

darkened by reason of sin, as to mistake that for happiness which is, in fact, real misery. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, mere flesh; all its faculties have a carnal bias, and all its powers are wholly enslaved to fleshly or carnal pursuits, and sordid pleasures. Dead in sin, destitute of divine life, alienated and enemies in their mind, have no sincere desires after God; and are not only strangers, but enemies, in a state of hostility to the holy nature of God. A mind bent upon wicked works, passionately prone to all evil, insomuch that when iniquity knew no bounds in Israel, 'tis said, "every one did that which was right in his own eyes," Judg. xvii, 6. Nor will St. Paul exempt himself nor the most eminent saints from being governed by the flesh, till renewed by the blessed Spirit; but declares they remained under the dominion of sensuality till subdued by the power of electing grace. The darkness of the understanding necessarily perverts the will, so that man invariably chooses evil in preference to good. And the will is by nature so enslaved to evil that he heartily loves and eagerly pursues the imaginary pleasures of sin. And because the will is fond of, and relishes that slavery, it is therefore said to be free; naturally free to what is morally and spiritually evil. This perverted will, unless curbed by Providential restraints, never fails to produce the baneful fruits of practical immorality and licentiousness. All practical unbelief and final impenitence of those that perish, arises from this viciousness of their nature and stubbornness of their perverted will. Boast not then of free-will. It is like what the prophet said of Nineveh, *void and empty* of any thing spiritually good. They who feel not this, resemble delirious persons in a high fever, who imagine nothing ails them, while, in fact, they are at the very gates of death. Therefore he, who is the faithful and true witness, taught the obstinate perverseness of the human will, that it is opposed to what is good. Ye will not come to me that ye might have life, but will do the works of the devil. Whence all who are left to the choice of their own will inevitably go to hell.