

image of God, or had he actually incurred eternal death by his fall, it would have absolutely forbade any benevolent or merciful procedure towards him as a sinner. But again, if God had not set on foot a gracious institution adapted to the circumstances and condition of man, now fallen and degraded, he never could by any device or act of his own, have been restored to the divine image and favour. These hints, which may be rendered very plain, constitute, in our judgment, the real support of the fall of man, and demonstrate the true basis of the divine economy under which fallen man has existed, under the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian ages, or dispensations.

The *rational* of the Christian religion is founded upon the views which the scriptures give of the fall of man; and the reasonableness of it can be fairly and fully demonstrated on the premises now before us.

When we speak of man's losing the image of God, we include under this phrase his loss of a correct idea of God's image, as well as his conformity to it. And here we find the fountain of all the idolatry ever known on earth. It is almost, if not altogether, impossible for human beings to lose the idea of the existence of a first cause after it has been in any way communicated to the mind. But it is as easy to lose a correct idea of the moral image of God, as it is difficult to lose an idea of his existence. While fallen man retains an impression or a conviction of a first cause or of a divinity, and has no correct idea of his image, he will naturally assimilate his divinity to that object which most engages his imagination or his strongest desires. Hence the deification of heroes, animals, vegetables, vices, or the host of heaven, according to the ruling passion of the idolatrous nation, tribe or individual. These, however, are conclusions from various premises not now laid before our readers, which may afterwards require more attention. To conclude this essay:—Man lost by his fall his personal glory as above described; he lost a true idea of the image of his Creator; and the actual moral likeness he before had to him; with this he lost his favour also, and was thereby not only become obnoxious to all the punishment annexed to his original transgression; but was, far as in him lay, utterly disqualified to regain either a true idea of God's moral character, conformity to him, or the enjoyment of his favour. Now the rational excellency of christianity is, that it adopts the only consistent means in the grasp of human comprehension to restore man to the image, favor, and friendship of God. But of this, more hereafter.

THE TRUTH OF REVELATION.

(Continued from page 41.)

The miracles wrought by Christ and the Apostles were so many, so great, so various, and performed in the presence of such vast multitudes, that they never could have gained credit if they had not been true.—Yet we find they did gain credit, and there in Jerusalem, the principal theatre of Christ's miracles, where he was publicly crucified between two thieves, the very place where the imposture, if it was one, might be