

Connected with the origin of sin, are many questions, which lead into the labyrinths of endless mystery and perplexity. These, we shall permit to slumber in their native darkness, as in all cases they should have been permitted to do. We have no disposition to perplex either ourself or readers, with bewildering disquisitions and speculations concerning questions, which have never profited those by whom they have been agitated. We have matter enough before us of a tangible nature, calculated to prove beneficial to all who will attend to it in the *spirit of faith*, without wasting our time in the hair splitting of speculative questions, perhaps far too recondite for the acumen, we will not say of the profoundest sage, but of the tallest son of light in all the angelic principalities!

It may not, however, be improper in this place to notice one or two not very abstruse questions, connected with the origin of evil, which have served as stumbling blocks to many persons.

We have been frequently asked, "why did not God constitute Adam upon principles such as would have rendered him incapable of sinning?" "Why did God permit the introduction of evil?" As well might we ask, why did he not give water a consistence, such as would have unfitted it for drowning a man? And why did he permit fire to possess these properties, by which it burns the fingers of the cook, and is in all respects so good a servant, but so bad a master? The physical evils which originate in the use of fire and water, take their rise from either the misapplication or the abuse of them, and could originate in no other way; but were fire and water deprived of those essential principles, by the misapplication or abuse of which physical evils are sometimes produced, they would cease to be fire and water; and would be therefore, incapable of their present beneficial results! The same answer will hold good in respect to man. To be a *man*, he must neither be a mere animal, nor the arch angel! He must be that link in the long chain of created beings, to which we apply the term *MAN*. To be a man, he must also have his native passions and appetites; all his native properties of soul and body; and to be a moral accountable being, he must be a moral agent; placed under law; capable of obedience and disobedience; capable of feeling self-approbation for well doing, and self-disapprobation for evil doing. Any possible organization of human nature, or constitution of the divine government, in which these principles should not have been recognized, would have placed man in a moral condition, such as is now occupied by brute animals; as incapable of virtue and vice, of rewards and punishments, of moral elevation and degradation, as is the mole, the oyster, or the bat!

"Contrivance," says Paley, "proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance, indicates the disposition of the contriver. 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 were contrived to eat, not to ache. Their aching, now and then, is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it—but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction that well deserves