in a delightful climate is the very habitation, and the fruits produced in that garden the very food, which we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe to have been prepared ſor the progenitors of the human race ; and though in the garden actually fitted up for this purpoſe two trees were remarkably distinguiſhed from the rest, perhaps in ſituation and appearance as well as in uſe, the diſtinction was calculated to ſerve the beſt of purpoſes. The one called the *tree of life,* of which, while they continued innocent, they were permitted to eat, ſerved as a ſacramental pledge or aſſurance on the part of God, that as long as they ſhould obſerve the terms of the cove­nant their life ſhould be preſerved ; the other, of which it was death to taſte, was admirably adapted to impreſs upon their minds the neceſſity of implicit obedience to the Divine will, in whatever manner it might be made known to them.

A queſtion has been started, and it is of ſome importance, What would have finally become of men if the firſt cove­nant had not been violated ? That they would have been all immortal is certain ; but it is by no means certain that they would have lived for ever upon this earth. On the contrary, it has been an article of very general belief in all ages of the church@@\*, that the garden of Eden was an emblem or type of heaven, and therefore called *Paradiſe* (see Paradise) ; and that under the firſt covenant, mankind, after a ſufficient probation here, were to be tranſlated into heaven without tasting death. This doctrine is not indeed explicitly taught in ſcripture ; but many things conspire to make it highly probable. The frequent communications between God and man before the fall \*\*(M), ſeem to indicate that Adam was training up for ſome higher ſtate than the terreſtrial para­diſe. Had he been intended for nothing but to cultivate the ground and propagate his species, he might have been left like other animals to the guidance of his own reaſon and inſtincts ; which, after the rudiments of knowledge were communicated to him, muſt ſurely have been ſuſſicient to direct him to every thing neceſſary to the comforts of a life merely ſensual and rational, otherwiſe he would have been an imperfect animal. It is obvious too, that this earth, how­ever fertile it may have originally been, could not have af­forded the means of ſubſiſtence to a race of immortal beings multiplying to infinity. For theſe reaſons, and others which will readily occur to the reader, it ſeems incontrover­tible, that, under the firſt covenant, either mankind would have been ſucceſſively tranſlated to ſome ſuperior ſtate, or would have ceaſed to propagate their kind as ſoon as the earth ſhould have been repleniſhed with inhabitants. He who reflects on the promiſe, that, after the general reſurrection, there is to be a new heaven and a new earth, will pro­bably embrace the latter part of the alternative ; but that part in its conſequences differs not from the former. In the new earth promiſed in the Chriſtian revelation, nothing is to dwell but righteoufneſs. It will therefore be preciſely the same with what we conceive to be expressed by the word heaven ; and if under the firſt covenant this earth was to be converted into a ſimilar place, where, after a certain period, men ſhould neither marry nor be given in marriage, but enjoy what divines have called the *beatific vision, we* may confidently affirm, that, had the firſt covenant been faithfully obſerved, Adam and his poſterity, after a ſufficient probation, would all have been tranſlated to ſome ſuperior ſtate or heaven.

To fit them for that ſtate, the gifts of divine grace ſeem to have been abſolutely neceſſary. To them it was a ſtate certainly ſupernatural, otherwiſe a God of infinite wiſdom and perfect goodness would not, for a moment, have placed them in an inferior ſtate. But to enable any creature, especially such a creature as man, whom an ancient philoſopher has juſtly ſtyled to riſe above its *nature,* foreign and divine aid is unqueſtionably requisite : and therefore, though we cannot perſuade ourſelves that the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt conſtituted that image of God in which man was originally made, we agree with biſhop Bull, that theſe gifts were beſtowed upon our firſt parents to enable them to fulfil the terms of the covenant under which they were placed.

Upon the whole, we think it apparent from the portions of ſcripture which we have examined, that Adam and Eve were endued with ſuch powers of body and mind as fitted them to exerciſe dominion over the other animals; that thoſe powers conſtituted that image of God in which they are ſaid to have been formed ; that they received by immediate revela­tion the firſt principles of all uſeful knowledge, and eſpecially of that ſyſtem which is uſually called *natural religion ;* that they lived ſor ſome time with no other religion, entitled to the natural rewards of piety and virtue, but all the while liable to death ; that they were afterwards tranſlated into paradise, where they were placed under a new law, with the penalty of death threatened to the breach of it, and the pro­miſe of endleſs life if they ſhould faithfully obſerve it ; and that they were endued with the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, to enable them, if not wanting to themſelves, to fulfil the terms of that covenant, which has been improperly termed the *covenant of works,* ſince it flowed from the mere grace of God, and conferred privileges on man to which the most perfect human virtue could lay no juſt claim.

Sect. III. *Of the Fall of Adam, and its Conſequences.*

Ffom the preceding account of the primeval ſtate of man, it is evident that his continuance in the terreſtrial paradiſe, together with all the privileges which he there enjoyed, were made to depend upon his obſervance of one poſitive precept. Every other duty incumbent on him, whether as reſulting from what is called the law of his nature, or from the expreſs command of his God, was as much his duty before as after he was introduced into the garden of Eden ; and though the tranſgreſſion of any law would undoubtedly have been puniſhed, or have been forgiven only in conſequence of sincere repentance and amendment, it does not appear that a breach of the *moral* law, or of the commandment respecting the ſanctification of the *Sabbath-day,* would have been puniſh­ed with death, whatever may be the import of that word in the place where it is firſt threatened. The punishment was denounced only againſt eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil : For “ the Lord God com­manded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayeſt freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.” To the word *death* in this paſſage divines have affixed many and different meanings. By ſome it is ſuppoſed to import a ſeparation of the soul and body, while the latter was to continue in a ſtate of conſcious exiſtence ; by others, it is taken to imply annihi­lation or a ſtate without conſciouſneſs ; by ſome, it is imagin­ed to ſignify eternal life in torments ; and by others a spiritual and moral death, or a ſtate neceſſarily subject to sin.

@@@[m]\* Bull's state of Man before the fall.

@@@(m) That there were ſuch frequent communications, has been ſhown to be in the higheſt degree probable by the late Dr Law biſhop of Carliſle. See his *Diſcourſe on the several Dispensations of revealed Religion.*