

ESSAYS ON MAN IN HIS PRIMITIVE STATE, AND UNDER THE PATRIARCHAL, JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.—NO. III.

PRIMITIVE STATE.—NO. III.

[From the Christian Baptist]

ADAM, by his fall, lost the image of God, and thereby ceased to be the object of his complacent affection and esteem. To love, delight in, and esteem, what God loves, delights in, and esteems; and to disapprove what he disapprobates, constitutes man's moral likeness to God, and proves him to be in his image. God cannot but love those who are like him, and he cannot but dislike those who are unlike him. His benevolent regard towards man as his creature, even when fallen, may, and we are assured does continue, while he is susceptible of being reconciled to him: though he cannot love with complacent affection one of the species, until his moral image is restored.

Now man by his fall, did not lose his susceptibility of being restored to the image of God; nor did he incur eternal death by his original transgression. Had either of these been fact his redemption had been impossible. Man cannot merit eternal death unless he sin against an economy which contains within it eternal life. And had God meant by the promise of death, in the economy under which Adam was first placed, what we understand by eternal death; his veracity required that Adam must go down to eternal ruin. But neither eternal life nor eternal death were proposed to Adam under that constitution; consequently the former could not be merited by obedience, nor the latter by disobedience. So far we proceed upon incontrovertible fact. It is true, indeed, that Adam by his fall was placed in such circumstances as it became possible for him to become liable to eternal ruin. But what we contend for here, is, that this was no part of the economy, nor contained either in the law or promises under which he was placed. He lost his glory. The dazzling splendour of his body vanished, and he was ashamed to look at himself; his understanding became bewildered; he lost the true idea of the similitude of God, as well as his moral image. But he neither lost the susceptibility of being restored to the image of God, nor did he actually incur eternal death. He was therefore still worthy of the divine benevolence, though unworthy of the divine complacency; or, in other words, there was still in man, in the species, as well as in the two progenitors, something which moved the divine benevolence, and which was worthy to move his compassion and kindness. This will not be the case, it cannot be the case, with those who fall from the economy under which we now live. For as eternal life is now promised, so is eternal death; and man can now render himself unworthy of even the divine benevolence, should he so sin against the divine philanthropy as to merit eternal death. But this is in anticipation of our subject.

To return to the fall of man, all speculations apart, the facts are these, man lost all his personal glory. The rays of glory which shone from the face of Moses, and the angelic beauty which appeared in the face of Stephen, the protomartyr, were but resemblances of the pristine