

altogether. The notion of an abstract spiritual religion is preposterous and absurd. God, it is true, might have immediately communicated to the soul all necessary religious knowledge, and by his powerful grace have perpetuated a religion of the heart, without having recourse to the medium of the bodily senses; but that he has not done so, we have abundant proofs from reason and Scripture, confirmed by our own experience. We principally adore God by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love; and true religion will be always promoted by any thing that moves the heart to the exercise of those great virtues. Now, philosophically speaking, it matters very little through what external medium those impressions are conveyed or produced. The principle is the same, whether the soul is affected through the sight, the hearing, or any of the other senses. There can be no more objection to the one than to the other. The Christian may at one time open a page of the great book of nature, and clearly read there the attributes of its Maker; at another, he may peruse, in the written word, the mercies of his revealed will, and the wonders of his adorable mysteries. Again, in some work of art, in a devout image, or religious painting he may contemplate the ineffable love of his Redeemer, or the virtues and rewards of his saintly imitators. He may also hear an eloquent sermon, or

moving exhortation, from a minister of Christ. But will not all tend to the same salutary purpose? May not all serve to cherish those sentiments of faith and confidence, of adoration and love, by which the Creator is honoured, and his commandments observed? Of what consequence is it, whether these desirable results come through one sense more than another; through sight more than hearing, through the sight of an image or a painting rather than that of a written or a printed book?

In order to be convinced of these truths, we have but to open the sacred Scriptures, and behold the manner in which God himself was pleased to establish his worship on earth—the sacrifices of the patriarchs, the prayers and offerings, and most minute and onerous ceremonial of the Mosaic dispensation—the dreaded voice to our first parents—the dove and rainbow of Noah, the vision and stone of Jacob, the burning bush of Horeb, the thunders of Sinai, the awful proclamation from its summit, the cherubim of the ark, and the manna and brazen serpent of the desert. What are all these but various appeals of his Creator to the heart of man, through different senses? We may observe too, the public worship, feasts, and ceremonies of the Jews, sanctioned, and even observed, by the Redeemer himself.

The man, therefore, who would object to all external worship and