

Consequently, nothing can give his pride a greater shock, and be more humiliating to him, than to be told that he also is liable to this reproach. Every species of sin, it is true, is not equally offensive to God. That is, he does not punish its commission in the same way, but proportions his punishment according to the magnitude of the offence. Still if it be sin, in the smallest degree, and wilfully and knowingly persevered in, it subjects its perpetrator to the wrath of God. The amiable person whom I am now describing, is guilty before God, because however numerous his virtues may be, they are not grounded upon Christian principles. The most pious action which was ever performed by man, contains in it some degree of imperfection, and consequently cannot by its own merit render him who performs it, worthy of heaven; much less atone for those actions which are manifestly bad. Therefore, the action in order to obtain acceptance must derive its efficacy, from some other source. And that is, the firm belief that there is no other way of obtaining eternal happiness, but by the blood of Jesus Christ: and that the benefits of his blood are applied to all those, who testify the sincerity of their belief in its efficacy, by striving to the utmost to fulfil his commands. But the person I am now describing, does not consider things exactly in this light. Whatever honour he may give to the Saviour, he still prides himself upon his own performances; he is not perfectly aware of his sinful state by nature, of his daily and manifold transgressions; neither does he give God the entire glory, when he is enabled to avoid any egregious crime, or to perform any virtuous action. When we look around us, and perceive how much wickedness is committed upon the earth, those of us who entertain a regard for virtue, are naturally inclined to esteem those persons in whom we find the latter quality to exist. And if the virtues of the individual, should unfortunately be built upon a wrong foundation, it is with difficulty and with pain, that we can bring ourselves to confess, that such a person is living at enmity with his Maker. But the thoughts of man are not as the thoughts of God. But (as we were told,