

There is no such thing as an universal language, unless we allow inarticulate cries (or sounds), and gestures (or signs) to be language; and in that sense, the brutes may be said to have a language as well as mankind.

If articulate language were natural to man, must it not follow that the same would be common to every nation, and spoken spontaneously by all of the same species, having the organs of pronunciation; and of course, that persons born deaf would have it as perfectly as any?—for they have all faculties that others enjoy from nature, and what in that case should hinder their possession of this?

It is intellect or abilities of reasoning and imitation, with the powers of imagination, which form the exalted and distinguishing prerogative of human nature, and these, as was before observed, are not wanting in persons born deaf, although language always is,—that is without peculiar instruction—a capacity also of acquiring every faculty or art except music and oratory—which is a species of music—with all the necessary means of pronunciation nature hath absolutely, although under great disadvantages indeed, bestowed on them; but, by want of the perception of sounds, they are exactly in the same state, with respect to speech, which we may suppose any persons would be in, who were shut up, and bred together, from earliest infancy in a place and manner which should render it impossible for them to hear any language spoken; that is, without speech.

Was Adam speechless? Had he any example by the imitation of which he acquired language, to enable him to give names to every living creature or to answer the voice of the Lord in the garden of Eden? If Adam had this faculty by nature, why not his heirs and successors when they arrive at the state of maturity?

To this it is replied, that many learned and pious divines have agreed, that the metaphorical style so much in use in the East, and with which the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament abound, may account for this: they have accordingly been of opinion that it is figurative expression not strictly historical, in the same manner as in the same chapter, the Immaterial Omniscient Spirit or First Cause, is said to have brought