

has been to conciliate discordant opinions, and to connect popular belief with philosophy.

But I have also aimed at a much higher mark; and have followed up the aim through the general train of reasoning introduced into the preceding divisions of this course of instruction. I have endeavoured to show, that though every part of the visible creation is transient and imperfect, every part is in a state of progression, and striving at something more perfect than itself; that the whole unfolds to us a beautiful scale of ascension, every division harmoniously playing into every other division, and, with the nicest adjustment, preparing for its furtherance. The mineral kingdom lays a foundation for the vegetable, the vegetable for the animal: infancy for youth, youth for manhood, and manhood for the wisdom of hoary hairs. We have hence strong ground, independently of that furnished us by Revelation, for concluding that the scene will not end here: that we are but upon the threshold of a vast and incomprehensible scheme, that will reach beyond the present world and run coeval with eternity. The admirable Bishop of Durham, to whose writings I have already occasionally adverted, pursues this argument with great force in his immortal Analogy, and shows, with impressive perspicuity, the general coincidence of design that runs throughout the natural and the moral government of Providence, all equally leading to a future and more perfect state of things. "The natural and moral constitution and government of the world," says he, "are so connected as to make up together but one scheme; and it is highly probable that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter; as the vegetable is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds.—Every act, therefore, of divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look much beyond itself, and its immediate object may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administration and to a genuine moral plan; and every circumstance of this his moral government may be adjusted beforehand, with a view to the whole of it.—It is hence absurd, absurd to the degree of being ridiculous, if the subject were not of so serious a kind, for men to think themselves secure in a vicious life; or even in that immoral thoughtlessness, which far the greatest part of them are fallen into."<sup>\*</sup>

## LECTURE II.

ON THE NATURE AND DURATION OF THE SOUL, AS EXPLAINED BY POPULAR TRADITIONS, AND VARIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATIONS.

We have entered upon a subject in which human wisdom or imagination can afford us but very little aid; and I have already observed, that I have rather touched upon it, in order that, with suitable modesty, we may know and acknowledge our own weakness, and apply to the only source from which we can derive any real information concerning it, than to support any hypothesis that can be deduced from either physical or metaphysical investigations. "The science of abstruse learning," observes Mr. Tucker, and no man was ever better qualified to give an opinion upon it, "when completely attained, is like Achilles's spear, that healed the wounds it had made before. It casts no additional light upon the paths of life, but disperses the clouds with which it had overspread them. It advances not the traveller one step in his journey, but conducts him back again to the spot from whence he had wandered."<sup>†</sup> But if it do not discover new truths, it prepares, or should prepare, the mind for apprehending those that are already in existence with a greater facility, and far more accurately appreciating their value.

In our last lecture we took a glance at several of the discordant opinions,

<sup>\*</sup> Analysis of Religion, Natural and Revealed, part i. ch. vii. p. 148, 150, 155. edit. 1802.  
<sup>†</sup> Light of Nature Pursued, chap. xxxii.

supported respectively by men of the deepest learning and research, that have been offered in relation to the essence of the mind or soul; and showed by a scale of analysis conducted through all the most striking modifications of that plastic and fugitive substance which composes the whole of the visible world, that all such discussions must be necessarily uncertain, and considerably less likely to be productive of truth than of error. But there is a question of far more consequence to us than the nature of the soul's essence, and that is, the nature of its duration. Is the soul immortal? Is it capable of a separate existence? Does it perish with the body as a part of it? Or, if a distinct principle, does it vanish into nothingness as soon as the separation takes place? What does philosophy offer us upon this subject? This, too, has been studied from age to age; the wisest of mankind have tried it in every possible direction: new opinions have been started, and old opinions revived;—and what, after all, is the upshot? The reply is as humiliating as in the former case: vanity of vanities, and nothing more; utter doubt and indecision,—hope perpetually neutralized by fear.

If we turn to the oldest hypotheses of the East,—to the Vedas of the Brahmins and the Zendavesta of the Parsees,—to those venerable but fanciful stores of learning, from which many of the earliest Greek schools drew their first draughts of metaphysical science, we shall find, indeed, a full acknowledgment of the immortality of the soul, but only upon the sublime and mystical doctrine of emanation and immanation, as a part of the great soul of the universe; issuing from it at birth, and resorbed into it upon the death of the body; and hence altogether incapable of individual being, or a separate state of existence. If we turn from Persia, Egypt, and Hindostan to Arabia, to the fragrant groves and learned shades of Dedan and Teman, from which it is certain that Persia, and highly probable that Hindostan, derived its first poetic literature, we shall find the entire subject left in as blank and barren a silence, as the deserts by which they are surrounded; or, if touched upon, only touched upon to betray doubt, and sometimes disbelief. The tradition, indeed, of a future state of retributive justice seems to have reached the schools of this part of the world, and to have been generally, though perhaps not universally, accredited; but the future existence it alludes to is that of a resurrection of the body, and not of a survival of the soul after the body's dissolution. The oldest work that has descended to us from this quarter (and there is little doubt that it is the oldest, or one of the oldest works in existence,<sup>\*</sup>) is that astonishing and transcendent composition, the book of Job:—a work that ought assuredly to raise the genius of Idumea above that of Greece, and that of itself is demonstrative of the indefatigable spirit with which the deepest as well as the most polished sciences were pursued in this region, during what may be comparatively called the youth and dayspring of the world. Yet in this sublime and magnificent poem, replete with all the learning and wisdom of the age, the doctrine upon the subject before us is merely as I have just stated it, a patriarchal or traditionary belief of a future state of retributive justice, not by the natural immortality of the soul, but by a resurrection of the body. And the same general idea has for the most part descended in the same country to the present day; for the Alcoran, which is perpetually appealing to the latter fact, leaves the former almost untouched, and altogether in a state of indecision, whence the expounders of the Islam scriptures, both Sunnites and Motazzalites, or orthodox and heterodox, are divided upon the subject, some embracing and others rejecting it. And it is hence curious to observe the different grounds appealed to in favour of a future existence, in the most learned regions of the East: the Hindoo philosophers totally and universally denying a resurrection of the body, and supporting the doctrine alone upon the natural immortality of the soul, and the Arabian philosophers passing over the immortality of the soul, and resting it alone upon a resurrection of the body.

The schools of Greece, as I have already observed, derived their earliest

<sup>\*</sup> Ser. II. Lect. x.

metaphysics from the gymnosophists of India; and hence, like the latter, while for the most part they contended for the immortal and incorruptible nature of the soul, they in like manner overlooked or reprobated the doctrine of a resurrection of the body. On which account, when St. Paul, with an equal degree of address and eloquence, introduced this subject into his discourse in the Agora or great square of Athens, the philosophers that listened to it carried him to Areopagus, and inquired what the new doctrine was of which he had been speaking to the people.

The earliest Greek schools, therefore, having derived this tenet from an Indian source, believed it, for the most part, after the Indian manner. And hence, though they admitted the immortality of the soul, they had very confused ideas of its mode of existence; and the greater number of them believed it, like the Hindoos, to be resorbed, after the present life, into the great soul of the world, or the creative spirit, and consequently to have no individual being whatsoever.

Such, more especially, was the doctrine of Orpheus and of the Stoics; and such, in its ultimate tendency, that of the Pythagoreans, who, though they conceived that the soul had, for a certain period, an individual being, sometimes involved in a cloudy vehicle, and sleeping in the regions of the dead, and sometimes sent back to inhabit some other body, either brutal or human, conceived also that at length it would return to the eternal source from which it had issued, and for ever lose all personal existence in its essential fruition; a doctrine, under every variety, derived from the colleges of the East.

I have said that this principle was imported by the Pythagorists, and the Greek schools in general, from the philosophy of India. The slightest dip into the Vedas will be a sufficient proof of this. Let us take the following splendid verse as an example, upon which the Vedantis peculiarly pride themselves, and which they have, not without reason, denominated the Gayatri, or most holy verse.

"Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun the Bhargas, or godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, FROM WHOM ALL HAVE PROCEEDED, TO WHOM ALL MUST RETURN, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat."<sup>\*</sup>

The doctrine of the later Platonists was precisely of the same kind, and it was very extensively imbibed, with the general principles of the Platonic theory, by the poets and philosophers who flourished at the period of the revival of literature. Lorenzo de Medici is well known to have been warmly attached to this sublime mysticism; yet he has made it a foundation for some of the sweetest and most elevated devotional poetry that the world possesses. His magnificent address to the Supreme Being has seldom been equalled. I cannot quote it before a popular audience in its original, but I will beg your acceptance of the following imperfect translation of two of its stanzas, that you may have some glance into its merit:

Father Supreme! O let me climb  
That sacred seat, and mark sublime  
Th' essential fount of life and love:  
Fount, whence each good, each pleasure flows,  
O, to my view thyself disclose!  
The radiant heaven thy presence throws!  
O, lose me in the light above!

Flee, flee, ye mists! let earth depart:  
Raise me, and show me what thou art,  
Great sun and centre of the soul!  
To thee each thought, in silence, tends;  
To thee the saint, in prayer, ascends;  
Thou art the source, the guide, the goal:  
The whole is thine, and thou the whole.†

\* Sir Wm. Jones, vi. p. 417.

† Concedi, O Padre! l'alta e sacra sede  
Monti la monte, e veggia el vivo fonte,  
Fonte ver bene, onde ogni ben procede.  
Mostra la luce vera alla mia fronte,  
E poiché conosciuto è 'l tuo bel sole,  
Dell'alma ferma in lui luci prone.

While such, however, were the philosophical traditions, the popular tradition appears to have been of a different kind, and as much more ancient as it was more extensive. It taught that the disembodied spirit becomes a ghost as soon as it is separated from the corporeal frame; a thin, misty, or aerial form, somewhat larger than life, with a feeble voice, shadowy limbs; knowledge superior to what was possessed while in the flesh; capable, under particular circumstances, of rendering itself visible; and retaining so much of its former features as to be recognised upon its apparition; in a few instances wandering about for a certain period of time after death, but for the most part conveyed to a common receptacle situated in the interior of the earth, and denominated sheol (שְׁאוֹל), hades (Ἅδης), hell, or the world of shades.

Such was the general belief of the multitude in almost all countries from a very early period of time; with this difference, that the hades of various nations was supposed to exist in some remote situation on the surface of the earth, and that of others in the clouds. The first of these modifications of the general tradition is still to be traced among many of the African tribes, and perhaps all the aboriginal tribes of North America. That most excellent man, William Penn, who appears, with some singularities, to have united in his character as much moral goodness, natural eloquence, and legislative wisdom, as ever fell to the lot of any one, has sufficiently noticed this fact, in regard to the American tribes, in his valuable account of the country, addressed to "The Free Society of Traders of Pennsylvania," drawn up from an extensive and actual survey, and constituting, so far as it goes, one of the most important and authentic documents we possess. "These poor people," says he, "are under a dark night in things relating to religion, to be sure, the tradition of it: yet they believe a God and immortality without the help of metaphysics; for they say there is a great king who made them, who dwells in a glorious country to the southward of them, and that the souls of the good shall go thither, where they shall live again."<sup>\*</sup> And it is upon the faith of this description that Mr. Pope drew up that admirable and well-known picture of the same tradition, that occurs in the first epistle of his Essay on Man, and is known to every one.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind,  
Sees God in clouds; or hears him in the wind:  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk or milky way;  
Yet simple nature to his home has given  
Beyond the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heaven;  
Some safer world in depth of woods embraç'd,  
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste;  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

*Queen Sabé*

*Queen Sabé. ahah*

The tradition which describes the hades, or invisible world, as seated in the clouds, was chiefly common to the Celtic tribes, and particularly to that which at an early age peopled North Britain. It is by far the most refined and picturesque idea that antiquity has offered upon the subject, and which has consequently been productive, not only of the most sublime, but of the most pathetic descriptions to which the general tradition has given rise under any form. The Celtic bards are full of this imagery; and it is hence a chief characteristic in the genuine productions of Ossian, which, in consequence, assume a still higher importance as historical records than as fragments of exquisite poetry. Let me, in proof of this, quote his fine delineation of the spirit of Crugal from a passage in the second book of Fingal, one of his best

Fuga le nebbie, e le terrestre mole  
Leva da mè, e splendi in la tua luce;  
Tu se' quel sommo ben che ciascuno vuole;  
A tè dolce riposo si conduce.  
E tè come suo fin, vede ogni pio;  
Tu se' principio, portatore e duce,  
La vita, e 'l termino, Tu sol Magno Dio.

\* Clarkson's Life of Wm. Penn, vol. i. p. 391.

authenticated poems,\* premising that the importance of the errand, which is to warn his friends, "the sons of green Erin," of impending destruction, and to advise them to save themselves by retreat, sufficiently justifies the apparition. "A dark red stream of fire comes down from the hill. Crugal sat upon the beam: he that lately fell by the hand of Swaran striving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the setting moon: his robes are of the clouds of the hill: his eyes are like two decaying flames. Dark is the wound on his breast. The stars dim-twinkled through his form; and his voice was like the sound of a distant stream. Dim and in tears he stood, and stretched his pale hand over the hero. Faintly he raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego. 'My ghost, O Connal! is on my native hills, but my corse is on the sands of Ullin. Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, nor find his lone steps on the heath. I am light as the blast of Cromla, and I move like the shadow of mist. Connal, son of Colgar! I see the dark cloud of death. It hovers over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin shall fall. Remove from the field of ghosts.' Like the darkened moon, he retired in the midst of the whistling blast."

Let us take another very brief but very beautiful example. "Trenmor came from his hill at the voice of his mighty son. A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs. His robe is of the mist of Lano, that brings death to the people. His sword is a green meteor half extinguished. His face is without form and dark. He sighed thrice over the hero; and thrice the winds of the night roared around. Many were his words to Oscar. He slowly vanished, like a mist that melts on the sunny hill."

The idea of his still pursuing his accustomed occupation of riding with his glittering sword (its glitter now half-extinguished, and of a green hue) on the steed of the stranger—a steed won in battle—his own limbs rendered airy, and the steed dissolved into the semblance of a cloud—is not only exquisite as a piece of poetic painting but as a fact consonant with the popular tradition of all other countries, which uniformly allotted to the shades or ghosts of their respective heroes their former passions and inclinations, the pastimes or employments to which they had devoted themselves while on earth, and the arms or implements they had chiefly made use of. Thus, the Scandinavian bard, Lodbrog, while singing his own death-song, literally translated from the Runic into Latin by Olaus Wormius, and transferring, in like manner, the pursuits of his life to his pursuits after death: "In the halls of our father Balder I know seats are prepared, where we shall soon drink all out of the hollow skulls of our enemies. In the house of the mighty Odin no brave man laments death. I come not with the voice of despair to Odin's hall."†

The same popular belief was common to the Greeks and Romans. Thus, Æneas, according to Virgil, in his descent to the infernal regions, beholds the shades of the Trojan heroes still panting for fame, and amusing themselves with the martial exercises to which they had been accustomed, and with airy semblances of horses, arms, and chariots:

The chief surveyed full many a shadowy car,  
Illusive arms, and coursers train'd for war.  
Their lances fix'd in earth, their steeds around,  
Now free from harness, graze the mimic ground.  
The love of horses which they had, alive,  
And care of chariots, after death survive.‡

Virgil, while true to the tradition of his country, is well known to have copied his description from Homer; and in Homer's time the same popular

\* See Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland appointed to inquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian, drawn up, according to the Directions of the Committee, by Henry Mackenzie, Esq. its Convener or Chairman, p. 153, and p. 190—260.

† See Blair's Dissertation on Ossian.

‡ Arma procul, currusque virum miratur inanes.  
Stant terrâ delixæ hastæ, passimque soluti  
Pot campos pascuntur equi; quæ gratia currum  
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes  
Pascere equos; eadem sequitur tellure repostos.  
*Æneid*, vi. 651.

tradition was common to the Jews, and runs through almost all their poetry. It is thus Isaiah, who was nearly contemporary with Homer, satirizes the fall of Belshazzar, ch. xiv. 9.

The lowermost HELL is in motion for thee,  
To congratulate thy arrival:  
For thee arouseth he the MIGHTY DEAD,  
All the chieftains of the earth.

The term MIGHTY DEAD is peculiarly emphatic. The Hebrew word is רפאים (Rephaim), the "gigantic spectres," "the magnified and mighty ghost;" exhibiting, as I have already observed, a form larger than life, or, as Juvenal has admirably expressed it upon a similar occasion, xiii. 221,

Major imago  
Humanâ  
A more than mortal make:

whence the term Rephaim is rendered in the Septuagint, Γγγηται, and by Theodotion, Γγγητες.

To the same effect, Ezekiel, about a century afterward, in his sublime prophecy of the destruction of Egypt, a piece of poetry that has never been surpassed in any age or country, ch. xxxii. 18—26. I can only quote a few verses, and I do it to prove that the tradition common to other nations, that the ghosts of heroes were surrounded in hades, or the invisible world, with a shadowy semblance of their former dress and instruments of war, was equally common to Judea.

v. 2. Wail! Son of Man, for multitudinous Egypt,  
Yea, down let her be cast,  
Like the daughters of the renowned nations,  
Into the nether parts of the earth,  
Among those that have descended into the pit.  
Thou! that surpassest in beauty!  
Get thee down.—  
To the sword is she surrendered:  
Draw him forth, and all his forces,  
The chieftains of the MIGHTY DEAD (רפאים)  
Call to him and his auxiliaries  
From the lowest depths of hell,—  
v. 27. To the grave who have descended  
With their instruments of war;  
With their swords placed under their heads.

From what quarter this popular and almost universal tradition was derived, or in what age it originated, we know not. I have said that it appears to be more ancient than any of the traditions of the philosophers; and in support of this opinion, I chiefly allude to one or two hints at it that are scattered throughout the book of Job, which I must again take leave to regard as the oldest composition that has descended to us. I do not refer to the fearful and unrivalled description of the spectre that appeared to Eliphaz, because the narrator himself does not seem to have regarded this as a human image, but, among other passages,\* to the following part of the afflicted patriarch's severe invective against his friend Bildad:

Yea the MIGHTY DEAD are laid open from below,  
The floods and their inhabitants.  
HELL is naked before him;  
And DESTRUCTION hath no covering.

Bildad had been taunting Job with ready-made and proverbial speeches; and there can be no doubt that thus of Job's, in reply, is of the same sort; imbued with popular tradition, but a tradition not entering into the philosophical creed either of himself or of any of his friends; for throughout the whole scope of the argument upon the important question of a future being,

the immortality and separate existence of the soul are never once brought forward; every ray of hope being, as I have already observed, derived from the doctrine of a future resurrection of the body.

In many parts of the world, though not in all, this common tradition of the people was carried much farther, and, under different modifications, made to develop a very important and correct doctrine; for it was believed, in most countries, that this hell, hades, or invisible world, is divided into two very distinct and opposite regions by a broad and impassable gulf; that the one is a seat of happiness, a paradise, or Elysium, and the other a seat of misery, a Gehenna, or Tartarus; and that there is a supreme magistrate and an impartial tribunal belonging to the infernal shades, before which the ghost must appear, and by which he is sentenced to the one or the other, according to the deeds done in the body.

Egypt is generally said to have been the inventress of this important and valuable part of the common tradition; and, undoubtedly, it is to be found in the earliest records of Egyptian history: but from the wonderful conformity of its outlines to the parallel doctrine of the Scriptures, it is probable that it has a still higher origin, and that it constituted a part of the patriarchal or antediluvian creed, retained in a few channels, though forgotten or obliterated in others; and consequently, that it was a divine communication in a very early age.

Putting by all traditionary information, however, there were many philosophers of Greece who attempted to reason upon the subject, and seemed desirous of abiding by the result of their own argument. Of these the principal are, Socrates, Plato, and Epicurus. The first is by far the most entitled to our attention for the simplicity and clearness of his conception, and the strength of his belief. Unfortunately, we have no satisfactory relic of the great chain of induction by which he was led to so correct and happy a conclusion; for we must not confound his ideas with those of Plato, who has too frequently intermixed his own with them. From the lucid and invaluable MEMORABILIA of his disciple Xenophon, however, we have historical grounds for affirming that whatever may have been the train of his reasoning, it led him to a general assurance that the human soul is allied to the Divine Being, yet not by a participation of essence, but by a similarity of nature; and hence that the existence of good men will be continued after death in a state in which they will be rewarded for their virtue. Upon the future condition of the wicked, Socrates appears to have said but little; he chiefly speaks of it as being less happy than that of the virtuous: and it has hence been conceived that, as he thought the sole hope of immortality to the good man was founded upon his becoming assimilated to the divine nature, he may have imagined that the unassimilated soul of the wicked would perish with its body; and the more so, as he allowed the same common principle or faculty of reason, though in a subordinate degree, to all other animals as to man; and hence, again, gave sufficient proof that he did not regard this principle as necessarily incorruptible. To me, however, his opinion seems rather to have been of a contrary kind, importing future existence and punishment.

Upon this sublime subject, indeed, he appears at times to have been not altogether free from anxiety: but it is infinitely to his credit, and evinces a testimony in favour of the doctrine itself far more powerful than the force of argument, and even breathing of divine inspiration, that, in his last moments, he triumphed in the persuasion of its truth, and had scarcely a doubt upon his mind. When the venerable sage, at this time in his seventieth year, took the poisoned cup, to which he had been condemned by an ungrateful country, he alone stood unmoved while his friends were weeping around him: he upbraided their cowardice, and entreated them to exercise a manliness worthy of the patrons of virtue: "It would, indeed," said he, "be inexcusable in me to despise death if I were not persuaded that it will conduct me into the presence of the gods, the righteous governors of the universe, and into the society of just and good men: but I draw confidence from the hope that something of man remains after death, and that the state of the good will be much better than that of the bad." He drank the deadly cup, and shortly

afterward expired. Such was the end of the virtuous Socrates! "A story," says Cicero, "which I never read without tears."\*

The soul of the Platonic system is a much more scholastic compound than that of the Socratic; it is in truth a motley triad produced by an emanation from the Deity or Eternal Intelligence, uniting itself with some portion of the soul of the world, and some portion of matter. In his celebrated *Phædo*, Plato distinctly teaches, and endeavours to prove, that this compound structure had a pre-existent being, and is immortal in its own nature; and that as it did exist in a separate state antecedently to its union with the body, it will probably continue to exist in the same manner after death. There are various other arguments in favour of its immortality introduced into the same dialogue, and, like the present, derived from the different tenets of his own fanciful theory; in no respect more cogent, and only calculated for the meridian of the schools.

In the writings of Aristotle there is nothing which decisively determines whether he thought the human soul mortal or immortal; but the former is most probable from the notion he entertained concerning its nature and origin; conceiving it to be an intellectual power, externally transmitted into the human body from the eternal intelligence, the common source of rationality to human beings. Aristotle does not inform his readers what he conceived the principle, thus universally communicated, to consist of; but there is no proof that he supposed it would continue after the death of the body.†

The grand opponent of the soul's immortality, however, among the Greeks, was Epicurus. He conceived it to be a fine, elastic, sublimated, spiritualized gas or aura, composed of the most subtle parts of the atmosphere, as caloric, pure air, and vapour,‡ introduced into the system in the act of respiration, peculiarly elaborated by peculiar organs, and united with a something still lighter, still rarer, and more active than all the rest; at that time destitute of name, and incapable of sensible detection, offering a wonderful resemblance to the electric or Galvanic gas of modern times. In the words of Lucretius, who has so accurately and elegantly described the whole of the Epicurean system:

Penitus prorsum latet hæc natura, subestque;  
Nec magis hæc infra quidquam est in corpore nostro;  
Atque anima est animæ proporro totius ipsa. §  
Far from all vision this profoundly lurks,  
Through the whole system's utmost depth diffus'd,  
And lives as soul of e'en the soul itself.

The soul thus produced, Epicurus affirmed, must be material, because we can trace it issuing from a material source; because it exists, and exists alone in a material system; is nourished by material food; grows with the growth of the body; becomes matured with its maturity; declines with its decay; and hence, whether belonging to man or brutes, must die with its death.

But this is to suppose that every combination of matter, and every principle and quality connected with matter, are equally submitted to our senses, and equally comprehended by them. It has already appeared that we cannot determine for certain whether one or two of the principles which enter into the composition of the soul, upon this philosopher's own system, are matter, or something superior to matter, and, consequently, a distinct essence blended with it, out of the animal fabric as well as in it. Yet if they be matter, and the soul thus consists of matter, of a matter far lighter, more subtilized and active than that of the body, it does not follow that it must necessarily

\* Mem. Xen. l. i. Nat. Deor. iii. 33. Calix venenatus qui Socratem transtulit è carcere in cœlum. Senec. Ep. 67.

† De Gen. An. ii. 3, iii. 11. Cic. Tusc. Q. i. 10. Enfield's Brucker, i. 285

‡ In the language of Lucretius, iii. 284.

Ventus et aer

Et calor

§ Lib. iii. 274.

perish with the body. The very minute heartlet, or corcle, which every one must have noticed in the heart of a walnut, does not perish with the solid mass of the shell and kernel that encircle it: on the contrary, it survives this, and gives birth to the future plant which springs from this substance, draws hence its nourishment, and shoots higher and higher towards the heavens as the grosser materials that surround the corcle are decaying. In like manner, the decomposition of limestone, instead of destroying, sets at liberty the light gas that was imprisoned in its texture; and the gay and gaudy but terfly mounts into the skies from the dead and mouldering cément by which it was lately surrounded. Matter is not necessarily corruptible under any form. The Epicureans themselves, as well as the best schools of modern philosophy, believed it to be solid and unchangeable in its elementary particles. Crystallized into granitic mountains, we have innumerable instances of its appearing to have resisted the united assaults of time and tempests ever since the creation of the world. And in the light and gaseous texture in which we are at present contemplating it, it is still more inseparable and difficult of decomposition. Whether material or immaterial, therefore, it does not necessarily follow, even upon the principles of this philosophy itself, that the soul must be necessarily corruptible; nor does it, moreover, necessarily follow that, admitting it to be incorruptible or immortal in man, it must be so in brutes. Allowing the essence to be the same, the difference of its modification, or elaboration, which, this philosophy admits, produces the different degrees of its perfection, may also be sufficient to produce a difference in its power of duration. And for any thing we know to the contrary, while some material bodies may be exempt from corruption, there may be some immaterial bodies that are subject to it.

The philosophers of Rome present us with nothing new; for they merely followed the dogmas of those of Greece. Cicero, though he has given us much of the opinions of other writers upon the nature and duration of the soul, has left us almost as little of his own as Aristotle has done. Upon the whole, he seems chiefly to have favoured the system of Plato. Seneca and Epictetus were avowed and zealous adherents to the principles of the Stoics; and Lucretius to those of Epicurus.

Upon the whole, philosophy seems to have made but an awkward handle of the important question before us. A loose and glimmering twilight appears to have been common to most nations: but the more men attempted to reason upon it, at least with a single exception or two, the more they doubted and became involved in difficulties. They believed and they disbelieved, they hoped and they feared, and life passed away in a state of perpetual anxiety and agitation. But this was not all: perplexed, even where they admitted the doctrine, about the will of the Deity, and the mode of securing his favour after death, with their own abstruse speculations they intermixed the religion of the multitude. They acknowledged the existence of the popular divinities; clothed them with the attributes of the Eternal; and, anxious to obtain their benediction, were punctilious in attending at their temples, and united in the sacrifices that were presented. Even Socrates, amid the last words he uttered, desired Crito not to forget to offer for him the cock which he had vowed to Esculapius.\*

In effect, the whole of the actual knowledge possessed at any time appears to have been traditionary: for we may well doubt whether, without such a basis to have built upon, philosophy would ever have started any well-grounded opinion in favour of a future state. And this traditionary knowledge seems to have been of two kinds, and both kinds to have been delivered at a very early age of the world—the immortality of the soul, and the final resurrection of the body. From the preceding sketch it seems reasonable to suppose that both these doctrines (unquestionably beyond the reach of mere human discovery) were divinely communicated to the patriarchs; and amid the growing wickedness of succeeding times, gradually forgotten and lost

\* Xenoph. Mem. l. iv. Plat. Apol. Laert. ii.

sight of: in some quarters one of them being slightly preserved, in some quarters the other, and in one or two regions, both.

In this last division it is highly probable we are to class the Hebrews at the epoch of Moses: and hence, perhaps, the reason why neither of these doctrines is especially promulgated in any part of his institutes. But in subsequent times both appear to have lost much of their force even among this people. The Pharisees and Caraites, indeed, whose opinions (whatever might be their practice) were certainly the most orthodox, supported them; but they are well known to have been both relinquished by the Sadducees, and one of them (the resurrection) by the Essenes. Solomon, whose frequent use of Arabisms evidently betrays the elegant school in which he had chiefly studied, appears with the language to have imbibed the philosophy of the Arabian peninsula; and hence, to have admitted (in direct opposition to the Essenes, who drew their creed from India) the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and a state of retribution, while he disbelieved the doctrine of the separate immortality of the soul: and the distinction ought to be constantly kept in view while perusing his writings, since otherwise they may appear in different places to contradict themselves. Thus, in order to confound the pomp and pageantry of the proud and the powerful, and to show them the vanity and nothingness of his, he adverts to the last of these doctrines and confines himself to it. Eccl. iii. 19, 20. "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even the same thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath (or spirit), so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity: all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." But when addressing himself to the young and giddy pursuer of pleasure, in order to alarm him in the midst of his gay and licentious career, he as distinctly alludes and as carefully confines himself to the first of these doctrines. His language then is, ch. xi. 9, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,"—and tread as thou wilt the flowery paths of indulgence and pleasure; "but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." There is an equal point, a keen and forcible moral in both addresses, and which could not fail to strike the heart of those to whom they were respectively delivered.

It has been said by some writers that the judgment here referred to relates to the present world, and must be so interpreted to avoid the self-contradiction I have just adverted to. But the wisdom of Solomon stands in no need of the feeble and rushlight illumination of such commentators: nor could it ever be so said by any critic who has diligently attended to the mixed language of Solomon's diction, or rather to the Arabisms he so frequently indulges in; and who, from this and various other sources, has traced out that his early studies must have been passed in Arabia, or under the superintendance of Arabian tutors; and who, at the same time, calls to mind that the Idumæan cities of Dedan and Teman had the same classical character at Jerusalem that the cities of Athens and Corinth had at Rome.

But are we still abandoned to the same unfixd and shadowy evidence, with just light enough to kindle the hope of immortality, and darkness enough to strangle it the moment it is born? Beset as the world is at all times with physical and moral evils, and doubly beset as it is at present; while virtue, patriotism, and piety are bleeding at every pore; while the sweet influences of the heavens seem turned to bitterness, the natural constellations of the zodiac to have been pulled down from their high abodes, and vice, tyranny, and atheism to have usurped their places, and from their respective ascendants, to be breathing mildew and pestilence over the pale face of the astonished earth,\* is it to the worn-out traces of tradition, or the dubious fancies of philosophy, that this important doctrine is alone intrusted?—a doctrine not more vital to the hopes of man than to the justice of the Deity?—No; the fulness of the times has at length arrived: the veil of separation is drawn aside; the mighty and mysterious truth is published by a voice from heaven;

\* This lecture was delivered during the period of the French Revolution.

it is engraved on pages of adamant, and attested by the affirmation of the Godhead. It tells us, in words that cannot lie, that the soul is immortal from its birth; that the strong and inextinguishable desire we feel of future being is the true and natural impulse of a high-born and inextinguishable principle: and that the blow which prostrates the body and imprisons it in the grave, gives pinions to the soaring spirit, and crowns it with freedom and triumph. But this is not all: it tells us, too, that gross matter itself is not necessarily corruptible: that the freedom and triumph of the soul shall hereafter be extended to the body; that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal immortality, and a glorious and beatified reunion succeed. By what means such reunion is to be accomplished, or why such separation should be necessary, we know not,—for we know not how the union was produced at first. They are mysteries that yet remain locked up in the bosom of the great Creator, and are as inscrutable to the sage as to the savage, to the philosopher as to the schoolboy;—they are left, and perhaps purposely, to make a mock at all human science; and, while they form the groundwork of man's future happiness, forcibly to point out to him that his proper path to it is through the gate of humility.

*x what for the mock? x what for that mock? x what for that mock?*

## LECTURE III.

## ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

HAVING taken a brief survey of the essence and duration of the soul, mind, or intelligent principle, as far as we have been able to collect any information upon this abstruse subject, from reason, tradition, and revelation, let us now proceed, with equal modesty and caution, to an examination into its faculties, and the mode by which they develop themselves, and acquire knowledge.

"All our knowledge," observes Lord Bacon, "is derived from experience." It is a remark peculiarly characteristic of that comprehensive judgment with which this great philosopher at all times contemplated the field of nature, and which has been assumed as the common basis of every system that has since been fabricated upon the subject. "Whence," inquires Mr. Locke, "comes the mind by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? I answer, in a word, from *experience*. In this all our knowledge is founded; from this the whole emanates and issues." M. Degerando, and, in short, all the French philosophers of the present day, in adopting Locke's system, have necessarily adopted this important maxim as the groundwork of their reasoning; and though, as a general principle, it has been lately called in question by a few of the ablest advocates for what they have ventured to denominate the Theory of Common Sense, and especially by Professor Stewart,\* as I may perhaps find it necessary to notice more particularly hereafter, it is sufficient for the present to observe that the shrewd and learned projector of this theory, Dr. Reid, admits it in its utmost latitude: "Wise men," says he, "now agree or ought to agree in this, that *there is but one way to the knowledge of nature's works, the way of observation and experiment*. By our constitution we have a strong propensity to trace particular facts and observations to general rules, and to apply such general rules to account for other effects, or to direct us in the production of them. This procedure of the understanding is familiar to every human creature in the common affairs of life, and it is the only one by which any real discovery in philosophy can be made."<sup>†</sup>

Now the only mode by which we can obtain experience is by the use and

\* Philos. Essays, vol. i. p. 122.

† Inquiry into the Human Mind, p. 2.

exercise of the senses, which have been given to us for this purpose, and which, to speak figuratively, may be regarded as the fingers of the mind in feeling its way forward, and opening the shutters to the admission of that pure and invigorating light, which in consequence breaks in upon it.

It must be obvious, however, to every one who has attended to the operations of his senses, that there never is, nor can be, any direct communication between the mind and the external objects the mind perceives, which are usually, indeed, at some distance from the sense that gives notice of them. Thus, in looking at a tree, it is the eye alone that really beholds the tree, while the mind only receives a notice of its presence, by some means or other, from the visual organ. So in touching this table, it is my hand alone that comes in contact with it, and communicates to my mind a knowledge of its hardness and other qualities. What, then, is the medium by which such communication is maintained, which induces the mind, seated as it is in some undeveloped part of the brain, to have a correspondent perception of the form, size, colour, smell, and even distance of objects with the senses which are seated on the surface of the body; and which, at the same time that it conveys this information, produces such an additional effect, that the mind is able at its option to revive the perception, or call up an exact notion or idea of these qualities at a distant period, or when the objects themselves are no longer present? Is there, or is there not, any resemblance between the external or sensible object and the internal or mental idea or notion? If there be a resemblance, in what does that resemblance consist? and how is it produced and supported? Does the external object throw off representative likenesses of itself in films, or under any other modification, so fine as to be able, like the electric or magnetic aura, to pass without injury from the object to the sentient organ, and from the sentient organ to the sensory? Or has the mind itself a faculty of producing, like a looking-glass, accurate countersigns, intellectual pictures, or images, correspondent with the sensible images communicated from the external object to the sentient organ? If, on the contrary, there be no resemblance, are the mental perceptions mere notions or intellectual symbols excited in it by the action of the external sense; which, while they bear no similitude to the qualities of the object discerned, answer the purpose of those qualities, as letters answer the purpose of sounds? Or are we sure that there is any external world whatever? any thing beyond the intellectual principle that perceives, and the sensations and notions that are perceived; or even any thing beyond those sensations and notions, those impressions and ideas themselves?

Several of these questions may perhaps appear in no small degree whimsical and brain-sick, and more worthy of St. Luke's than of a scientific institution. But all of them, and perhaps as many more of a temperament as wild as the wildest, have been asked, and insisted upon, and supported again and again in different ages and countries, by philosophers of the clearest intellects in other respects, and who had no idea of labouring under any such mental infirmity, nor ever dreamed of the necessity of being blistered and taking physic.\*

There is scarcely, however, a hypothesis which has been started in modern times that cannot look for its prototype or suggestion among the ancients; and it will hence be found most advantageous, and may perhaps prove the shortest way to begin at the fountain-head, and to trace the different currents which have flowed from it. That fountain-head is Greece, or at least we may so regard it on the present occasion; and the plan which I shall request leave to pursue in the general inquiry before us will be, first of all, to take a rapid sketch of the most celebrated speculations upon this subject to which this well-spring of wisdom has given rise; next, to follow up the chief ramifications which have issued from them in later periods; and, lastly, to summon, as by a *quo warranto*, the more prominent of those of our own day to appear personally before the bar of this enlightened tribunal, for the pur-

\* See the author's Study of Medicine, vol. iv. p. 46, edit. 2, 1825.