

prince of the power of the air. Jehovah, on the other hand, in the convulsions of nature, in the dispensations of his providence, and in the threatenings of his word, affords awful proofs of his displeasure against sin. The result of such a contest cannot be doubtful; and we ask, can that man be happy, or can he be the subject of pleasure, who is thus opposed to the Being who made him, and who must consider his Creator his enemy? If, indeed, he has peace of any kind, it is that awful and portentous stillness which precedes the dreadful conflict in which the sinner shall assuredly fall, and from which he shall descend to the regions of punishment and despair.

Before a rebel like man can be happy, the opposition towards God that reigns in his heart must be destroyed, and the affections of his soul receive a new bias; the fear of the consequences of sin, under which he must constantly labour, must be removed, and the pursuits of his life be changed. Now we appeal, both to the nature of the change required, and to all the observation of the world we have been able to make, whether or not man possesses a natural disposition to make peace with God, to return to his service, and to render him due homage! We ask, does man possess a single desire to be happy in the only way in which God can make him so? That he would be filled with pleasure we know, but are those pleasures pure? Are they such in which an angel would delight; or are they of a nature that would satisfy the soul, fallen and depraved as it is? The answer that must be given is easily anticipated, and leads to the conclusion that a change must be produced, and that true religion can only be implanted in the heart of man by Divine power. This fact accords with the whole tenor of scripture; which universally represents the return of man to God as the effect of

influence exerted on his mind by the Holy Spirit; "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good; that are accustomed to do evil;—" And he shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."—"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:"—"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

We see then, that if religion exists in the heart at all, the principles of it must have been implanted there by the Spirit of God; and if it has not its residence in the heart, whatever pretensions a man may make, he has deceived himself if he supposes that he possesses true religion. Now, here we pause, and appeal to scripture and to reason, and ask, would God exert his influence on the mind of man to make him unhappy? It is true, that in the process which the soul undergoes in turning from the slavery of sin to the service of God, there must be some painful feelings,—there must fall some bitter tears of repentance. But this sorrow arises, not from the circumstance of his engaging in the service of God, but from painful regret that he did not enter it sooner;—it is not because he is now under the restraints of religion, but because he was so long the servant of sin;—it is not because he is brought nigh to God, but from grief that he so long wandered from the only source of happiness. In this grief there is indeed a holy joy, and this repentance leads to happiness here, and to a world of felicity beyond the grave. Hence, when many Christians are first taught the true nature of religion, and are enabled to believe the gospel testimony concerning Jesus, they "are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," which they then imagine can never end, but will continue to