Under these circumstances I must leave it to the enlightened audience before me to choose out of these different hypotheses as they may think best. For myself, I freely confess, that I have no ambition to soar into the higher rank and the infallible knowledge of an instinctive creature, and shall modestly content myself with the humbler character of a rational and intelligent being, still steadily steering by the lowly but sober lamps of a Bacon, a Newton, a Locke, a Butler, a Price, and a Paley, instead of being captivated by the beautiful and brilliant, but vacillating and illusive, coruscations of these northern lights.

LECTURE VII.

ON HUMAN HAPPINESS.

It has required, I apprehend, but a very slight attention to the course of study we have lately been following up, to be convinced of the truth of the remark with which we opened the series,—I mean, that the subject it proposed to discuss is, of all subjects whatever that relate to human entity, the most difficult and intractable. And absurd and visionary as have been many of the opinions which it has brought before us, let us in conclusion, check all undue levity, by recollecting that they are the absurdities and visions of the first philosophers and sages of their respective periods; of the wisest and, with a few exceptions, of the best of mankind; to whom, in most other respects, we ought to bow with implicit homage, and who have only foundered from too daring a spirit of adventure, and amid rocks and shoals which laugh at the experience of the pilot.

For myself, I freely confess to you, that my own hopes of success are but very humble. I have done my best, however, to render the subject intelligible; and if, in the progress of it, I should also have betrayed dreams and absurdities, I have only to entreat that they may be visited with the candour which I have endeavoured to extend to others; fully aware that the ablest arguments I have been able to submit are not fitted, if I may adopt the eloquent words of Mr. Burke, "to abide the test of a captious controversy, but of a sober, and even forgiving examination; that they are not armed at all points for battle, but dressed to visit those who are willing to give a peaceful entrance to truth."

There is one point, however, and the most important point we have contemplated, in which all the different schools seem to be agreed,—I mean, that of moral distinctions. Whatever may be the roads the different travellers have lighted upon, whether short or circuitous, smooth or entangled, they all at last find themselves, in this respect, arrive at the same central spot; and coincide in prescribing the same rules of duty, enjoining the same conduct, and, with a few exceptions, delivering the same determinations. No philosopher in the world has ever dreamed of confounding virtue with vice, or of writing a treatise on the benefit of committing crimes. Let us search where we will, we shall find that there is a something in human nature, when once emerged from the barbarism of savage life, that leads the learned and the unlearned to approve the one and to condemn the other, even where their own conduct is involved in the condemnation.

And what is this something in human nature that conducts to so general a conclusion? A set or system of innate ideas and first principles, replies one class of philosophers; a moral instinct or impulse of common sense, replies another class; the intrinsic loveliness and beauty of virtue itself, replies a third; because the attributes of virtue are useful and agreeable either to ourselves or to others, replies a fourth; because it conducts to human happiness, replies a fifth; and because it is the will of God, replies a sixth.

But while all thus agree in the conclusion, the question that leads to it still

returns upon us: What proof have we of the existence of such innate ideas or instinctive impulse? of the intrinsic beauty of virtue? that it is useful to us, productive of our happiness, or that it is the will of God it should be cultivated? or rather, what proof have we that the original position is true, and that there is a something in human nature in general, which induces us to prefer virtue to vice?

The original position is true, but the reasons urged in support of it are neither equally true nor equally adequate, even where they are true.

It is not true that we have either innate ideas or moral instincts that impel us to a love of virtue; for in such cases the most savage tribes among mankind would be the most virtuous; their præcognita, or innate ideas, being but little disturbed by foreign ideas, acquired by education or extensive commerce with the world; and their moral instincts as little disturbed by foreign habits acquired from the same causes.

There has often arisen in the mind an unaccountable whim, of supposing that a savage life, or state of nature, is the best and purest mode of human existence; and novelists, poets, and sometimes even philosophers have equally ranted upon the paucity of its wants, the simplicity of its pursuits, the solidity of its pleasures, and the strength and constancy of its attachments. It is here, we have been told, that the human soul developes its proper energies, and displays itself in all its native benevolence and dignity: here all things belong equally to every one; the only law is the will of the individual, the only feeling a sublime, unselfish philanthropy. This whim became epidemic in France about the beginning of the French Revolution, and was, in fact, the monster mania that led to it. And the contagion, not long afterward, began to show itself among many individuals of our own country, who, in the height of their phrensy, laboured earnestly to promote the same kind of trials among ourselves that our neighbours were actually exhibiting. The history is fresh in the mind of every one, and it is not necessary to pursue it. It is sufficient to observe, that it led, in a short time, to consequences so mischievous, as to work their own cure; and to afford another living proof of the fact I endeavoured pointedly to establish in a late lecture, that barbarism, vice, and misery are, by an immutable law of nature, the inseparable associates of each other.* Throw your eyes to whatever part of the globe or to whatever history of mankind you please, and you will find it so without an exception. Other animals have instincts that control their appetites, and lead them insensibly to the perfection of their respective kinds; that inculcate constancy where constancy is necessary, and compel them to provide for and take the charge of their young. Man has no such instincts, whatever; he has reason, indeed, a more ennobling and efficient faculty, but it must be called forth, for it is a dormant priciple in savage life. And hence, destitute of the one, and uninfluenced by the other, he is the perpetual slave of his ungoverned and ungovernable passions, and is the only animal in the world that has been known to kill or abandon its own offspring in a state of destitute and helpless infancy; and to murder its own kind for the purpose of feasting upon it: a fact too well established to be doubted of; and which, instead of being confined to a single climate or a single people, has apparently been common to all countries, when under the influence of gross barbarism; which still exists among various tribes in Africa, South America, and Australia, and particularly among the islands of the South Sea, and which, according to the concurrent testimony of the best Greek and Roman writers, as Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela, was formerly to be traced among the Scythians, Tartars, and Massagetæ of Asia, and the Lestrigons of Europe. Strabo, indeed, ascribes the same practice even to the Irish in his day, and Cælius Rhodriginus to their neighbours of Scotland; while Thevenot asserts that, when he was in India in 1665, human flesh was publicly sold in the market at Debca, about forty leagues from Baroche.

Consentaneous to this view of the subject are the following remarks of

* Series II. Lecture xiii.

one of the most intelligent circumnavigators of the present day, M. Von Langsdorff, which he gives as the result of a personal and comprehensive survey of different climates and countries:—"There is no creature upon the earth, in any climate or zone, that bears such an enmity to its own species as man. Let us only," says he, "cast our eyes over the history of the globe, in the most barren wastes, and in the most fertile countries, in the smallest islands, or on the most extensive continents, among the most savage as well as the most cultivated nations, in short, in every part of the world, wherever man exists, and we shall find him seeking to destroy his own species: he is every where, *by nature*, harsh and cruel. The observations we made upon these newly-discovered islands (the Polynesian), which never, to the best of our knowledge, had any intercourse with civilized nations, and whose inhabitants may be considered as children of nature, and as still in their original condition, afford remarkable examples in confirmation of these assertions.

"The sweet and tender feelings of affection and love, of friendship and attachment, even that of parents towards their children, and of children towards their parents, I have, alas! very seldom found among a rude and uncivilized people. The African hordes not only bring their prisoners taken in battle, but their own children, to market. The same thing is done by the Kirgis, the Kalmucs, and many other inhabitants of the north-western coast of America; and here at Nakatiwa (one of the islands of the South Sea) a woman would very readily have given a child at her breast, which had been asked by us in jest, in exchange for a piece of iron."* And he might have added, that it was the exposure of British, or rather, perhaps, of Saxon, children for slaves in the public market at Rome, as late as the close of the sixth century, expressly sold for this purpose, by their own parents, at their own homes, that first induced that excellent prelate, Pope Gregory I., to plan a mission for the conversion of our barbarous forefathers to Christianity, from the horror he felt at their conduct, and the pity with which he beheld the little outcasts.

In the view of history, therefore, as well as in the language of Scripture, man, in a state of nature, is prone to evil, and his heart is desperately wicked: or as it is given most exquisitely in the poetical language of the Psalmist,

> "Behold the dark places of the earth
> Are full of the habitations of cruelty!"†

The sentiment, then, that exists in human nature in favour of virtue, or a virtuous conduct, though general, is not universal, and, consequently, cannot proceed from any original instincts or innate ideas. What, then, are the other causes to which it has been ascribed by moralists? The intrinsic loveliness of virtue itself. Because its attributes are generally useful and agreeable. Because it conducts to human happiness. Because it is the will of God.

Now all these answers, however diversified, may be resolved into two general ideas—human happiness, and the will of God: for we can only regard that as lovely, or an object of love, which contributes to our happiness: and we can only regard that as useful or agreeable which conduces to the same end.

The subject, therefore, becomes considerably narrowed, and the only substantial replies that appear capable of being given to the question, What is the source of this general sentiment among mankind in favour of virtue? are, Because it is the path to happiness; or, Because it is the will of God.

But may not the subject be still farther narrowed, and both these replies be resolved into one identical proposition? may not human happiness and the will of God be the same thing? If so, we shall then only have to inquire farther, whether virtue be the real path to human happiness? for if it be, then, necessarily, he who pursues that path obeys the will of God.

* Von Langsdorff's Voyages and Travels, ch. vii. p. 139.

† Psalm lxxiv. 20.

Both questions are important: the first, however, may be settled in a few words. To discover the will of an intelligent agent, nothing more is necessary than to examine the general drift or tendency of his contrivance, so far as we are able to make it out. Taking it, then, for granted, that the world is the work of an intelligent agent, does it exhibit proof of having been devised for the general accommodation and happiness of man?—for his general misery, —or for neither? It cannot have been devised for neither, because that would be to relinquish the very foundation of our present position, and to deny that the world exhibits contrivance, or has been formed by an intelligent agent? Is, then, the world, with its general furniture, is the frame of man itself calculated to promote man's happiness or his misery? It is impossible to answer this question more strongly than in the words of Archdeacon Paley:—

"Contrivance proves design, and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances with which we are acquainted are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil, no doubt, exists: but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache: their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the *object* of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very *objects* of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, This is to irritate; this to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout. If, by chance, he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is that it is useless. No one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment. Since, then, God has called forth his consummate wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and the world appears to have been constituted with this design at first, so long as this constitution is upholden by him, we must, in reason, suppose the same design to continue."*

A thousand other examples might be added, but it is unnecessary. The conclusion is clear, and it is most important: we obtain from the light of nature, or the exercise of our own reason, irresistible proofs of the divine benevolence, irresistible proofs that God has made man to make him happy: or, in other words, that human happiness is the will of God.

We are now, then, prepared to enter upon our last question: Is a course of virtue the path to happiness, for if it be, it must necessarily be the will of God to walk in it? Or, having proved the terms to be co-ordinate, we may propose the question conversely, Is a course of virtue the will of God? For if it be, it must necessarily conduct to human happiness. Under either view of the question, the general proposition will be as follows: God has willed human happiness, and he has willed it to be obtained by a course of virtue. God, then, is the Author, happiness the end, and virtue the means.

Let us take the question before us in its first view, Is human virtue the means of human happiness?

Had we time it might perhaps be expedient to enter into a definition of the terms: but we have not time, and I must refer, therefore, to the general understanding of mankind upon this subject: which I may do the more safely,

* Mor. and Pol. Phil. vol. i. ch. v.

because, though the terms virtue and happiness are strikingly comprehensive, there is no great difference of opinion either among the learned or the unlearned concerning their general outlines or more prominent characteristics.

The question, then, ought to be argued in relation to the happiness both of the individual and of the community; or, in other words, to the happiness of man in his private and his social capacity.

Is the practice of virtue most contributory to a man's individual happiness? The libertine says No; and he seeks for it in his mistress, whom he changes as often as he changes his dress. The glutton says No; unless a good city-feast be virtue; for the soul of happiness with him consists in a haunch of venison and a brisk circulation of the bottle. The spendthrift says No: you may as well seek for happiness in a haystack: happiness, my dear sir, you may depend upon it, consists in nothing else than a good stud, and a pack of hounds. The gamester, in like manner, says No; and he directs us to a pack of cards and a pair of dice. Even the miser joins in the general negative, and would fain persuade us that it resides in the meagre and miserable ghost that constitutes his own person, or the meagre and miserable pursuits to which his person is daily prostituted.

Now all these have, no doubt, their respective enjoyments; but do they constitute happiness in any fair sense of the term? are they permanent? I do not say through life, but for four-and-twenty hours together. Many of them, on the contrary, are of that violent kind that they wear themselves out in an hour or two; and what is the state of the system before it recovers sufficient energy for a renewal? To say that it is as empty as an air-pump, would be to give a better character of it than it deserves. It is not empty; it is still full; full of bitterness or insupportable languor, sickness at heart or sickness at the stomach. Even the miser, who, properly speaking, provides for a longer range of enjoyment than any of the rest of this precious group, is a victim while he is a worshipper, a sacrifice to anxiety while an idolater of Mammon.

We are at present, however, merely following them up through a single day; but life is a series of days: in its ordinary estimate, of threescore years and ten. And he who is a candidate for happiness must prepare himself, not for a single day, but for the entire term: he must save his strength, and proceed cautiously, for there is no race in which he may so soon run himself out of breath. His motto may perhaps be, "A short life and a merry one;" and this, in truth, is the motto, and not the motto only, but the brief history, of most of those whom we have thus far considered. For consumption, dropsy, gout, or chagrin and suicide, make not unfrequently a woful havoc in their ranks before they have cleared two-thirds of the pleasurable career they had proposed to themselves. Let them, then, have their motto if they will; but let them not boast that they have found out the specific for making life happy; for all that they have found out is a specific for throwing both life and happiness away at the same time. They have had a few fitful bursts of enjoyment; but the price has been enormous,—a costly birthright for a mess of pottage. He only can fairly boast of happiness, place it in whatever way you please, who, on casting up the account, can honestly say that it has accompanied him through the long run.

There is another and a very different set of people, both in the higher and lower ranks of life, who also occasionally strive to persuade themselves that they are happy, and who are sometimes actually thought so by those around them: and these are the listless and idle, who loll and saunter life away as though it were a dream; and who, in truth, are more alive in their dreams than in their waking hours. Now, happiness consists in activity: such is the constitution of our nature: it is a running stream, and not a stagnant pool. It shows itself under this form from the first moment it shows itself at all. Behold the happiness of the infant or of the schoolboy: he is full of frolic; he cannot contain the current of self-delight: in the bold significancy of vulgar language, it runs out at his fingers' ends. Upon the whole, the listless and idle have less pretensions to happiness than the characters we have just surveyed,—the libertine, the gamester, and the spendthrift: for should you distil

the aggregate of insignificant incidents that compose the whole tenor of the feeble life of the former, not a drop, perhaps, of the essence of happiness would ascend in the alembic. They may be at perfect quiet, if you please, and look fat and in good liking, but this is not happiness; for if so, capons and Cappadocian slaves would have a better title to it than themselves.

Let us now apply these observations to the question before us. No man can be happy without exercising the virtue of a cheerful industry or activity. No man can lay in his claim to happiness, I mean the happiness that shall last through the fair run of life, without chastity, without temperance, without sobriety, without economy, without self-command, and, consequently, without fortitude; and, let me add, without a liberal and forgiving spirit. The whole of this follows as the necessary result of our argument. The exercise of these virtues may perhaps cost a man something at the time, but the full scope and aggregate of his happiness depend upon the exercise. It is a tax upon the sum-total, that must be regularly paid to secure the rest. And it ought never to be forgotten, that we are so much the creatures of habit that the more we are accustomed to the exercise, like an old garment, the easier it will sit upon us.

But these are private virtues, and only a few of them. Man has also, if he would be happy, to practise a still longer list of public virtues; and he cannot be happy without practising them. Or, in other words (for I am now to consider him in a social capacity), the happiness of the community to which he belongs, and of which his own forms a constituent part, could not continue without his practising them.

He may steal, indeed, from his neighbour, and hereby increase his means of gratifying some predominant passion; but then his neighbour may also steal from him in return, and to a greater extent: and his happiness, therefore (ever regarding it in the aggregate), is connected with his exercising the virtues of justice and honesty. He may break his promise, or lie to his neighbour, upon a point in which his own interest appears to be concerned; but then his neighbour may also return him the compliment, and in a way in which his interest may be still more deeply concerned; and his interest, therefore, or, which is the same thing, his happiness, obliges him to practise the virtue of veracity.

In Woodfall's edition of the Letters of Junius, there is a passage upon the subject before us, contained in one of his private letters, which has peculiarly struck me, considering the quarter it has proceeded from, and the manner of its communication. Whoever was the writer of these celebrated Letters, it will be readily admitted, that he had a most extensive acquaintance with men of all ranks and characters, particularly with the vicious and profligate; and that he had a most extraordinary facility of penetrating into the human heart. In the private letter I refer to, he unbosoms himself to his printer, for whom he appears to have had a great esteem, and, amid the regulations he gives him for his future conduct, makes the following forcible remark: "With a sound heart, be assured you are better gifted, even for worldly happiness, than if you had been cursed with the abilities of a Mansfield. After long experience of the world, I affirm, before God, I never knew a rogue who was not unhappy."*

It is not necessary to pursue the catalogue. Man is by nature a social being: every one is purposely made dependent upon every other; and, consequently, the happiness or well-being of the whole and of every one, who constitutes an integral part of the whole, must be the same happiness. Yet as the happiness or well-being of the individual demands in his private capacity, as we have already seen it does, a system of private abstinences or restraints, the happiness or well-being of society demands a more extensive system of public duties of the same kind. We must consent to relinquish a part of our liberty, a part of our property, a part of allour personal propensities and appetites, or the well-being of the society to which we belong, and, con-

* Letter No. xliii.

sequently, our own social well-being, could not continue. We may, indeed, take ourselves away from society, and live in the solitude of the forests; but our happiness is bound up in social life, and, whatever is the cost, it is consistent with the same happiness that we pay it.

Freethinkers are accustomed to sneer at the precepts of the Bible, which inculcate upon us the virtues of self-denial and mortification in the present life, in order to our making sure of a life of uninterrupted happiness hereafter. But if there be any degree of truth in the remarks now offered, they find themselves called upon to practise a similar restraint and denial even in the purchase of present enjoyment. And the analogy is so striking between the natural and the moral government of the Deity in this respect, that Bishop Butler has forcibly laid hold of the same argument, not only in vindication of the Gospel-precepts upon this point, but in illustration of the paramount importance of our attending to them, if we would be wise to our future and everlasting interest. "Thought," says he, "and consideration, the voluntary denying ourselves many things which we desire, and a course of behaviour far from being always agreeable to us, are absolutely necessary to our acting even a common decent and common prudent part, so as to pass with any satisfaction through the present world, and be received upon any tolerably good terms in it. Since this is the case, all presumption against self-denial and attention to secure our HIGHER INTEREST is removed. The constitution of nature is as it is. Our happiness and misery are trusted to our conduct, and made to depend upon it. Somewhat, and, in many circumstances, a great deal too, is put upon us, either to do or to suffer, as we choose. And all the various miseries of life which people bring upon themselves by negligence and folly, and might have avoided by proper care, are instances of this; which miseries are, beforehand, just as contingent and undetermined as their conduct, and left to be determined by it."*

It is from this common consent to put a restraint upon our personal feelings in the pursuit of relative pleasures, from this social impulse of our constitution with which we are so wisely and benevolently endowed, that every man belonging to the same state or community becomes a part of every man, and cannot, even if he would, be an indifferent spectator of the wo or the weal of his neighbour. And hence arises the sacred bond of sympathy or fellow-feeling;

> And true self-love, and social, are the same.

While as the line is drawn still closer, and we associate together more frequently and more intimately, we become, from the great and powerful principle of habit, still more kindred parts of each other. And hence the origin of the higher public virtues of patriotism, generosity, gratitude, friendship, conjugal fidelity, parental love, and filial reverence: the exercise of all which in our relative situations of life, whether we contemplate it at the time, or whether we do not, is by our own constitution, or, which is the same thing, by the will of the great Creator, rendered essential to our individual happiness.

Mr. Pope, from a hint furnished by Dr. Donne, finely compares this origin and spread of the different circles of private and public virtues from the salient point of self-love, or the desire of individual happiness in the breast, to the series of circles within circles excited on the bosom of a still and peaceful lake, by the throw of a pebble; while all nature smiles around, and, from this very agitation, the face of the heavens is reflected with an additional degree of lustre.

> "Self-love but serves the virtuous breast to wake,
> As the smooth pebble stirs the peaceful lake.
> The centre mov'd, a circle strait succeeds,
> Another still, and still another spreads.
> Friend, parents, neighbour, first it will embrace,
> Our country next, and next all human race.

* Analysis of Religion, Natural and Revealed, part i. ch. iv.

> Wide, and more wide, th' o'erflowing of the mind
> Takes every creature in of every kind.
> Earth smiles around, in boundless beauty dress'd;
> And heav'n reflects its image in his breast."

We stand in need, then, of no præcognita or innate ideas, of no fanciful instinct whatever;—arguing as intelligent beings, and fairly exercising the discursive faculty of reason, we come to the clear conclusion that virtue is the path to human happiness. The case, indeed, is so manifest, that while many of the instincts we actually possess are often tempting us against such a conduct and such a conclusion, whenever reason is appealed to, we never fail to return to the same established dictum.

The Stoics, with a sort of romantic refinement, pretended to have fallen into a love of virtue for her own sake; and to *sustain* and to *abstain*, to *bear* and *forbear*, to be patient and continent, comprised the summary of their moral system. But while they were thus enraptured with the means, like every other society of mankind, they had the full advantage of the end. They may, indeed, have practised virtue for the love of virtue, but they also practised virtue, and reaped the benefit of their own happiness.

The Epicureans, on the contrary, regarded all these sublime pretensions as mere cant and affectation. They also enjoined and practised, and, notwithstanding the false reproach that has attached to their name, enjoined and practised with more rigidity than even the Stoics, the laws and restraints of moral virtue; yet boldly and unequivocally avowed that it was chiefly as a mean towards an end: that it was not so much from a love of virtue, as from a love of pleasure or happiness: and hence pleasure and happiness were in this school used as synonymous terms, as were also vice and folly, and wisdom and virtue; or, rather, wisdom was regarded as the first of all virtues, as being that which teaches us that a life of real pleasure or happiness is to be obtained alone by the exercise of the general cluster of virtues. In one of his letters to Menæceus, that has yet survived the ravage of time, Epicurus has a passage upon this subject peculiarly striking, and that cannot be too strongly impressed on our memories. "Wisdom," says he, "is the chief blessing of philosophy; since she gives birth to all other virtues which unite in teaching us, that no man can live happily who does not live wisely, conscientiously, and justly; nor, on the other hand, can he live wisely, conscientiously, and justly, without living happily: for virtue is inseparable from a life of happiness, and a life of happiness is equally inseparable from virtue. Be these, then, and maxims like these, the subjects of thy meditation, by night and by day, both when alone and with the friend of thy bosom; and never, whether asleep or awake, shalt thou be oppressed with anxiety, but live as a god among mankind.' *

To the same effect Cassius, in an expostulatory letter to his friend Cicero, who had shown some inclination to join in the general calumny against the Epicureans: "Those whom we call lovers of pleasure are real lovers of goodness and justice: they are men who practise and cultivate every virtue; for no true pleasure can exist without a good and virtuous life."

So Lucretius, when describing the different tribes of the sons of vice, or offenders against the public law, characterizes them by the common name of fools. "They are," says he, "perpetually smarting, even in secret, beneath a sense of their atrocious crimes, and that reward of their guilt, which, they well know, will sooner or later overtake them:—

> The scourge, the wheel, the block, the dungeon deep,
> The base-born hangman, the TARPEIAN cliff,
> Which, though the villain 'scape, his conscious soul
> Still fears perpetual; torturing all his days,
> And still foreboding heavier pangs at death.
> Hence earth itself to FOOLS becomes a hell.†

* Diog. Laert. x. 132. 135.

> Vérbera, carnufices, robur, pix, lamina, tædæ:
> Qui tamen et si absunt, at mens, sibi conscia factis,
> Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, torretque flagellis
> Nec videt interea, qui terminus esse malorum

It was from the elegant and ornate moralists of the East, that the philosophers of this school derived this figurative synonyme; from Arabia, Egypt, and India; in all which quarters we find it still more frequent and familiar. Solomon, whose early studies were derived from an Arabic source, is peculiarly addicted to this use of these terms. The very commencement of his book of Proverbs, or system of ethics, as the schools would denominate it, affords us a striking instance:—

> "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge:
> For FOOLS despise wisdom and instruction."

So Vishnusarman in his Hitopadesa, to the same precise effect: "Many who read the Scriptures are *grossly ignorant;* but he who *acts well* is a truly LEARNED man."*

Whatever view, therefore, we take of this subject, in whatever way we exercise our reason upon it, we cannot fail to approve of virtue in preference to vice; for we cannot fail to regard virtue as the only sure road to happiness, and, consequently, as the path of wisdom, or the will of God. The case, indeed, is so clear, that it is seldom mankind in any part of the world are now-a-days at the trouble of debating the subject. There is no controversy —the result is taken for granted. And hence wherever education exists, or, in other words, wherever civilized life extends, we are chiefly taught it, not as a science, but as a rule of action; we imbibe it as a habit; and our first and finest feelings co-operate with our best reason in its favour. We form an abstract picture of it in our minds, and delineate it, under the correct and pleasing image of the fair, the needful, the sovereign good. We have already seen that, in proportion as society is ignorant, men are wicked; in proportion as it becomes wise, they grow virtuous. They acquire clearer ideas of right and wrong, which are obviously nothing more than virtue and vice, under an additional set of names, or in a state of activity. And were the rules and laws of right, virtue, or wisdom to be constantly adhered to, or, in other words, the will of the Deity to be fully complied with, there can be no question that mankind, even in the present state, would enjoy all the happiness their nature would allow of; and that a kind of paradise would once more visit the earth.

And why, then, is not the will of the Deity fully complied with? Why, since the consequence is so undoubted, and so beneficial, are not the rules of virtue constantly and universally adhered to?

This is a most important question, as well in itself as in its results.

The will of the Deity, or the entire rules of virtue, are not always adhered to, first, because, as collected from reason or the light of nature alone, they are not, through the whole range of this complicated subject, in all instances equally clear and perspicuous; and, secondly, because, in a thousand instances in which there is no want of clearness or perspicuity, there is a want of sanction—of a compulsory and adequate force. The rules of virtue are general, and must necessarily be general; but the cases to which they apply are particular. The case is present and often impulsive, but the operation of the rule is remote, and it may not operate at all; and hence the pleasure of immediate gratification is perpetually unhinging this harmonious system, and plunging mankind into vice with their eyes open.

But civil laws, moreover, or the authority of the social compact in favour of virtue, are not only often inadequate in their force, but they must necessarily, in a thousand instances, be inadequate in their extent. It is impossible for man, of himself, to provide against every case of vice or criminality that may offend the public; for the keenest casuist can form no idea of many of

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> Possit, quive sciet pœnarum denique finis;
> Atque eadem metuit magis, hæc ne in morte gravescant.
> Hinc Acherusia fit STULTORUM denique vita.
> Lib. iii. 1030.

* Sir W. Jones, vi. p. 37.

such cases till they are before him; and if he could, the whole world would not contain the statute books that should be written upon the subject.

There are also duties which a man owes to himself as well as to his neighbour; or, in other words, human happiness, as we have already seen, depends almost as largely upon his exercise of private as of public virtues. But the eye of civil law cannot follow him into the performance of these duties, for it cannot follow him into his privacy: it cannot take cognizance of his personal faults or offences, nor often apply its sanction if it could do so. And hence, in most countries, this important part of morality is purposely left out of the civil code, as a hopeless and intractable subject. Yet even in the breach of public duties, specifically stated and provided for, it cannot always follow up the offender, and apply the punishment: for he may secrete himself among his own colleagues, and elude, or he may abandon his country, and defy, the arm of justice.

There seems, then, to be a something still wanting. If the Deity have so benevolently willed the happiness of man, and made virtue the rule of that happiness, ought he not upon the same principle of benevolence, to have declared his will more openly than by the mere and, at times, doubtful inferences of reason? in characters, indeed, so plain, that he who runs may read? and ought he not also to have employed sanctions so universal as to cover every case, and so weighty as to command every attention?

As a being of infinite benevolence, undoubtedly he ought. And what, in this character, he ought to have done, he has actually accomplished. He has declared his will by an express revelation, and has thus confirmed the voice of reason by a voice from heaven: he has made this revelation a written law, and has enforced it by the strongest sanctions to which the mind of man can be open:—not only by his best chance of happiness here, but by all his hopes and expectations of happiness hereafter. And he has hence completed the code of human obligations, by adding to the duties which we owe to our neighbour and to ourselves, a clear rescript of those we owe to our Maker. Nor is such revelation of recent date; for a state of retributive justice beyond the grave constituted, as we have already seen, the belief of mankind in the earliest ages of time; and amid all the revolutions the world has witnessed, amid the most savage barbarism, and the foulest idolatries, there never perhaps has been a country in which all traces of it have been entirely lost, or have even entirely ceased to operate.

At different periods, and in different manners, the Deity has renewed this divine communication, according as his infinite wisdom has seen the world stand in need of it. New doctrines and discoveries—and doctrines and discoveries, too, of the highest importance, but which it is not my providence to touch upon in the present place—have in every instance accompanied such renewal, justificatory of the supernatural interposition. But the sanction has, in every instance, been the same; while, and I speak it with reverence, the proofs of divine benevolence have with every promulgation been growing fuller and fuller:—revealed religion thus co-operating with natural, co-operating with the great frame of the visible world, co-operating with every pulse and feeling of our own hearts in establishing the delightful truth, that GOD IS LOVE; and in calling upon us to love him, not from any cold and lifeless picture of the abstract beauty of holiness, beautiful as it unquestionably is in itself, but from the touching and all-subduing motive—BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.