that whatever more may be meant by the image of God in which man was made, the phrase undoubtedly comprehends all those powers and qualities by which he is enabled to maintain his authority over the inferior creation. Among these the faculty of reason is confessedly the most impor­tant ; for it is by it that man is capable of being made ac­quainted with the Author of his being, the relation which subsists between them, and the duties implied in that re­lation from the creature to the Creator.

Sect. II.—*Of the Religion of Man in his Primeval Stare.*

It is more than probable that man, after his creation, was not left to discern, by the efforts of his own unassisted rea­son, either his own character or the duties which devolved upon him towards God. This opinion is confirmed by what the inspired historian tells us, when he says, Gen. ii., “ God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his works which he had created and made ;” for Adam could not have understood what was meant by the *sanctification* of a particular day, or of any thing else, unless he had previously received some religious instruction. There cannot therefore be a doubt, but that, as soon as man was made, his Creator communicated to him the truths of what is called natural religion ; and to these were added the precept to keep holy the Sabbath-day, and set it apart for the purposes of contemplation and wor­ship.

This was a very wise institution, as all the divine institu­tions must be. “ The great end for which we are brought into life, is to attain the knowledge and be confirmed in the love of God. This includes obedience to his will in thought, word, and deed, or that course of conduct which can alone make us happy here, and fit us for everlasting glory hereafter. But of these things we cannot retain a proper sense without close and repeated application of thought ; and the unavoidable cares and concerns of the pre­sent life occupying much of our attention, it is, in the nature of things, necessary that some certain portion of time should be appropriated to the purposes of religious instruction and the public adoration of our Creator, in whom we all live, and move, and have our being.” Hence a very learned divine, Dr. Taylor of Norwich, has inferred, that though the parti­cular time is a matter of positive appointment, the observa­tion of a sabbath, in general, is a duty of natural religion, as having its foundation in the reason of things. See Sabbath.

Man, therefore, in his *natural* and original state was a rational and religious being, bound to do “ justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with his God, and to keep holy the Sabbath-day.”

In this original state, man was under the discipline of what we have called *natural religion,* entitled to happiness while he should perform the duties required of him, and liable to punishment when be should neglect those duties, or trans­gress the law of his nature as a rational and moral agent This being the case, it is a matter of some importance, to ascertain, if we can, what the rewards and punishments are which natural religion holds out to her votaries.

That under every dispensation of religion the pious and virtuous man shall enjoy more happiness than misery ; and that the incorrigibly wicked shall have a greater portion of misery than happiness, are truths which cannot be contro­verted by any one who admits that the Almighty gover­nor of the universe is a Being of wisdom, goodness, and justice. But respecting the rewards of virtue and the punishment of vice, more than these general truths seems not to be taught by natural religion. Many divines, how­ever, of great learning and worth, have thought otherwise, and have contended, that from the nature of things, the re­wards bestowed by an infinite God upon piety and virtue must be eternal like their author. These men, indeed, ap­pear willing enough to allow that the punishments with which natural religion is armed against vice must be only of a temporary duration, because reason, say they, is ready to revolt at the thought of *everlasting* punishment.

This opinion, which confounds natural with revealed re­ligion, giving to the former an important truth which be­longs exclusively to the latter, has been so ably confuted by Warburton, (Div. Leg. b. ix.) that we shall submit his arguments to our readers in preference to any thing which we ourselves can give.

“ If reason doth, on the one hand, seem to revolt at *ever­lasting punishment,* we must confess that fancy, on the other, (even when full plumed by *vanity),* hath scarcely force enough to rise to the idea of *infinite rewards.* How the heart of man came to consider this as no more than an adequate retribution for his right conduct during the short trial of his virtue here, would be hard to tell, did we not know what monsters pride begot of old upon *pagan philo­sophy;* and how much greater still these latter ages have disclosed, *by* *the long* incubation of *school-divinity* upon *folly.* What hath been urged from natural reason, in sup­port of this extravagant presumption, is so very slender, that it recoils as you enforce it. First, you say, 'that the soul, the subject of these eternal rewards, being *immate­rial,* and so, therefore, unaffected by the causes which bring material things to an end, is, by its nature, fitted for eter­nal rewards.’ This is an argument *ad ignorantiam,* and holds no farther. Because an *immaterial* being is not sub­ject to that mode of dissolution which affects *material* sub­stances, you conclude it to be eternal. This is going too fast. There may be, and probably are, many natural causes (unknown indeed to us) whereby immaterial beings come to an end. But if the nature of things cannot, yet God certainly can, put a final period to such a being when it hath served the purpose of its creation. Doth annihilation impeach that wisdom and goodness which was display­ed when God brought it *our of nothing ?* Other immate­rial beings there are, viz., the souls of brutes, which have the same natural security with man for their existence, of whose *eternity* we never dream. But pride, as the poet observes, *calls God unjust,*

If man alone engross not heaven’s high care ; Alone made ***perfect*** here, immortal there.

However, let us (for argument’s sake) allow the human soul to be unperishable by nature, and secured in its existence by the unchangeable will of God, and see what will follow from thence-—An *infinite* reward for virtue during one mo­ment of its existence, because reason discovers that, by the law of nature, *some* reward is due ? By no means. When God hath amply repaid us for the performance of our duty, will he be at a loss how to dispose of us for the long remain­der of *eternity ?* May he not find new and endless employ­ment for reasonable creatures, to which, when properly dis­charged, new rewards, and in endless succession, will be assigned ? Modest reason seems to dictate this to the fol­lowers of the *law of nature.* The flattering expedient of eternal rewards for virtue here was invented in the simplicity of early speculation, after it had fairly brought men to conclude that the soul is immaterial.

“Another argument urged for the eternity of the rewards held out by natural religion, to the practice of piety and virtue, is partly physical and partly moral. The merit of service (say the admirers of that religion) increases in pro­portion to the excellence of that Being to whom our ser­vice is directed and becomes acceptable. An infinite being, therefore, can dispense no rewards but what are in­finite. And thus the virtuous man becomes entitled to im­mortality.

“ The misfortune is, that this reasoning holds equally on the side of the unmerciful doctors, as they are called, who doom