claim that which he first finds. And, if there be not enough to satisfy all, the first seizer ought to give portions to those that need them. And, if necessary supplies be denied to any one, he may justly take a necessary portion from the present possessors. 2. Equality of wealth is in no respect necessary among mankind. Particular persons ought to reap the fruits of their lawful care and industry. And, it is not for the hurt, but for the advantage, of the public, that some be richer than others. 3. Any persons may, as they have need or opportunity, seize on things which are still common, as light, air, sea-water, wild beasts, or the like; or which have been abandoned by the former proprietors. 4. In ordinary cases, antiquated claims ought not to be revived, as it tends to produce contention, perjury, and war. Nor is a man faulty in holding the property of another, which upon prescription or other probable grounds, he thought to be his own, till he find the contrary clearly evinced.

Social virtue requires the strictest regard to **TRUTH** and **CANDOUR** in all our conduct. Our thoughts, words, and ac-

tions ought exactly to correspond with each other, as well as with their objects. 1. Exact adherence to truth in our words much promotes mutual trust and happiness among men. 2. Without truth in our words, speech becomes unsuitable, useless, and ensnaring. 3. Lying, falsehood, and even ambiguity of speech or behaviour, have always been held infamous by all good men.—In no case doth the law of nature allow of *lying*, as it is contrary to the nature and honour of God, and the safety and happiness of mankind; were it allowed in any one instance, dissimulation, fraud, perjury, &c. must be allowed in other instances.

It therefore follows, that *our promises ought to be carefully and exactly performed*. 1. Truth and candour require that we should really intend doing every thing to which we engage. 2. They to whom any thing is promised, thereby acquire a right to it. 3. They cannot therefore honestly be deprived of it without their own free consent. 4. If property depending on promises uttered, written, sworn, or sealed, were held uncertain, it would introduce the most perplexing confusion, and would ruin all mutual trust among men. 5. Breach of our promises tempts our neighbours to suspect that we were not candid in making them, or that we are very inconstant in our temper and resolutions, and so hurts our character and usefulness in the world.—But, if our promises have been obtained by fraudulent imposition, they are not in every case binding. And promises made by persons destitute of the due exercise of reason, or which engage to any thing sinful, are never binding.

The violation of promises and oaths to men, or vows to God, is exceedingly criminal. 1. It is a horrid abuse of that authority deputed to us by God, in the exertion of which we make our promises, oaths, and vows. 2. It pours the highest contempt on God, to whom vows are made, and who is solemnly stated the witness and guarantee of oaths;—and renders a solemn ordinance of his own the mean of basely affronting him. 3. If perjury were once allowed, all mutual faith and trust among men would soon be utterly ruined. 4. Perjured persons have always, among all nations, been held the pests and scandals of human societies. And no less can we reckon those who, by artful dissimulation, evade the charge of bribery or perjury, in the election of officers or governors in commonwealths; or who, in churches, solemnly avouch or subscribe *Articles* and *Confessions of faith*, without believing or maintaining the *whole doctrines* therein contained.—But, if a promise or covenant be *conditional*, an essential breach of it by one party frees the other from his obligation.

Social virtue requires the propagation of mankind only in a married state. 1. If women were common, it would prevent all tender and faithful friendship between the sexes, and degrade them to beasts. 2. It would occasion much jealousy and strife. 3. It would much counteract the propagation and health of children. 4. It would expose women with child to great danger and distress. 5. Proper provision for, and the regular education of children, would be neglected, and they left to perish, or at best to grow up as wild savages. 6. No property could be bequeathed by fathers to children, and thus a notable encouragement and spur to sobriety and honest industry would be removed.

Hence it follows, that *every form of fleshly lust*, which tends to prevent or dishonour marriage, ought to be detested and mortified as highly criminal,—as dishonourable to God who made us, and to our souls, bodies, and characters,—as a source of the prodigal dissipation of our substance,—an indirect murder of ourselves and our posterity,—an occasion of strife and hatred among accomplices in wickedness,—a grievous and irreparable injury to them and their friends with whom unchastity is committed;—a most effectual mean of rendering our souls stupid, atheistical, or idolatrously attached to filthy objects.—In ADULTERY men commit the most criminal dishonesty, in depriving their neighbour of that which is most dear, precious, and honourable to him;—involve themselves in a most vile and perjurious breach of marriage-vows,—introduce disorder and confusion into families,—and tempt to the commission of idolatry, murder, and every thing horrid.—In civilized nations, it hath been punished with death; and indeed, as it entangles two at once in a crime so ruinous to their souls, bodies, and families, it is in some respects worse than murder itself.

As it therefore follows, that married persons ought earnestly to promote the happiness of their yoke-fellows and children, none ought to have more than one wife or husband at the same time. 1. As God, in his providence, always maintains so near an equality in the number of males and females among mankind, polygamy must occasion castration, self-pollution, sodomy, bestiality, or the like abominable conduct, wherever it much obtains. 2. It promotes contention among those who affect a plurality of wives, in their respective families. 3. Continued succession of new amours hinders the affections of husbands from duly fixing on their wives. 4. Multiplicity of wives prevents that propagation of mankind which is necessary to their common welfare. Solomon, by all his thousand, appears to have had very few children.

Marriage being a transaction of great importance, on which the welfare of persons, families, and nations, and even the happiness of the future state so much depends, ought never to be contracted, 1. By such as, on account of their non-age, or from want of the exercise of their reason, cannot perform the duties of marriage; nor, 2. By such as are incapable of procreation, unless with such as are in the like condition: nor, 3. By those that are infected with such lothesome distempers as would probably be communicated to, and injure their yoke-fellows or their children: nor, 4. By those that are already married to another, or that have no proper certainty of their former partner's death or wilful desertion: nor, 5. By those that are too near of kin,—as this would confound the duties of preceding relations,—prevent the extension of friendship in the world,—and produce various other improprieties.

As children have so much dependence on parents,—and as the happiness of the parties and their offspring so much depend on the propriety of their marriage-connection, none ought to enter into it without *consulting their parents*, if alive, and obtaining their consent. And, as marriage can never be dissolved but by death, or on account of adultery or wilful desertion, none ought to be forced into it by parents or others,—or to enter into it without *great deliberation* and *solemn consulting of God*, the supreme and general *Parent* of mankind.

Social virtue requires the *most tender and natural affection* among those who are related to one another.—Parents ought tenderly and carefully to *educate their children*, that they may honour God, and be useful to mankind. And, if possible, mothers ought to suckle their own children. 1. Children when young cannot provide for themselves, and so must perish, if parents neglect them. 2. The more carefully children are educated, the more ready are they to love, obey, and be an honour and comfort to their parents. 3. Careful and prudent education of children is of great importance to the public welfare of the church and nation. 4. The education of children, when it is wholly trusted to others, is very often fearfully neglected.—Children ought to be portioned according to their apparent merit, rather than according to their age.—It is absurd, that one child should carry off almost the whole of his parents' property, for no other reason but because he is a male, or came into the world some months before the rest.—In ordinary cases, an *eldest son* may have the largest portion, as it is expected that he will have most skill to manage it, and will be a protector and director to the rest of the children. But, if he be *notoriously wicked*, he should be disinherited,—it being unreasonable that an inheritance should be put into his hands,

while it is most probable that he will use it to his own ruin. — To mark their gratitude and respect to parents, as the representatives of God to them, children ought to love them affectionately,—reverence and honour them,—obey all their lawful commands,—consult them in every matter of importance,—and, if needful, supply their wants.

SERVANTS in families ought to be considered as *secondary children*,—and have due instruction, wages, and kind and affable entertainment; and they ought to reverence and obey their masters, and to be faithful and diligent in their service.— Persons who are justly condemned to slavery, as a punishment of their dishonesty or other crimes, may be lawfully bought for slaves: and prisoners may be bought from conquerors, if it be in order to preserve their lives. But to make war upon neighbours, or encourage others to it, in order to procure slaves,—or to trade in buying slaves,—is altogether unmerciful, and shocking to right reason and humanity,—natively entailing upon these merchants the blood of the souls and bodies of their fellow-creatures.

To promote the happiness of mankind it is necessary that they form themselves into CIVIL SOCIETIES. 1. Controversies concerning property or injurious conduct may happen between different families, which need to be determined. 2. Hence some general rules of determination must be established. 3. These contests ought to be determined by one or more judges or arbiters, unbiassed to either party. 4. These judges ought to have authority and power in their hand sufficient to enforce a proper compliance with their decisions.—In forming these civil societies and their government, it is natural to think, 1. Parents, originally, were the sole governors, under God, of their children, mediate or immediate. This is the only form of government which is *merely natural*. 2. No man being naturally any part of inheritance, the government of younger children could not necessarily devolve upon the eldest son. 3. Each family therefore became a small sovereignty or state by itself, in which parents were governors. 4. In order to an amicable decision of contests between families, several of them formed themselves into larger societies. 5. Disputes between lesser societies introduced a coalescence of several of them into one. 6. It thus became necessary that power and authority should be lodged in the hand of some general arbiter of their differences,—to whom, if he managed well, they all gradually submitted. 7. In submitting themselves to one or more, who had no natural right to govern them, men, no doubt, demanded from these rulers, an engagement to protect them in their lives, liberties,

and property. 8. If ambitious persons, by force or fraud, obtained this governing power, the submitters, no doubt, insisted on the best terms for their obedience, which they could obtain from their conquerors. Hence some *original contract* between governors and governed, *expressed* or *understood* is the *foundation* of all government among men, that of parents over their children only excepted. And nothing can be more absurd than claims of *indefeasible right* to supreme power, invested in eldest, or other sons, in any families whatsoever, or of *absolute power* to dispose of the property, lives, or liberties of others of mankind.

God, as Creator and Governor of the world, is the author of all civil government. Nor have either subjects or magistrates the smallest degree of liberty or power, but what they derive from him, and for which they must be accountable to him. Not, therefore, the will of subjects, or the consciences of magistrates, but the *Law of God*, as Supreme Governor, must be the *real standard* of all laws enacted by men.—Nor must men's civil interests, but the glory of God, as Founder and Supreme Governor of nations, be intended as their *chief end*, in all civil subjection and government.—To maintain the contrary, necessarily involves in the depths of atheism.

All men being naturally born in a state of *equal freedom*, none of them can be bound to submit to the laws of their country, any further than these are calculated to promote the general welfare of their society, in subordination to the glory of God. 1. None but God hath any *natural right* to rule over any such society. None but he hath any just claim to absolute power in governing. None hath any real power but what is derived from him,—or any power to enact any statutes contrary to his benevolent law. 2. Few parents would by voluntary contract bind either themselves or their children to an unlimited subjection to men; and if they did, the contract could be valid, as they have no power to make any such disposal of themselves or their children,—no power to dispose of either the lives or liberties of children.

If, therefore, magistrates command that which is prejudicial to the general welfare of the society, or dishonourable to God, the Supreme Governor of it, they ought to be disobeyed. And, if they be habitually cruel and tyrannical, they ought to be resisted and deposed, if circumstances permit. 1. When the great body of the subjects are much alienated in affection, a revolution may be accomplished without much hazard or hurt. 2. By resisting tyrannical princes in proper circumstances, nations have often preserved their lives as well as their liberties from impending ruin. 3. Such resistance, prudently managed, is an effectual warning to other magistrates to beware of abuse.

ing and oppressing their subjects. 4. In mixed forms of government, the propriety of resistance is most clear as well as most easy : as when a parliament resists a king, or a king resists a parliament, in defence of the common liberties of the nation. —Nevertheless, as princes are exposed to many and uncommon difficulties, and are apt to be imposed on by their confidants ;—and as their real designs are not easily penetrated, and often not to be pryed into by their subjects ;—and as resistance ordinarily occasions much bloodshed and misery,—subjects ought to put the best construction upon the conduct of their governors that it can justly admit,—and never proceed to violent measures but where it is absolutely necessary, and where there is an hopeful prospect of success.

In some cases, Conquest may confer, or contribute to confirm, civil authority. 1. Kings, to prevent perpetual wars with some neighbouring princes, may subdue a particular country ; but, till the inhabitants have directly or indirectly engaged themselves, they are not bound to submit. 2. To prevent more misery and bloodshed, a conqueror may be lawfully submitted to, till the rightful prince become capable to assert his own rights: but imposition of oaths of fidelity or allegiance in such cases, fearfully ensnares men's consciences, and rarely proves of any advantage to the interests of the imposers. 3. When rightful princes long neglect to assert their own claims, permanent possession and tame subjection confer a kind of right on conquerors and their successors,—that nations may not be ruined by once regnant families renewing their antiquated claims. 4. In ordinary cases, conquerors ought to restore what they have conquered to the rightful sovereigns, when they have wrested it from such as had formerly seized it by violence or fraud. 5. Nothing is more absurd, than to detest and punish petty thefts or personal injuries, and yet approve or extol the robbing, enslaving, or murdering of nations.

Except in the case of the Jewish nation, God permits civil societies to establish what particular form of government they find most agreeable to their circumstances, if it be not contrary to his law. But no particular form now in being is absolutely perfect. If kings were perfectly wise and virtuous, ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, in which their will is the only rule of government, would be best. But, as the most of men in high stations are very imperfect, and none of them faultless, it would be unsafe to lodge so much power in one man: Hence oppression and tyranny have generally prevailed, wherever it hath been attempted.—ARISTOCRACY, in which some few principal men have the whole power in their hand,—and DEMOCRACY, in which adult males in general bear rule,—leave too much room for cabals of crafty men,—render the dispatch of business too slow,—the affairs of

government too open,—and the cure of contentions very difficult.—MIXED MONARCHY, in which king, nobles, and commons, have their joint shares in the government, therefore, seems best. And, as *election* of kings, though it might sometimes prevent the advancement of improper persons, would afford much occasion for cabals and factions,—a *limited succession* is in many cases preferable to it. As the arbitrary and occasional will of imperfect governors would be an extremely precarious and unsafe standard of government, all civilized societies have, in or after their establishment, formed laws by which they incline to be ruled. Of human laws the most remarkable are, 1. The *Law of nations*, containing those regulations which are tacitly adopted by all civilized societies; as, That no ambassador ought to be ill used,—no prisoners killed, but exchanged or ransomed,—and no women, children, or other unarmed persons, to be abused or killed in time of war,—and should also bear, that no private property, except warlike stores, should be seized. 2. *Laws of shipping*, relative to landing, sailing, loading, or unloading contraband goods, hoisting or striking of colours, &c. 3. The *Civil Law*, which comprehends the statutes once of public and permanent authority in the Roman empire. 4. The *Feudal Law*, introduced by the conquering Goths into a great part of Europe, for regulating superiorities, vassalages, and the like. 5. *National Laws* of France, Spain, England, Scotland, &c. consisting of public immemorial customs, and statutes of the supreme courts of judicature. 6. *Municipal Laws*, regulating the immunities of cities and burghs. 7. *Society Laws*, regulating the privileges and mutual behaviour of merchants, craftsmen, or the like;—to which we may add, 8. The *Canon Law*, formed from the decisions of ancient doctors, and of popes and councils, for the regulation of the Romish church,—even as the Talmud, formed from the dictates of their ancient Rabbins, is *canon law* to the modern Jews. 9. Protestant *Ecclesiastical Laws*, comprehending their Confessions, Articles, Formulas, Canons, Acts of Assemblies, &c. which become civil laws, in so far as they are adopted by the supreme authority of States. — As none of these human laws reach the inward dispositions of men's hearts,—few of them have any rewards, and none of them any rewards or punishments of a spiritual or eternal nature annexed to them, they must all be of infinitely less importance than, and subordinated to, the law of nature, which proceeds immediately from God himself, and are to be obeyed only in so far as consistent with it.

Human life being very precious, and the loss of it irrecoverable, capital punishments ought never to be inflicted, when others are adequate to the crime, or can answer the great end of the glory of God in the general advantage of the society. But some ma-

lefactors ought to be punished with death. 1. If the common tranquillity ought to be carefully preserved, notorious disturbers of it must be cut off. 2. Notwithstanding of capital punishments threatened or inflicted, some wickedly commit the most shocking enormities against the welfare of their state, and the honour of God, its Supreme Governor. 3. No loss of property, liberty, or honour, is adequate to the criminal depriving others of their precious life, &c. 4. If the more shocking enormities were not severely punished, the commission would become more and more frequent.—Hence the execution of malefactors ought to be as public and solemn as possible, in order more effectually to deter others from the like crimes.—It is even sometimes necessary, that innocent persons should suffer in their honours and estates along with the guilty.—For the security of nations, and the more effectually to deter others from such wickedness, the children of traitors may be deprived of their parents' estates, that thus they may be impressed with the treason, and disabled from avenging the traitor's death on the nation.

In necessary self-defence men have a right to kill their assailants. But **DUELLING** is unlawful and murderous, a remain of the ancient Gothic barbarity. Men by it discover the most abominable pride and passion,—presumptuously usurp the power of the civil magistrate in avenging themselves, and madly risk their own death and damnation, in attempting to murder their neighbour, or even friend.

In no case ought men to deprive their neighbour of his life, and plunge him into an eternity, perhaps of inexpressible misery, if, consistent with equity and the public welfare, it can be avoided. But in some cases **WAR** is lawful and necessary, upon one side, though never on both. 1. Some men are so unjust that there is no securing our own property or life, but by opposing force to force. 2. Violent injurers of others being public pests of society, their restraint or destruction becomes necessary, not only for securing our own life and property, but also to prevent their injuring or murdering of others.—Though war ought never to be undertaken without urgent necessity, when the matter in dispute is of great importance in itself, or in its consequences,—and never till after the most earnest attempts to retain or recover our property by milder methods,—yet it may be sometimes lawful to take arms before we are attacked, and over-run the country of our implacable opponent, in order to render him incapable of further mischief,—even as we may bind a madman before he hath actually hurt us. Nay, it may be lawful for private persons to take arms of their own accord, in case of invasions or sudden assaults; or when the force of public laws is suspended by public confusions.—But as wars are always *unlawful* and murder-

ous, upon one side, and frequently on both, no man ought to assist in war without an impartial examination and well-grounded satisfaction concerning its lawfulness. No command of superiors can sanctify rage and murder: Nay, even in lawful war, violence and bloodshed ought to be avoided as far as can possibly consist with the good end proposed;—and, though it may be lawful to impose on an enemy by feigned marches, declining of battle, or other doubtful acts, it is always unlawful to deceive him by lies, false promises, or oaths.—But to violate truces, treaties, safe conduct, or injure ambassadors or messengers;—and to hire any to betray or assassinate their princes or generals, or to disclose their secrets, is base and wicked, and often tends to prolong the war, or render it more furious.

As magistrates derive their whole power and authority from God himself, and are bound as his deputies to exercise it for his honour and the welfare of their nation in subordination to it, they cannot lawfully establish any religion but that which is of God,—they cannot *authoritatively tolerate* a FALSE RELIGION, which at once robs, affronts, and blasphemes God, the King of nations, draws down his wrath upon the encouragers and embracers of it, corrupts the morals and disturbs the peace of the nation,—any more than they can lawfully authorize calumny, theft, murder, adultery, or the like.—But, by their own eminently virtuous example, by proper encouragement of orthodox and faithful teachers, and by enacting of prudent and good laws in its favour, they ought to promote the open profession and practice of the TRUE RELIGION in their dominions, and to restrain, or even seasonably and suitably punish any open affront to it. Nevertheless, they ought never to FORCE men to religious acts, especially such as suppose real saintship, by any *civil penalties*. 1. Real religion doth not chiefly consist in external performances, but in the proper frame, and exercise of the heart. 2. Such convulsive force, instead of convincing men of the truth, hardens them against conviction, and prevents impartial examination. 3. It cannot therefore render men *truly religious*, but only base dissemblers in religion. 4. It is hurtful to society. It obliges those that are *conscientiously* persuaded of the propriety of that which is contrary to the will of the magistrate, either to endure the stings of their own conscience, if they comply, or to see themselves and their families ruined, if they do not.—It prejudices others in favour of the prosecuted, as if no other argument than violence could be produced against their opinions. And this is apt to increase their adherents, if not to create public disorders, and revolutions in the state.

In order to a general promotion of religion and virtue, all men ought earnestly to addict themselves to, 1. An attentive

reading, hearing, and meditating upon the nature of God and men, and of the connections between them, as they have opportunity afforded them. 2. The utmost regularity and reverence in their external worshipping of God, which mark their own regard to him, and stir up others to the like. 3. The most sincere and fervent prayer to God, that he would teach, incline, and enable them to a right performance of their duty. 4. A religious assembling together in the social worship of God, corresponding to their social temper of mind, and that at proper times, fixed either by God himself, or by their common consent that no civil business may hinder or disturb such associations. 5. All, in their particular relations and circumstances, as *men, women, husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, sisters, masters, servants, magistrates, subjects, teachers, taught, lawyers, physicians, soldiers, craftsmen, merchants,—rich or poor, noble or ignoble,—natives or strangers,—old or young, prosperous or afflicted in soul, body, property, or relations,—*ought with great attention to fulfil those duties which particularly correspond with their diversified conditions. 6. The present and future advantages of religion and virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, ought carefully to be pondered, and deeply laid to heart.

In this life, the circumspect cultivation of religion and virtue promotes men's health and honour, and their after reflections on their conduct, and their reasonable hopes of a future reward in the prosecution of it, give them a most substantial though secret satisfaction: and what is profitable to every individual must be profitable to the *whole society*.—It is most absurd to pretend, that private vices are public benefits, and that a general reformation of manners would ruin vast multitudes, whose subsistence depends on the common pride and debauchery of others. For, 1. What greater good was ever produced or even occasioned by vice, than hath, or could be by virtue. How easily might that money, which is spent in gaming, drunkenness, whoredom, or prodigality, be better circulated by the inventions and exercises of virtue? 2. To promote the circulation of money, and the support of the industrious, religion and virtue allow men the use of many things not absolutely necessary, if their stations do suit, and their incomes can afford them. 3. A general reformation to temperance and other virtues would prevent the disgrace and ruin, if not the eternal damnation of many thousands of persons and families. The time and money spent in gaming, drunkenness, and whoredom, &c. might be far better employed in forming children or others to some useful business. 4. Many who enjoy splendour and wealth are unhappy amidst them, and might be far happier, even in poverty, if they had but a virtuous temper of mind. 5. Men temperate and virtuous would defend and promote the welfare of their

country, with more conscience, care, and courage, than vicious and abandoned wretches can be supposed to do. 6. Nations and other societies have often become great and powerful by virtue; but have been weakened and ruined by vice.

In the future state, men, who live and die religious and virtuous, bid fair to be eternally happy, and those that are vicious to be miserable. 1. God does, and for ever will love, true religion and virtue, and hate profligacy and vice. 2. The pleasures and profits which attend religion and virtue, and the miseries which accompany vice in this world, appear to be an earnest of something correspondent in a future state. 3. The small difference, to appearance, that God makes in his dealings with the virtuous and the notoriously wicked, in this life, induces our rational minds to expect a far greater difference in the next.

CHAP. II.

Of the INSUFFICIENCY of the LAW, and especially of the LIGHT of NATURE, to conduct Men to true and lasting felicity.

THE *Law of Nature*, which hath been imperfectly exhibited in the preceding chapter, ought never to be confounded with the *light of nature as now enjoyed*. The *law of nature* is comprehensively known to God alone, to whom the whole number and forms of relations between himself and men are naked and open, it is stable, permanent, uniform, and every where binding. The *light of nature* is that knowledge of the nature of God and of themselves, and of the duties resulting from the connections between them, which men *actually* possess. It is exceedingly diversified in its extent and degree, according to the different capacities, opportunities, and inclinations of men;—so that, in some parts of Tartary, Africa, America, and the Isles, where it receives no assistance or improvement from Divine Revelation, it appears little superior to the sagacity of some brutes.

Nevertheless, multitudes of our high pretenders to knowledge have extolled it as sufficient, nay, the *only guide* of mankind to true virtue and happiness. Having had their understandings informed and enlarged by means of revelation, and often pretending the highest regard to Christianity, they, in the most uncandid manner, endeavour to undermine its authority, and render it an object of ridicule;—or even to attack the fundamental principles of natural religion, because of their subserviency to it. None of these deistical, or more properly