

or any other metal, shot from a cannon, placed erect upon the ground, with its mouth upwards, would ascend, with amazing velocity, perpendicularly in the air, to a prodigious height. This ball evidently flies directly from the centre of the earth. What is the cause of its retrograde motion? The force of attraction? That cannot be, for had not an opposite and superior force been applied to it, it would have been motionless at the bottom of the cannon. May we not, therefore, rationally conclude, that in this case, the ignited powder must, at least, counteract the law of attraction so far, as by the application of its power, evidently superior, to drive the ball with astonishing speed, in a direction diametrically opposite to that, in which it would move if led by the hand of attraction only, unaffected by any other power.

Now, if without affecting the order of the whole structure of the world, the law of attraction may be counteracted, and its effects prevented, in one instance, why not in one hundred? If with respect to a cannon ball, why not with respect to a brick, a beam, or all the parts of a dislocated building? And if by the force of ignited gunpowder, how much more by the power of the Almighty. Surely the Infinite Being, before whom, if he does but move, the earth quakes, and the tempest roars, can counteract the power and effects of attraction, when, where, and in what manner he pleases, and yet, at the same instant, preserve entire the order of the world; though by doing so he might greatly dis-

order the sage minds of those philosophic gentlemen, who, while they confess his being, presume to set bounds to his authority, and limit his power ; who say that he has forsaken the earth, and does neither good nor evil ; who though they coolly compliment him with the titles of Creator and Supreme, warmly deny him the honour of governing the works of his own hands, and of doing what he will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the children of men ; and who, if they condescend to acknowledge his providence, confine it within the narrow compass of their own scanty imagination, as if he could do nothing beyond their comprehension, or were bound to explain all his measures unto them. These men, replete with self-sufficiency, pride, and vanity, think themselves competent to measure the heights, fathom the depths, and explore the full extent of all his works and ways ; and so high are the thoughts which they indulge of their own all-comprehending powers, that they arrogate to themselves omniscience ; so that when any thing is mentioned as being the *word* or *work of God*, or the effect of his all-pervading providence, for which they cannot account, upon the received principles of philosophy, or which seems not to comport with their philosophical logic, they instantly, without any signs of hesitancy, in a high tone of ridicule, pronounce it a fable, a dream, or the vain imagination of a weak disordered mind. Scripture and providence, nay, the Infinite Eternal himself must be measured by their line ; and bow

obsequious to their dogmas; or prepare to meet the fierce lightning of their angry judgment, and endure the mighty thunder of their indignant anathemas !

But He who is mighty in wisdom, and whose understanding is infinite, well knows how to deal with those men, and how to check their insolence, and abase their pride. He can, with ease, with a nod, or a look, turn wise men backward, take them in their own craftiness, as in a snare, and make all their deified knowledge foolishness. And he has, I doubt not, by his wonders, performed in the heavens, and the earth, in the whirlwind, and the deep, puzzled the heads, and confounded the thoughts of not a few philosophical infidels, whose lofty minds, too high to suffer them to confess their embarrassment, and acknowledge their insufficiency to account for some events, upon the principles of philosophy, on any other ground than that of the immediate interposition of the Supreme power, have urged them on, in opposition to the conviction of their own consciences, to persist in the obstinate denial of divine, supernatural, sovereign providence taught in the Holy Scriptures ; upon whose principles it is easy to account for those things, which must eternally perplex philosophy, and which, I am confident, its utmost sagacity will never be able to explain.

Surely, the Most High, whose very name imports self-existence, and self-sufficiency, can perform what he will, and can will whatever is not incompatible

with the dignity and holiness of his nature. The safety or destruction of a man, in the perilous situation proposed by you, must, therefore, depend upon the will of God. Has he determined his destruction? Then nothing can save him: the arm of the Almighty is lifted to crush him. Has he determined to save him? Then nothing can destroy him: omnipotence is exalted to deliver him. That which he has purposed must come to pass, or he is not supreme. If salvation, his power must be applied with infinite wisdom, to the shattered building, to govern and regulate each fall, and to order and adjust each falling part according to his design to save the man from perishing; for it cannot with reason, whatever philosophers may think, be supposed, that he wills the man's escape, and can, at the same time, stand by, as an idle spectator, and suffer him to perish, without employing his power to prevent it. And when omnipotence stands forth to deliver, destruction is utterly impossible! What is it that an infinite power cannot effect? Here I will venture a bold assertion, let infidel philosophers growl and snarl as they will: the power of the Supreme cannot, in any case whatever, be under the government of any law but his own will; if, therefore, his will has determined that the man, in the case supposed, shall not be buried in the ruins of the building, the law of attraction must give place; its force must be counteracted, or, if needful, and agreeable to the divine will, altered or suspended: sufficient is that amazing hand which framed all

nature to counteract, alter, or suspend, and yet preserve, the general order of nature. We will, therefore, imagine that we see a building exposed to the violent shock of an earthquake, or a tremendous hurricane, with all its cement loosened, and its beams dislodged, and a good man sleeping within its walls, totally ignorant of these matters; and we will suppose that the sovereign disposer of every event, has positively determined that this man, perilous as his situation appears to us to be, shall not be buried in its ruins. In this case, as in all other cases, every law, and every force must bow and yield to the supreme will; every part of the falling structure must be guided in its fall by the invisible Almighty hand, always employed to execute, with precision, the divine designs; and the good man must, *providentially*, escape being buried in its ruins.

INFIDEL CAVIL REFUTED, IN REPLY TO  
A QUESTION RESPECTING BORROWING  
AND NOT RETURNING.

A LETTER TO CURTIUS.

SIR,

You ask, “ as all scripture is given for instruction, to be informed, how you are to reconcile with common honesty, the order given by Moses to Israel, to borrow of Egypt jewels of silver and gold, and to spoil them. Does this agree with the justice and goodness of God? Or with common honesty, which obliges every one to restore faithfully to his neighbour, according to the intendment of the Lord. To make this difficulty easy,” you say, “ will oblige you.”

Whether to regard you as a Christian inquiring after truth, or some captious deist snarling at the Holy Scriptures, I know not ; nor does it signify, in the least, which you are, my answer is to either character. Why do you say, the order which Moses gave Israel ? Was Moses the author of that order ?

or did it emanate from his will? No, it had for its origin the will supreme, it issued from the Most High, whose lawful dominion admits of no circumscription; whose will and authority are subject to no control; who doeth according to his pleasure, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; whose hand none can stay; and unto whom, the highest created authority, may not say, what doest thou? Moses, on this occasion, as on many other occasions, was no more than the mouth of God to the people, by which he choose to declare to them his will.

Had Moses and the people of Israel, merely of their own minds borrowed of the Egyptians, without a design to return that which they borrowed, the act would have been really dishonest, and they would have been highly reprehensible: Psa. xxxvii. 21. But this was not the case.

Long ere the thousands of Israel departed out of Egypt, their miraculous exodus, with many of its attendant circumstances, was foretold and promised, by the Lord himself, to the patriarch Abram; "And he said unto Abram, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I *judge*; and afterwards shall they come out with *great substance*," Gen. xv. 13, 14.

This prophetic promise had its literal and exact accomplishment, at the time appointed. God re-

remembered the covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac ; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law ; he called for a famine upon the land of Canaan ; he brake the whole staff of bread. This impelled Israel to go down into Egypt, and Jacob to sojourn in the land of Ham. There he increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants, and to afflict them with hard bondage, and cruel oppression, four hundred years. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. By their hands, he showed his signs among them, and his wonders in the land. He sent darkness, and made it dark. He turned their water into blood, and slew their fish. He commanded, and their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also, and their fig-trees ; and brake the trees of their coasts. He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number ; and did eat up all the herbs in the land, and devoured the fruits of the ground. He smote also the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength. And he brought forth his people with *silver and gold, and great abundance.*

Thus the Supreme Almighty Judge, all whose ways are just, remembered his holy promise, and



judged the nation that afflicted his chosen, by consuming one part of its wealth, and by transferring another part of it unto his people.

He, who says, "every beast of the field is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine:" "the silver is mine, and the gold is mine," he, who is the sole proprietor of the world, and the fulness thereof; and, who possesses an indubitable right to dispose of every part of it as he will; he gave to Israel a plain and positive command, by which he invested them with full authority, to borrow every man of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, *Exod. xi. 2; xii. 35.* Israel, then, by commission from heaven, borrowed of the Egyptians; and the *latter*, under divine influence, lent unto the *former* such things as they required, *Exod. xii. 36.*

Now, what is there in this procedure, in the smallest degree, incompatible with moral honesty, or with the justice and goodness of God? Was not the property enjoyed by the Egyptians the *Lord's*? Had he more than lent it unto them for a season? Had he not unquestionable authority to call in the loan *when*, and by *what means* he pleased; and also to *transfer* it unto whomsoever he would? Was it not with *justice*, pure and unimpeachable, that he gave their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locusts; destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost,

and gave up their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunder-bolts? And was it not an act of *equal justice* to give their silver and gold unto his people, as *wages* for the long and painful service which they had performed in the house of bondage? Egypt had long dealt proudly against them, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour, and *without reward*.

But, the righteous Lord, who abhors cruelty, and punishes oppression with indignation, had long determined to rain down his desolating fury upon Egypt, for the unjust and cruel treatment which Israel had received at her proud oppressive hands, and to reward his people with her treasures for all their sufferings, and all their groans, endured and uttered beneath her yoke.

This divine determination, truly just and good, was revealed not only to Abram, but likewise to Moses, and by him to the children of Israel. The Lord said unto his faithful servant, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abram, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done unto you in Egypt, I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians;

and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, *ye shall not go empty.*" Exod. iii. 16, 20, 21, 22.

Now, since the fact to which you allude, was evidently the result of the *sovereign purpose*, the *gracious promise*, the *just command*, and the *holy influence* of the moral governor of the world, there could not possibly be any thing in it *militant* with moral honesty, or *inconsistent* with divine justice and goodness; we may, therefore conclude, in the fullest confidence, that it was an act of *pure honesty*, perfectly *congenial* with the above perfections of Deity: nay, that those attributes were displayed, honoured, and glorified in the whole of that amazing transaction:—*justice* deprived the *oppressors* of their property;—*goodness* gave it to the *oppressed*. Indeed, Sir, it very forcibly strikes me, that, under *circumstances* like the above, it would have been *criminal* in Israel not to have taken the Egyptian's property; as much so as it was in Saul to spare Agag, whom God had commanded him to destroy; or, as it was in Ahaz to refuse a sign when the Lord, by his prophet, authorised him to ask one, either in the depth, or in the height above. When God *commands*, man is bound to *obey*; "to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams: but rebellion," however absurd the command may appear to proud reason, "is as the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness is as the iniquity of idolatry." God's plain and positive command is man's full warrant to act in any case whatever.

Should any be disposed to dispute the equity of the divine command, in the case to which the query refers, let them put on strength, and arm themselves with thunder, and dispute it with him who gave it: he well knows how to defend his own cause, and to clear himself when he is judged.

THE JUSTICE AND HOLINESS OF GOD  
VINDICATED IN ANSWER TO  
SCEPTICAL EXCEPTIONS.

A LETTER TO PHOCIAN.

SIR,

IN compliance with your wish, I take up my pen. You refer to Numbers xxxi. 17, 18, "Now therefore kill every male amongst the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." This circumstance, you say, has been upon your mind for many years; nor can you reconcile so shocking a mandate to the holiness of God. The whole passage, you say, struck you, "as being destitute of all the features of genuine morality; and as possessing none of the characteristics of national or individual justice." You ask, "are not all the ideas contained in it inconsistent with justice, decency, humanity, and the divine perfections?" The married women were all to be murdered, and the women children preserved

for the purposes of debauchery." A fine portrait of your mind. You believe there is a God; or why do you mention his name? You also believe him to be a perfect being, or you are consummately absurd in saying any thing about his perfections: an imperfect existence can, properly speaking, have no perfections. And is he perfect?—absolutely, infinitely, eternally, perfect? Then he is wise; and his wisdom is absolutely, infinitely, and eternally perfect.

Now, here let me ask, has this God of boundless wisdom, made no revelation of himself to man, besides that which he has made of his eternal power and Godhead, in the visible things of the creation? If he has not, who is to know what is his will? And who is to determine, and by what rule, what, in a moral or religious view, is right and what is wrong? You, Sir, think, that the whole of the above passage of scripture, "is destitute of all the features of genuine morality." I think it is destitute of none of them. What is to determine which of us is wrong? We cannot both be right. Shall we appeal to right reason in this case? To her we will appeal; and by her decision we will abide.

She says, "There is a God:" eternal, self-existent, and infinitely perfect;—that he made all things by his sovereign power and wisdom, for himself;—that he presides over all the creation, and rules it, by right indisputable, according to his own will;—that his will is the supreme law;—that what he wills is right, because, and merely because, he wills

it;—that he, being infinitely perfect in wisdom, must, in the creation of all things, have had some design;—that he must, in that stupendous performance, have designed the highest possible end;—that the highest end must be his own eternal glory;—that he must design the very same end in ruling the creatures, as he did in creating them;—that as he has made man an intelligent and moral agent, it must be his pleasure, that man should render him peculiar honour, according to the superior rank he holds among the creatures, by an active obedience, rational and moral, agreeing with his own sovereign will;—that as it is in the nature of things, impossible that man should obey his will without knowing it, or know it without a revelation of it, there must be a revelation of it somewhere, or the design of God would be defeated;—and that, as there is nothing in the world, which bears the smallest lineament of a revelation from a Being of infinite perfection, besides the Bible; the Bible and that only, must contain the revelation, so evidently necessary, and be the only judge of what, in a moral and religious view, is right and what is not. And although it contains many things highly mysterious, and which shock the feelings of human pride, and chagrin the boasted wisdom of the world, yet, when reason seriously contemplates the magnitude of its subjects, and their importance, such as the being and perfections of God; the creation of the universe; the divine supremacy, government and providence; the salvation of mankind; the

resurrection of the dead ; the final judgment of the world, and a future state ; and when she considers the unparalleled sublimity and majesty of a great part of its language ; together with the holiness of its doctrines ; the salutary nature and tendency of its promises ; the purity of its precepts ; the harmony of its constituent parts ; the miracles which have attended it ; particularly the great miracle of its preservation, age after age, in spite of the most powerful and determinate efforts to destroy it, and rid the world of so troublesome a guest ; and the very remarkable prophecies it contains, many of which have been fulfilled, with surprising exactness, ages since they were delivered, and some of which, are, most evidently fulfilling at this time ; especially those written thousands of years ago, concerning the present state of the Jews, in which state, every body knows, that knows any thing, they have continued almost eighteen hundred years ; not to mention those very striking predictions, which point directly at the scoffers, who appear in these latter times,—the Atheists and Deists of the present day,—who, while they deny the truth of the Bible are themselves living witnesses of its authenticity, when, I say, reason considers all these things, she hesitates not in asserting, in the most peremptory tone, the scriptures a revelation from God, containing every truly moral maxim, that ever appeared in the world. There never was a genuine moral precept, that the Bible does not teach ; even the Deists themselves are indebted to it, for all their



*just* notions of morality. That which is justly called right reason, renders it utterly impossible not to view the Old and New Testaments as a divine revelation, sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. It is *pride*, imperious, insolent *pride*, not *right reason*, which is offended at the scriptures, and the sovereign will of God which they declare.

How very different the sentiments and language of these two opposite principles are, may be seen at one view, in the character of Nebuchadnezzar : "For thou hast said, in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." Isa. xiv. 13, 14. These are the thoughts and this is the language of human pride. How strikingly opposite are those of chaste reason ! "And I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation ; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing ; and he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou ?" Dan. iv. 34, 35.

If, Sir, you believe there is a God, who is the sole author of universal nature, you will do well if, like that humbled monarch, you acknowledge his

supremacy, and bow with reverence to his rightful sovereignty. Vain are all your professions of regard for his holiness and justice, and for the interest of morality, while you pay no respect to his supreme dominion : disapprobation of this peculiar and transcendent glory of deity, is the highest species of rebellion against his holiness and justice, and the very quintessence of immorality. What kind of reason or philosophy is it, that prompts a man, while he professes to feel a reverence for the holiness and justice of God, to display, in language the most malignant, an inveterate contempt of his sovereignty, the highest dignity and glory of his perfections ? The moment we deny his absolute dominion, we declare him to have a superior, who gives him laws, commands his will, restrains his operations, and to whom he stands accountable for his actions. Where then, is the glory of his attributes ? This reduces the Creator to the level of his creatures ; nay, it sinks him below them ; for if *he* does not possess the supreme dominion, *they* must, there being none beside to possess it. But chaste reason blushes at the thought ; she sickens and recoils ; the idea, to her, is insufferable ; she contemplates it with extreme disgust ; she advances, indignant at the impious pride, that would invade the divine prerogative, and lay the supreme sovereignty at its despicable feet, and exclaims, “ A God-head reigns ! ” How could this endless number and variety of creatures, exist without a Maker ? If they were self-created, they might also be self-

preserved ; but lo ! they every moment perish ; nor can the strongest preserve themselves from destruction. They must all owe their being to a power prior and superior to their own ; that power must, every moment, preserve their existence, and he who made and upholds them, must have the absolute dominion over them, and authority to dispose of them as he will. Here, as every where, reason and revelation are in harmony ; they have but one voice “ Hath not one God created us ? ” “ Thou art worthy, O Lord ! to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are, and were created ; ” “ the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ; ” “ dominion and fear are with him ; ” “ who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ; ” “ the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men ; ” “ the Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all ; ” “ the Lord shall reign for ever and ever ; ” “ whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places ; ” “ life and death are in his hand.” He gives life, and he has a right to take it away, when, and from whom he will, and by such means as he pleases ; either by the immediate stroke of his hand, or by instruments of his own choosing : famine, diseases, fire, or sword.

Will you, Sir, dispute his right to kill ; whose power alone makes alive ? or to kill when and how he pleases ? Then gird up your loins like a man :

bring forth your strong reasons like a true deistical hero : your Maker will answer you. Behold ! he opens the windows of heaven, and breaks up the fountains of the deep, by waters ascending and descending he deluges the world, and sweeps away, at once, all its inhabitants, except eight persons, whom he miraculously preserves ; he rains down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroys them in a day, with all their inhabitants, men, women, and children ; he cuts off the first-born of Egypt, in a night ; ingulphs in a moment, Pharoah and all his host in the Red Sea ; strikes Nadab and Abihu dead, in the twinkling of an eye ; and sends down Corah and his company quick into the earth, and closes them up in an instant. All these are the works of his hands ; his righteous judgments, by which he makes himself known in the earth :—the tremendous language, by which he answers them who say to him, “ What doest thou ? ” But these are things recorded in the *hated* book, they are, therefore, *fabulous*, they must not be believed !

But, Sir, open your eyes and look around you. Here is a fine city, full of people, shaken and torn to pieces by an earthquake, and sunk, with hundreds of men, women, and children buried in caverns shocking to behold ; there is a country almost depopulated in a few months, by plague, pestilence and famine ; and yonder is a large navy of stately ships wrecked by the merciless fury of the winds and seas, and every soul on board is lost.

What shall we say to these awful catastrophes? Here is no human agency employed. They must be the works of that amazing Being who touches the mountains and they smoke; who looks upon the earth and it trembles; who speaks and raises the stormy wind and rules the raging of the sea with his nod; and who makes desolations in the earth and in the sea. And are these murderous acts? Are they contrary to the holiness and justice of God? Cannot these be reconciled to his perfections? If his *nature* is holy and just, his *will*, must be holy and just; and so must all the acts of his will, and all the acts of his power, the effects of his will.

But, perhaps, it will be said of these awful effects of his tremendous arm, that they are mere casualties, or the effects of chance. And pray what is chance? The goddess of the Deists. And what are casualties? The favours she bestows upon her votaries. What an enviable race of men! How auspicious their lot! for all with them is a lottery. Consummate in wisdom, they pay their devoirs to the visionary idol of their own minds, from which they have nothing to fear; nothing to hope for; nothing of either evil or good to expect; but *certain uncertainties!* But to be serious. What are really meant by casualties? They are events which occur in the world; events, which, although they *do* exist, might possibly *not* have taken place. Very well; but do they really exist? Yes; the truth of their existence cannot be doubted.

By or without causes ? Not without them ; if they were without them they would be self-existent and independent, and therefore gods. If by causes, then, without hesitancy, I affirm, not only that it was utterly impossible that they should not come to pass ; but also, that they occur in *consequence* of the *positive appointment and determination* of God. And I prove the truth of the assertion thus ; the events have taken place—they really exist—they exist by certain causes ; then are they the effects of those causes, and those very causes must produce those very effects. Every cause must, of necessity, produce an effect, or effects, congenial with its own nature ; nor can any cause be without its effects, nor give being to a single effect that is not congenial with its own nature. The sun causes light, the fire heat, and the blowing of the wind the motion of the trees ; these are effects which they naturally and necessarily produce ; nor can they occasion contrary effects : darkness cannot proceed from the sun, nor cold from fire, nor the stillness of the trees from the blowing of the wind. The being, therefore, of all events that occur, is rendered infallibly sure, by the existence of their respective causes : if the causes once take place, the effects cannot but follow them. The causes which give being to those effects are the effects of other causes which were prior to them, the being of which made them also certain ; and those causes were effects of other causes still prior, whose existence renders theirs sure ; and so on till we arrive

at the first cause of all: the Eternal Supreme. This immense Being, infinitely perfect, produced a number of effects of his will, wisdom, and power, with a design unchangeable, that they should be the causes of other effects; which he appointed to be the causes of other effects; and those effects he ordained to be the causes of other effects; and so on down through all the series of causes and effects to the last: which are as truly the productions of his will, his wisdom, and his power, as the first, which proceeded immediately from himself, without the intervention of second causes. His will, his wisdom, and his power run through every link of this amazing chain, connecting the whole and giving every cause efficiency to produce the effects, which he eternally and immutably designed it should. If but one cause or effect can be found in any part of the series of nature's causes and effects, which was not eternally determined by his will, he cannot will its existence; it must, therefore, exist in defiance of his will, and in spite of his wisdom and power, and consequently, must be his superior, and he must be deficient in wisdom and power, and so not perfect: and then he could not be God. Deism involves atheism, and both and each, the most consummate folly.

Say, Sir, if you can, how any event that occurs in the course of nature, be it great or small, can be viewed as not proceeding either immediately or mediately, from the will, wisdom, and power of God, without, at least, a mental denial of his supremacy,

and the infinity of his wisdom and power, and consequently, of his Deity. Now it is, I think, evident, from this view of things, that all events come to pass, in consequence of the determinate counsel of God; that he “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;” and that there neither are nor can be, any such things as chance and contingency in the universe: famines and plagues, earthquakes and storms, with all the vast and shocking destruction of human creatures resulting from them, are the works of Him, “who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and before whom, all the inhabitants are as grasshoppers;” and who, by these means, turneth man to the earth, from whence he took him at first.

And, if the Almighty, the Sovereign of all persons, beings, and things, is pleased to perform such destructive wonders as these, is it at all incompatible with his will to command the sword to slay its thousands, or its tens of thousands? If, to push men, women, and children, out of life by contagious air, and the awful convulsions of nature, is not inconsistent with his justice, holiness, and other perfections; it can never be thought, with any degree of consistency, that it can be in the least, contrary to them, to take away whom he will by the sword. If it is his pleasure, to punish his enemies with death, who shall find fault? “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?” He is not: he has a right to execute judgment upon his adver-



saries, and to do it in what way, and by what means he will.

Be still and know that it was God, who commissioned Moses and Israel, to make war upon Midian, and to destroy them with the sword ; and know also, that the commission was just and good. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, vex the Midianites, and smite them ; for they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they beguiled you, in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi," Numb. xxv. 16, 17, 18. Again, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying ; avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites." "And Moses spake unto the people saying, arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian." Here is the express command of God, to smite the Midianites.

But you, Sir, think it too harsh, too cruel a mandate, to issue from the throne of so holy, so just, so kind and benevolent a Being as God : it shocks your feelings, and is too offensive for you to read. But if the Supreme can, in perfect consistency with his holiness, justice, and benevolence, take away human life by other second causes, not less shocking than the sword, why not with that instrument ? If he can sweep away thousands by the plague, or by famine ; if he can send thousands down quick into the bowels of the earth by earthquake ; and if he can, by storms and tempests, send to the bottom of the ocean thousands more,

and yet be just, holy, and benevolent, why should it be thought incredible that he should give instructions to Moses and Israel, to cut off a sinful and provoking nation by the sword? or why should such instructions be viewed as inconsistent with his perfections? If the mere act of taking away life, is compatible with his holiness, justice, and benevolence; the means and instruments by which he performs it, one should suppose, cannot make it incompatible with them. If he has a right, as the Sovereign of the world to take one life, he has an equal right to take a thousand lives, because all are alike his own; and if the cutting off of one man, one woman, one child, does not bring his justice and holiness into question, the taking away of ten thousand, of each class, cannot do it. If he can destroy multitudes by famine, pestilence, earthquake, and tempest, and yet be benevolent enough for the Deists, may he not be equally benevolent, though he destroy as many by the sword? And if, when he takes vengeance, he has authority to use second causes, in the punishment of sin, which, I think, few will dispute, has he not the liberty of choosing his instruments, and of appointing man to be the messenger of his holy displeasure, and the minister of his awful justice? Why not a man, as well as a thunderbolt? or an army of men, as well as a host of waves? If the Deists cannot disprove his power to command the various elements to destroy mens' lives, in vain do they assail his authority to appoint man to the woful office. His

*dominion* over the *latter* is not less than it is over the *former*; and if they cannot demonstrate, that the benevolent Deity cannot consistently with his benevolence, commission, air, earth, fire, and water, to kill his human creatures, they can never make it appear to be contrary to that perfection, to authorize the sword in the hand of man to do the same.

No argument, I am satisfied, can be advanced, to prove that the Lord of Hosts did not command Moses and the Israelites to avenge him of the Midianites, but what must equally prove that he does not commission the elements to destroy human life; and, consequently, equally prove that he is not the supreme; for if it is his will to commission the *latter*, why might it not be his will to command the *former*? And if he can, consistently with his perfections, employ *these* in taking away the lives of numbers both on the land and in the sea, why might he not with the very same consistency employ *those* in taking away his enemies from the earth? Or seeing that the different elements do destroy human beings, if, as the Deists say, they do it not by his will, he is *not*, but they *are*, supreme.

Here, again, by following deistical objections, in their natural consequences, we are led into the dismal abyss of atheism.

Now, as the commandment given by the Most High to Moses, was strictly holy and just, and in perfect harmony with all his perfections, as every thing which proceeds from him must be, the obedience of Moses to the divine order, could neither

be unholy nor unjust, nor contrary to any one of the perfections of his sovereign Lord, nor destitute of any of the features of genuine morality. As because the will of God is holy, and just, and strictly moral, all the orders of it must be holy, just, and strictly moral; so every act performed in obedience to his will, must be holy, and just, and strictly moral. Obedience to a divine command is morality; disobedience to it is the reverse. The supreme will fully determines what is right: from that will there can be no appeal. The laws of the Eternal, whether general or particular, are the rule of human actions; to approve and obey them is to act morally; to disapprove and disobey them is to act immorally. Nothing was taken from the Midianites by "*the shocking mandate*," to which their Maker and their Sovereign had not an indisputable right; nothing was denied them to which they had a lawful claim; nothing was inflicted upon them which they had not merited; with what face, then, can Phocian say, either that the divine command to slay them is unjust, or, that the faithful execution of it, by Moses and the Israelites, wants all the characteristics of national and individual justice? or, that it is inconsistent with justice, decency, humanity, and the divine perfections; any more than the act of an executioner by which he cuts off the life of a traitor or a murderer is inconsistent with them?

Indeed, it appears to me, that the whole of this offensive transaction is in perfect concord with the

strictest principles of justice, and, of course, in harmony with decency, humanity, and all the divine perfections. The Midianites had ensnared the people of Israel and drawn them with their wiles, first into debauchery and then into idolatry, and the Lord had severely punished the latter for their crimes. "The Lord said unto Moses, take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, slay ye every one his man that were joined unto Baal-peor," Num. xxv. 4, 5. Now, if it was just and agreeable to his holiness for the Lord to punish his people with *death*, for yielding to the temptation of Midian, it could neither be unjust nor contrary to his holiness to inflict upon Midian the *same punishment* for *tempting them*. Nor could it be, in the least, incompatible with either of those attributes to punish the *tempters* by the hands of the *tempted*.

But that which seems more particularly to offend you, Sir, is, the order given by Moses to the men of Israel, to kill all the males among the children, and all the women who had known man by lying with him, and to keep alive all the women children for themselves, you say, "for the purposes of debauchery." Here, begging your pardon, I cannot help observing, that, with all your profession of superior delicacy you have given a most contemptible proof of the purity of your mind. What, could you think of no other purposes, than those of debauchery,

for which they were preserved? Must the impure thought of debauchery be the only one that you could conceive, or indulge, in this case? Blush, Sir, and stay till your mind is more chaste, before you take upon you to find fault with the Bible for its supposed unchastity. What authority have you to say, or even to think, that they were saved with any such view? Is it likely; is it at all consistent with common sense, to suppose, that after the severe anger that Moses had seen poured out by the offended majesty of heaven upon the people of his charge for committing fornication, and adultery with the women of Midian, and at the very instant when he and the children of Israel, as the ministers of divine indignation were slaughtering the nation which by their guilty intrigues had seduced them to the perpetration of those crimes; and whilst the sword of the Lord's righteous vengeance, drawn to punish the guilt of criminal practices in their enemies, was still reeking with blood before his eyes; is it, I say, in the least degree reasonable, to think that he should, under these circumstances, peculiarly awful and affecting, command the younger part of the female captives to be saved for the purposes of debauchery? and give licence to repeat the crime for which, more than twenty thousand of Israel, had been destroyed by the plague? Or can it be thought that Phinehas the man who signalized himself by his determinate zeal for the Lord, in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, whom he ran through their bodies

while they were committing the horrid crime of whoredom in the tent, and whose highly honourable conduct was the means of staying the plague, for which he was rewarded by the Lord, whose cause he pleaded, against a generation of fornicators and adulterers ; is it likely, that this intrepid soul, would have stood silent and not have entered his protest against so impious a design, and have censured even Moses himself, for giving countenance to so cursed a thing ? To this add ; Moses, when the army of Israel returned from the war and presented the captives before him, was wroth with the officers of the host, and said unto them ; “ have ye saved all the women alive ? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.” Now, can it be rationally conceived, that, with almost the same breath, with which he uttered this indignant rebuke, he would give them an order, to keep alive a part of those females for the purposes of debauchery ? But is it not agreeable to reason to conclude, that as he was reproving the officers, the Lord, who on many occasions, condescended to a familiarity with him, greater than he ever did with any other man, and spoke with him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, did, on this important occasion, give him a secret intimation of his sovereign will, with reference to the manner in which the captives should be disposed of ? When did Moses, in any

national affair of moment, like this, act without the divine counsel ? Who will venture to say, and undertake to prove, that he who began the war with Midian, under the direction of the God of armies and the King of nations, concluded it without his instructions ?

That the Sovereign of life and death, had a right to dispose of the lives in question as he pleased, cannot be doubted ; and that Moses had a knowledge of his righteous pleasure, in this case, as well as in others of high importance, may, I think, be safely concluded from the nature of his office, which was, to superintend the political and military, as well as the ecclesiastical affairs of Israel as God's viceroy, acting under his immediate direction. The males then, and the women who had known man by lying with him, were slain ; and the women children that had not known man, were kept alive, by the order of the Judge of all the earth, who does right, not for the dishonourable purposes Phocian sinfully supposes ; but either for servitude, or adoption, or marriage, and to be proselyted by these means to the Jewish religion. These are designs truly moral and laudable ; agreeing with all the dictates of humanity, and decency. Had Moses destroyed the Midianitish males and the women that had known man, with the same licentious wantonness, with which the Deists condemn, and mentally destroy the Holy Scriptures, his procedure would have excited the same disgust in our minds which theirs does ; but that he did



so, can never be proved by all the refined subtilty of the whole deistical world, much less by the sallies of low wit, played off by a set of petty adventurers in the cause of infidelity, who are equipped for their enterprise, with little beside pride, and the intolerable impudence of the most disgusting self-conceit.

The idea suggested by Phocian, that the women children were appropriated to illicit pleasures, may be viewed by some people, as a smart stroke at divine revelation ; but it must appear to all thinking minds as most weak and ridiculous. The Bible laughs at such puny strokes of petulance, as leviathan at a straw or a feather. But, perhaps, after all, Phocian will think that some indecent means were used, to discriminate those females who had not known man, from those that had ; but he may easily divest his mind of the unpleasant thought, by only paying the slightest attention to the words of the sacred historian, "*The women-children keep alive for yourselves :*" they were, evidently such, whose age ascertained their virginity.

Now, to conclude ; it appears, that unless the supremacy of God be flatly denied it must be admitted, that human life is entirely at his disposal ; that he has a right to take it away, when, where, and how he pleases ; that he has an indisputable right to punish with death the transgression of his laws ; that the orders of his sovereign will are in the truest harmony with his justice, and consequently, with all his attributes ; that the slaughter

of human creatures by his command is *not* murder, is *not unjust*, is *not* unholy, nor inhuman, nor indecent, but the reverse : that all objections and arguments advanced against his command, strike directly at the supreme prerogative ; and that, Deists are most inconsistent characters : a Deist to be uniform, must be an Atheist, and to be an Atheist, he must renounce his reason and become a fool.

## THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH, AND THE DOWNFALL OF ERROR.

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Fair truth divine shall reign : her throne sublime,  
Upheld by arms Omnipotent stands firm ;  
Nor wily arts, nor powers, nor maddened rage,  
Of human and infernal legions join'd,  
Can move it.—Sable heresy shall fall :  
Her smoky baseless throne shall soon revert,  
And tumble down to its own native hell,  
And with it, headlong, all its advocates,  
To rise no more :—so great Jehovah swears,  
Rising the solemn threatening to fulfil,  
And thunder down whate'er assails his truth,  
Or tarnishes the lustre of his grace,  
By truth display'd.—O ministers ! beware  
Of error ; and, before you write or speak,  
Ask—what is truth ?—Ask of the Holy Ghost,  
The God of truth, pure wisdom from above ;  
'Tis he must teach you by the sacred page,  
And guide you into truth, or else you'll err,  
And lies diffuse abroad, to your own shame,  
And fatal injury of immortal souls.

THE END.

