

matter working upon itself? It were truly wonderful if the horn of the horse's hoof should fashion itself into so fit a defense for his foot against the ruggedness of the roads, on which he has to toil and travel. Then might even an oyster boast its intelligent shell, that so opportunely forms itself round its delicate body, to defend it from filth and friction, and the devouring attacks of hungry fishes. It is really humbling to have to notice such free thinking dotage and mental aberrations.

We are then brought back from dead unthinking matter to a distinct intelligent principle, which we are thus forced to acknowledge; but which our infidel Theorists were seeking to avoid. Shall we then to humour them, allow matter to be at least coeval with this principle; though we have already proved that to be an absurdity? If we even did so, in what would they be the gainers? They have still left in all his dreadful night and majesty the same supreme being to judge and condemn them for their guilt. Where then is the advantage to them, or what is the necessity of acknowledging matter to be eternal? Or are we, without any possible reason or motive, to make so boldly an assertion? If this is their boasted philosophy, it is evidently the philosophy of fools; which no one in his right senses would listen to for a moment.

I need not therefore enter into any further argument, to shew the extravagant absurdity of such a hypothesis. My observations are directed only to common sense, without any wish to dive into abstruse reasonings on a subject, which indeed does not require them: though there are not wanting able authors, who have carried their proofs upon this score nearly as far as the human intellect can follow them.

Let us next consider for a moment the other notable assertion, that the soul herself is material.—I should begin by asking those, who hold such an opinion, why they have chosen to adopt it; and what their views are in maintaining it so strenuously. Is it not evidently from the wish; and in the hope to convince themselves that they may escape the punishment of their guilt; to lull their ever chiding conscience, and blunt the scorpion sting of inward gnawing remorse; by reasoning themselves, if they could, into the belief that their souls are but matter, destructible and doomed to perish? Thus, while they assert matter to be eternal, only in order to avoid the terror of an offended God; they at the same time, with surprizing inconsistency, but in conformity with the dictates of common sense, maintain it to be perishable; and on this opposite principle they ground all their hopes of future impunity: for, if not, then I would ask them again, where is their gain, by supposing the soul material, since, if not destructible and perishable, as matter, it may still exist after death; and if so, why may it not be subjected to all the punishment it deserves, for having acted in this life against the strong felt moral sense of justice and virtue, implanted in the mind of every one; and what we may justly call the instinct of reason. For if the soul is punish-

able here for what she does amiss, even by the inward, painful and abashing sense of shame; by regret, sadness, remorse and despair: or, should the guilty succeed in extinguishing in their minds by long habit in vice all sense of horror at their wicked and infamous deeds; at any rate by the very pain of disease, the frequent consequences of their dissolute conduct; by sickness even, and sufferings of every kind, to which in their present state they find themselves occasionally subjected; they may learn, in spite of their Hypothesis, that as their souls, whether material or not, are punishable here, and subjected to pain, so they may be in another state of existence hereafter. Here again they are drawn back by the very means they had planned for their escape, to that adjudging principle of intelligence; whose dreaded grasp they endeavour so to shun; and they are shewn that, as they must bear its chastizing influence in this life, so may they have to feel its more rigorously exerted influence in a life to come.

But some will have it only the body that feels; and when it has lost its vital warmth, after ceasing to breathe, that all its feelings and sufferings are at an end. It is but building castles in the air, to make supposition unsupported by known facts, or probable arguments. We often see the body during life, as but the organ of a distinct and thinking principle, enlivened or depressed, by mere mental affection; originating not in any accident or alteration in its own state; but in that of its reflecting and invisible manager and mover. It reddens with shame; and grows pale with apprehension. It smiles or dances with inward joy; or droops dejected, shed tears, and often wails aloud, not from any hurt it sustains, or pain it suffers, but from deep thought and abstruse cogitation. How a faint glimpse of hope, which has no reality but in thoughtful anticipation, can brighten up its looks, dry up its tears, and still its lamentations on such mournful occasions! And after all these evidences of a distinct principle from the body, is it rational to suppose this last the only one that suffers and feels. Why, in this supposition should not the body, still remaining after death, feel and suffer as before? Because its animating principle is fled; something they must own, infinitely excelling what it has left behind; and essentially different from its perishable organ of clay; which, as henceforth useless to it, in its new state of existence; it drops on taking its flight to the region of spirits; leaving it to moulder away and mingle with its native earth; till the Omnipotent, who made, and linked it with the soul, restore it to her in a state of merited bliss or misery interminable. It is therefore the soul, a distinct principle from the body, that suffers and feels in this life, and which may equally or more intensely be made to suffer and feel in a state of separation from its earthly organ; which had been adapted to it for the temporary purposes of its short sojourn in this place of probation.

Yet how, it is often asked, can a spirit, not matter, be punishable, according to the gospel threat, with material fire? But is not the soul a spirit in

her present state? and still, though by the medium of her organ, the body, she feels all the scorching effect of material fire, as well as all the pleasing or painful influence of the material elements surrounding her. As God has tied her thus down to the earth, so may he chain her down to fire; and link her if he chooses, to her own merited torment, for who can say what he can, or cannot do with his creatures? Or shall man with his short-sighted reasonings presume to limit his infinite power; or set bounds to his inscrutable justice? All we know from the certain idea we have of his justice and goodness, is, that he will inflict no punishment on the soul, which she herself is not at the time conscious of having deserved. That his wish in creating her was to have rendered her finally happy, for which purpose, without forcing her will, the free choice of which was to constitute her merit or demerit in this life; he afforded her more or less the means, if well improved, of securing to herself that perfect bliss, for which he had called her into being.—Looking, as he does, from eternity to eternity, he foresaw, if you will, her fate, and permitted it. But his foresight no more caused that fate, than my seeing any action done causes that action to take place. Is he then, as infinitely good, obliged to prevent it? But he is infinitely just, as well as infinitely good; and owes to his rational and immortal creatures the display of his dreadful as well as amiable attributes. Besides, where were that full freedom of willing and choosing betwixt good and evil, granted to his creatures, after warning them sufficiently as to the choice they should make which he does by the internal moral sense implanted in them, as well as by external means; should he thus preclude the possibility of their choosing wrong?

This, however, is an awful mystery, not farther to be sounded by the human intellect, but sufficiently grounded on all the proofs adduced in support of the Christian Revelation; proofs, which the greatest and wisest of mankind have considered as unanswered and unanswerable; and therefore conclusive on the subject in the opinion of all, who reason as they ought, not on bare suppositions or fanciful theories; but on what we actually feel, and on matters of fact.

I need not here stop to expose the absurd consequences of the ridiculous hypothesis, which I have been refuting; or to prove the folly of the attempt to account for the very thoughts and volitions of the human mind, by the curlings, for instance, of a vapor; the corruscations or scintillations of an ethereal spark; or the various conglomerations, evolutions, separations, or conjunctions of material particles, all which has been abundantly held forth to public ridicule by those who have condescended to follow such argumentative maniacs through all the perplexed and bewildering mazes of their random conjectures. I shall therefore conclude with a quotation from an ingenious author, particularly adapted to our present purpose, that of demonstrating the absurdity of the supposition that the soul is material.

“She cannot be material, the soul, that can judge