observance of one positive precept, immortality or eternal life; which is not essential to the nature of any created being, and cannot be claimed as the merited reward of the greatest virtue or the most fervent piety.

This obvious truth will enable us to dispose of the objec­tions which have been sometimes brought by free-thinking divines against the wisdom and justice of punishing so se­verely as by death the breach of a mere positive precept ; which, considered in itself, appears to be a precept of very little importance. We have only to reply, that as an exemp­tion from death is not due either to the nature or to the vir­tue of man, it was wise and just to make it depend on the observance of a positive precept, to impress on the minds of our first parents a constant conviction, that they were to be preserved immortal, not in the ordinary course of divine providence, but by the special grace and favour of God. The same consideration will show us the folly of those men who are for turning all that is said of the trees of knowledge and of life into figure and allegory. But the other trees of which Adam and Eve were permitted to eat, were certain­ly real trees, or they must have perished for want of food. And what rules of interpretation will authorise us to inter­pret *eating* and *trees* literally in one part of the sentence, and figuratively in the other ? A garden 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 for 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 on their minds the necessity of implicit obedience to the Divine will, in whatever manner it might be made known to them.

A question of some importance has been started, 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 clear that they would have lived for ever on this earth. On the contrary, it has been an article of very general belief in all ages of the church, (See Bull’s State of Man before the Fall,) 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,@@\* 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 sufficient to direct him to everything necessary to the comforts of a life merely sensual and ra­tional, otherwise he would have been but 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 succes­

sively 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 righteousness. 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 never 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 *ζωοv μιμητικoν,* 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 on our first parents to enable them to fulfil the terms of the covenant under which they were placed.

On 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 for 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. IV.—*Of the Fall of Man.*

From 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 on 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, 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

@@@, 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 Discourses on the several Dispensations of Revealed Religion.