call in queſtion the fitneſs or the duty of public worſhip. This is ſo far from our intention, that we firmly believe with Mr Wollaſton, that what piety remains among us is to be attributed in a great meaſure to the practice of frequent­ing the church on Sundays ; and that it is the neglect of this particular duty which has rendered the preſent genera­tion of men leſs pious, leſs humble, and more prone to faction, than their fathers were, who made it a point every Lord’s day to unite with ſome congregation of Chriſtians in the public worſhip of their Creator and Redeemer. But whilst we are convinced of the importance and neceſſity of this too much neglected duty, and could wiſh to impreſs our conviction upon the minds of all our readers, we do not apprehend that we leſſen its dignity, or detract from the weight of almost univeral practice, by endeavouring to de­rive that practice from its true source, which appears to us to be not human reaſon, but divine revelation.

But whatever doubts may be entertained with reſpect to the origin of public worſhip, there can be none as to the foundation of moral virtue. Reaſon clearly perceives it to be the will of our Maker, that every individual of the human race ſhould treat every other individual as, in ſimilar circumstances, he could juſtly expect to be treated himſelf. It is thus only that the greateſt ſum of human happineſs can be produced (ſee Moral Philosophy, n⁰ 17. and 135.) ; for were all men temperate, ſober, just in their dealings, faithful to their promises, and charitable to the poor, &c. it is ob­vious that no miſeries would be felt upon earth, but the few which, by the laws of corporeal nature, unavoidably reſult from the union of our minds with ſyſtems of matter. But it has been already ſhown, that the deſign of God in forming sentient beings was to communicate to them ſome portion, or rather ſome reſemblance, of that felicity which is eſſential to himſelf ; and therefore every action which in its natural tendency co-operates with this deſign muſt be agreeable to him, as every action of a contrary tendency muſt be diſagreeable.

From this reaſoning it follows undeniably, that we are obliged not only to be juſt and beneficent to one another, but alſo to abſtain from all unnecessary cruelty to inferior animals. That we have a right to tame cattle, and employ them for the purpoſes of agriculture and other arts where ſtrength is required, is a poſition which we believe has never been controverted. But if it is the intention of God to com­municate, in different degrees according to their different ranks, a portion of happineſs to all his creatures endowed with ſenſe, it is obvious that we sin againſt him when we ſubject even the horſe or the aſs to greater labour than he is able to perform ; and this ſin is aggravated when from avarice we give not the animal a ſufficient quantity of food to ſupport him under the exertions which we compel him to make. That it is our duty to defend ourſelves and our property from the ravages of beaſts of prey, and that we may even exterminate ſuch beaſts from the country in which we live, are truths which cannot be queſtioned ; but it has been the opinion of men, eminent for wisdom and learning, that we have no right to kill an ox or a ſheep for *food,* but in conſequence of the divine permiſſion to Noah recorded in the ninth chapter of the book of Geneſis. Whether this opinion be well or ill founded we ſhall not poſitively deter­mine, though the arguments upon which it is made to rest are of ſuch a nature as the faſhionable reaſoners of the pre­ſent day would perhaps find it no eaſy taſk to answer ; but it cannot admit of a doubt, that, in killing ſuch animals, we are, in duty to *their* Creator and *ours,* bound to put them to the leaſt poſſible pain. If this be granted, and we do not ſee how it can be denied by any man convinced of the benevolence of the Deity, it is ſtill more evident that we act contrary to the divine will when, for our mere amuſement, we torture and put to death such animals as are confeſſedly not injurious to ourſelves, or to any thing upon which the comforts of life are known to depend. We are indeed far from being convinced with the poet, that infects and reptiles “ in mortal ſufferance feel as when a giant dies,” (ſee Pleasure and Physiology, Sect. viii.) ; but their feelings on that occaſion are certainly ſuch, as that, when we wantonly inflict them, we thwart, as far as in our power, the benevolent purpoſe of the Creator in giving them life and ſenſe. Det it be obſerved too, that the man who practiſes needleſs cruelty to the brute creation is training up his mind for exerciſing cruelty towards his fellow-creatures, to his ſlaves if he have any, and to his ſervants ; and by a very quick progreſs to all who may be placed beneath him in the scale of ſociety.

Such are the plain duties of natural religion ; and if they were univerſally practiſed, it is ſelf-evident that they would be productive of the greateſt happineſs which mankind could enjoy in this world, and that piety and virtue would be their own reward. They are however far from being uni­verſally practiſed ; and the conſequence is, that men are fre­quently raiſed to affluence and power by vice, and ſome­times ſunk into poverty by a rigid adherence to the rules of virtue.

This being the caſe, there can be no queſtion of greater importance, while there are few more difficult to be anſwered, than “ What are the fonctions by which natural religion enforces obedience to her own laws ?” It is not to be ſup­poſed that the great body of mankind ſhould, without the prospect of an simple reward, practiſe virtue in thoſe inſtances in which ſuch practice would be obviouſly attended with injury to themſelves ; nor does it appear reaſonable in any man to forego preſent enjoyment, without the well-grounded hope of thereby ſecuring to himſelf a greater or more per­manent enjoyment in reverſion. Natural religion therefore, as a ſyſtem of doctrines influencing the conduct, is exceeding­ly defective, unleſs it affords ſufficient evidence, intelligible to every ordinary capacity, of the immortality of the ſoul, or at leaſt of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. That it *does* afford this evidence, is ſtrenuouſly maintained by ſome deiſts, and by many philoſophers of a different deſcription, who, though they profeſs Chriſtianity, ſeem to have ſome unaccountable dread of being deceived by their bibles in every doctrine which cannot be propped by the additional buttreſs of philoſophical reaſoning.

One great argument made use of to prove that the immortality of the ſoul is among the doctrines of natural religion, is the universal belief of all ages and nations that men continue to live in ſome other ſtate after death has ſeparated their ſouls from their bodies. “ Quod ſi *omnium conſenſus naturae vox est :* omneſque, qui ubiqui ſunt, conſentiunt eſſe aliquid, quod ad eos pertineat, qui vita ceſſerint: nobis quoque idem exiſtimandum eſt : et si, quorum aut ingenio, aut vir­tute animus excellit, eos arbitramur, quia natura optima sunt, cernere naturæ vim maxime : verisimile est, *cum optimus quiſque maxime posteritati ſerviat,* eſſe aliquid, cujus is poſt mortem ſenſum sit, habiturus. Sed ut deos eſſe natura opi­namur, qualesque sint, ratione cognoscimus, sic permanere animos arbitramur *consensu nationum omnium\*.’’*

That this is a good argument for the truth of the doc­trine, through whatever channel men may have received it, we readily acknowledge ; but it appears not to us to be any proof of that doctrine’s being the deduction of human reaſoning. The popular belief of Paganiſm, both ancient and modern, is ſo fantaſtic and abſurd, that it could never have