

and offerings afford abundant testimony of their belief. Nor does their sense of the necessity of such a satisfaction and reconciliation appear to be altogether innate or natural; for the early institution of sacrifices in the world by the express command, or at least, approbation of God himself,* as well as the subsequent establishment of rites and ceremonies pertaining to the same end amongst the Jews, by his express injunction, all afford a strong warrant for believing that the *universal* prevalence of a similar custom in the world—like that of the belief in the existence of a Deity and the immortality of the soul—is to be referred to a Divine Revelation. These, however, were mere types or symbols of a greater sacrifice; for our own reason declares their inefficacy, and the word of Scripture plainly asserts their insufficiency. We cannot believe that the blood of an inferior animal can alone be an equivalent for the forfeited life of man; and man dying for his fellow would be but an attempt to atone for pollution by a polluted offering—whilst the Sacred Scriptures themselves silence every doubt by the declaration, that *it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins—sacrifice and burnt offering thou wouldest not—in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure.*

How then was the happy design to be compassed of reconciling man to his Maker? How, in consistency with the glory and justice of God, were such enemies to be reconciled, such offenders to be pardoned, such wretches to be saved? Would the insulted Majesty of heaven deign to treat with ungrateful rebels except by a Mediator? Would the offended Governor of the world suffer thus his commands to be violated, his authority to be despised, his honor to be trampled on, without some equivalent satisfaction? Could we hope to be cleared of our guilt without an expiation, reinstated in our freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without a punishment?

No: The dignity of the Almighty must be preserved whilst His mercies are transcendent: His justice must be satisfied whilst His goodness is unbounded. He was willing to be sued to for peace and mercy; but, at the same time, he demanded a satisfaction for our transgressions. He was willing to pardon us for our offences; but he would also manifest his detestation of them, and prove his hatred of sin in a manner more conspicuous and illustrious than if He had persecuted it down to hell and irreversibly doomed us to eternal torments.

But how was this great end to be effected? Where was a Mediator to be found who would place himself betwixt God and us,

* The skins of the beasts wherewith our first parents were clothed, are supposed to have been taken from sacrificed animals—and the offering of Abel would imply the early introduction of the custom.