

It has been previously stated, that we are incapable of forming any accurate conception of mind, but from habitually using in regard to it, terms having a relation to external objects, we acquire an erroneous idea of it in connection with material substances, and hence the absurdity of supposing the developement of the brain in any particular part, to correspond in degree with the prominence of a certain faculty, does not at first sight appear so glaring. It is evidently, however, a misconception arising from the confusion of our ideas of materiality and immateriality, and a false supposition that immaterial substances hold to space the same relation as material.

It seems to have been a favourite foible of philosophers, in all ages, to represent the economy of the mind as almost infinitely complicated; but it is rational to suppose, that where very little is or can be known, that hypothesis which is the least complex and at the same time, perfectly calculated for the solution of moral facts, is the most likely to be true; and in consequence the most worthy of universal reception. That theory which, in my opinion, best answers both these ends, is, that the mind is a principle naturally endowed with aspirations after happiness, and possessing a capacity of reason, which, like a rudder, steers it in all its operations to this end. That self love, selfishness, or a desire for happiness is the principle to which human conduct may be referred, is, I think, abundantly evident from a consideration of the motives in which it originates. The various pursuits which mankind follow in order to obtain a livelihood, are professedly in a great measure selfish, but if we review those minor parts of his character, which are generally considered as instances of his superiority to selfish principle, we shall find that they all bear the impress of the same stamp. Nothing is more natural, than that assertions of this kind should be received with distrust, for the operation of the very principle of which I am speaking, renders us unwilling to admit a fact so derogatory from our cherished fancy of the dignity of human nature, and the prism through which we have always viewed the subject, has obscured or misrepresented, our natural perceptions; but an investigation of a few of the particulars, will probably be sufficient to convince us, that the conclusion is not unwarranted by the premises.