

immortality of the soul of man, or to speak more correctly, that of the existence of the soul, as any thing separate, or distinct from the body. They regard man, not as a complex being made up of soul and body, but as a unit, and exclusively a material being. It follows therefore from this, that, when man dies, he does not fall asleep, but he ceases, as a distinct being to exist. For, if what we call the soul of man is nothing distinct from the body, when this body becomes lifeless, and is dissolved into its primitive elements; and the atoms of which it was composed pass into vegetables, and, through them into the bodies of other men and animals, it is clear that, though the matter of which the man was composed still exists, the man himself has ceased to exist. And such a thing as the resurrection of a mere material man, the matter of whose body has existed in many different bodies, is a physical impossibility. A new creation of a precisely similar man there may be, but the resurrection of the very same man, with his personal identity untouched, there cannot be.

This doctrine of materialism,—one of the most shallow and irrational which the misguided mind of man ever devised, the modern advocates of it pretend to find in Scripture. Here then I shall join issue with them, and endeavor to show, that such a doctrine does not receive the slightest countenance from the word of God properly understood. With this view then I shall consider, first the leading texts, to which these men appeal, in support of their materialistic views, and then, in the second place, bring forward the most important scriptural evidence, in support of generally received opinion concerning the immortality of the soul, and its capacity of existing in a state of consciousness and activity, when separated from the body.

First, then, our opponents appeal to the Pentateuch for negative arguments, in support of their peculiar views. It is admitted that, in the Pentateuch, there is very little direct reference to the future state of existence, no appeal made to men's feelings as immortal beings, and no inducements held out to obedience to God's law, drawn from a regard to a future state of reward and punishments. And on the absence of all appeal to the future state of existence, Bishop Warburton, one of the most powerful of English writers, founds his great argument for the divine legation of Moses. There is much force in the Bishop's argument; but I feel persuaded that there are indirect allusions to the immortality of the soul, in the Pentateuch, which show that the ancient Hebrews knew and received that great doctrine; and to these I shall afterwards refer. But the modern Sadducees are not content with endeavouring to draw negative arguments from Scripture, in support of their peculiar views: they endeavour to bring direct and positive evidence from the word of God that man is merely a material being, and so far as any immortal spiritual principle is concerned, no better than the beasts that perish.

Let us look at some of these passages. The passage to which I shall first direct your attention, is that which at first sight appears most strongly to favour the doctrine of materialism; you will find it in Eccles. iii. 18—22. In this passage the wise man is speaking of the vanity of man as mortal, and of the wickedness and folly of those who live only for a present world; and regarding the condition of such, he said in his heart, or prayed, that God might manifest them to themselves, and let them see that they are no better than brute beasts. Solomon does not express it as his opinion, as some ignorantly suppose, that man spiritually is no better than a