

2. HOPE.—This was another spring of action on which GOD worked, or operated, when he excited the sacred writers to record the discoveries of his heart. If we begin with Moses, we may easily conceive, that hope operated mightily in his bosom, when he was penning this book in the wilderness. He was at the head of two millions of people, for whose future happiness he was infinitely concerned; he saw a numerous race of children rising into existence, life, action, and immortality; he knew the weakness of human reason, and the unspeakable need of a revelation to lead them into the paths of wisdom, duty, and happiness: and, under the powerful impressions of GOD's spirit, he wrote discoveries, statutes, facts, predictions, promises, and threatenings, with the most exalted and vigorous hope of being the glorious instrument of promoting their present order, peace, and happiness, as well as of their future eternal salvation. Methinks, if we trace the emotions of his devout and generous heart, we shall find him strongly feeling such sentiments as these: "I am now penning down these thoughts, which I received from my GOD, for the use of this vast body of people: by this means I shall instruct, convince, persuade, and comfort millions yet unborn: I see, that, after I am dead, this people shall multiply as the stars of heaven,  
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and as the sands on the sea shore : I see, that, through a period of fifteen hundred years, prodigious multitudes shall arise into existence, and receive unspeakable advantage from my writings.”

3. GRATITUDE was another spring which operated powerfully in the bosoms of the sacred writers, while composing their immortal books for the service of the church in all ages. Gratitude is a lively sense of favours bestowed, with an ardent desire, or a passionate inclination, to make all possible returns of affection and service.

What a strong sense must Moses feel of the distinguishing goodness of God to himself ? and how mightily must this stir him up to the highest affection, and to the utmost readiness to serve the interest and glory of God in the world ? How must he wish, for forty years together, to spread abroad the knowledge, the glories, the justice, the grace, and the dominion of God amongst the millions of the Jewish tribes ? and how does this gratitude breathe in his precious writings ? particularly in the last book he wrote ; where every page is a shining evidence of ardent devotion and gratitude to his God.

What pathetic strains of gratitude live, and burn, and shine, in a thousand passages in the book of Psalms : what an overwhelming sense of the divine goodness ! what intense and vigorous affection ; even to such a transcendent eminence

as to appear above the powers and thoughts of mortal men; and almost to rival the affections and devotion of the angels of God!

A person can hardly open the book of Psalms, but he must see an ardour of soul, which, considering it issues from the breasts of imperfect creatures, imprisoned in dust and ashes, may well nigh put angels to the blush, and stir them up to higher devotion, and more ardent and intense fire and praise.

What gratitude to God must ISAIAH feel? that greatest of men, that sublime orator of God! If ever there was a man highly distinguished above his fellow mortals, for four thousand years, this was the man; this was the peculiar favourite of Heaven.

And if we look into the bosom of the divine apostle PAUL, what flames of gratitude burned in his soul for above thirty years together; and how did it animate him to the most mighty efforts, by preaching, suffering, and by his writings, to diffuse the knowledge of the perfections and glories of his redeeming God.

If we were to search the breast of Peter, the vile back-slider, when once pardoned and restored, and filled with love and gratitude to his divine master, what wonders of grace and zeal should we here explore! And can we imagine

that John, the beloved disciple, who had the honour to lean on his redeemer's breast; can we imagine that he would be behind his brothers Peter and Paul in gratitude to his GOD! In a word, the more we examine their tempers and devotion, the more we shall admire.

4. HONEST and SACRED AMBITION animated the MINDS of the PENMEN of the BIBLE.

Ambition is a mixt passion, made up of boundless admiration of an infinite good, and eternal desire to possess that good as our own for ever.

Ambition is then only guilty, or criminal, in the eye of GOD, when it proceeds from a bad spring, and terminates in a wrong object: such was the ambition of the devils, and of all the mighty wicked tyrants on the face of the whole earth, in the several ages and parts of the world.

But the sacred writers were well purged from all this detestable and contemptible pride and vanity: their passions of wonder and desire terminated on the supreme good, the infinite GOD. To have his approbation was their utmost aim and honour, beyond which they could not stretch a single thought. To enjoy his love, and live under his smiles, was their highest happiness; beyond which they could not exert one single desire. This gave the most sublime ferment to all their passions and thoughts. I look into the  
breast

breast of Moses, and I see his passions all on fire . hope, gratitude, joy, and holy ambition, to approve himself to God, all blended together in one grand blaze of glory ; and working him up to the highest pitch of rational zeal for the honour of the divine perfections, wishing, above all things, to meet the notice of his divine master's eye, and receive, at the final issue of his life and immortal writings, the eternal plaudit of his God.

As for the apostle Paul, he was the most ambitious man that ever lived in the world : and he avows it in the strongest terms, with regard to himself ; and he exhorts others to follow him in the same glorious temper and disposition.

Thus he speaks in Rom. xv. 20. For it has been the object of my ambition \* to preach the gospel. And in 2 Cor. v. 9. he avows it again : “ Therefore we make it the height of our ambition, § that we may be well pleasing to Christ.” And in 1 Thes. iv. 11. he thus exhorts his pupils : Make it your ambition † to live quietly. And in Titus iii. 14. he nobly says, “ Let those that belong to us, learn to distinguish ‡ themselves in good works, or outstrip others, and stand before them in good works.” And in Rom. ii. 7. he makes it the essential character of  
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\* Philotimoumenon. § Philotimoumetha. † Philotimeisthai.

‡ Proisasthai.

of a true christian, That by a patient continuance in WELL DOING, he seeks for glory, \* honour, and immortality ; that is, for immortal glory and honour in the present approbation, and in the eternal presence of God.

This naturally leads us to a more distinct consideration of another spring of action, which actuated the souls of the sacred writers, and which is so closely interwoven with the above, that it is almost needless to make it a distinct head, viz.

#### 5. GLORY and SHAME.

Glory, as it exists in an immortal soul, is a mixed passion, made up of the highest joy and the most ardent self-love blended together in equal proportions.

'Tis a high-spirited joy in the greatest good, mixed with the strongest self-love for my own soul, as connected with that best good.

A lively sense of my interest in this purest good acts upon my self-esteem of my own soul, and increases the force of it.—My self-valuation acts on the sense I have of my interest in the richest good, and increases the force of my joy in it ; and thus they re-act on each other, and increase the strength and fire of each.

My

\* *Doxan kai timen kai apthartian zetoufi.*

My value for my own immortal soul makes me rejoice in my interest in Christ, the supreme good: and my joy in my interest in this infinite good, excites me to put an higher value on my own soul, which is endued with such wonderful and immortal powers, as renders me capable of an eternal possession and fruition of this good. This is loving myself in God and loving God in myself, as a creature capable of enjoying so vast a glory in the boundless and immortal existence of the first and best of all beings.

Now, if ever any men in the world were capable of this glory, the sacred writers were the men! if ever any men rejoiced in the supreme good, these were the men: if ever any men esteemed themselves as interested in God, these were the men: if ever any men had the strongest and highest self-valuation for their own souls, as connected with Christ, these were the men: if ever any men had a rich assemblage of the most resplendent virtues and graces, these were the men.

Whatever shining perfections have adorned human nature in any age of the world, whatever can constitute solid glory of character and real greatness of soul, is to be found in these sublime penmen of the sacred scriptures. And the more we examine the real internal characters of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, the more we shall

be convinced of the truth and justice of the above reflections or assertions : nor will one character of all the penmen sink, but rise, on our severest scrutiny, into his whole life and character, down to the hour of his death.

Shame is a dread of censure and contempt, knowing that we have said or done something to deserve it.

'Tis a painful expectation of disgrace and scorn, arising from a consciousness that we have acted a vile and dishonourable part towards God, or our fellow-creatures ; or towards both.

'Tis a painful confusion of soul, on an apprehension of our being in great danger of losing our good name, and beauty of character, by our having done some secret foolish action, which is likely to come to open day-light, before our friends, our enemies, and all the world.

Shame is a passion made up of sorrow, self-love, and self-contempt, on our being suddenly found out and surprized in the action of a fool, or the baseness of a false-hearted villain.

'Tis the very opposite of glory, which is a mixture of pure strong joy in a great good, and an ardent self-love as connected with that good, and put into possession of it. But shame is a sense of our loss of this good, and a self-contempt on account of our having deserved that loss for ever.



Now, the higher sense of glory the inspired writers had, the keener was their sense of shame.

And if ever any men had the keenest sense of glory; if ever any men in the world were alive to glory and shame; if ever any men had the strongest dread of shame, and the utmost caution to avoid it before GOD and all the world—these were the men.

No person ever encouraged and excited an honest ambition to excel in wisdom, fortitude, and a generous zeal, so much as the eternal son of GOD, seated on his lofty throne in heaven, and addressing himself to all his churches on earth to the end of time. For we are not foolishly to imagine, that Christ's addresses were confined to one little spot, the lesser Asia, or to seven single churches, in one single period of time. To confine ourselves in such narrow limits and views would discover a poverty of understanding, and such meanness of soul, as must be infinitely dishonourable to the vast views of the son of GOD, and the boundless extent of his conceptions.

Seven times, yea eight times, he speaks to the christian conqueror, Rev. ii. iii. xxi. And eighteen distinct honours he proposes and promises to the brave and nobly-ambitious soldier in his armies.—Here ambition may rise to an unbounded and eternal empire.

Honour

Honour is an inward state of dignity and distinction in the eye, and approbation and empire of God ; so as to be beyond the reach of contempt, scorn, disdain, and just suspicion, or calumny of men or devils.

6. PLEASURE, or a SENSE of DELIGHT was another spring of action, on which the spirit of God operated when he stirred up the minds of the sacred penmen to write the holy scriptures.

If we were to examine the minds of the finest pagan geniuses that have ever figured in the learned world, we shall find that the pleasures of imagination, and the vigorous hopes of immortal fame, were the main springs that excited them to compose their sublime poems and monuments of history and masculine eloquence. It would be a pleasing and useful speculation to pursue this thought, and apply it to the productions of Homer and Demosthenes, to Cicero and Virgil. —It would yield us farther delight and improvement to apply ourselves to trace out the master springs and motives which set to work the pens of Bacon, Boyle and Milton, of Newton, Locke, Pope and Dr. Young, with a thousand other authors of ancient and modern times. This would give us a clear insight into the good and bad springs which actuate the heart of man. We at present forbear, although I had prepared some materials on this enchanting theme ; but I must  
leave

leave it to the contemplation of virtuous and ingenious young persons to pursue it at their leisure, and return to my purpose of tracing out the sacred pleasure which the holy writers felt when they penned the words of God for the salvation of the church.—Here the springs of pleasure were all refined and consecrated to the honour and glory of the admirable perfections of God.

Pleasure, or a sense of delight, must necessarily be in its very nature, an agreeable sensation of the soul ; a lively satisfaction and ease of mind ; an agreeable feeling in the powers and affections of the heart ; a pure consciousness of the presence of beauty, truth, and goodness, as highly suited to our taste ; a sweet gratification of the rational powers ; a joyous recreation of the mind.

Pleasure is the result of perceptive powers, and an object well adapted to those powers. 'Tis the genuine effect of a suitable object, rightly applied to a well-disposed and delicate faculty.—The revelations of God are glorious objects, full of truth and grandeur, goodness, novelty, and beauty, suited to a rectified and holy mind, richly adapted to regale a sound and correct imagination, and to give the utmost pleasure to a lively and holy taste for all that is sublime and beautiful in the councils, operations, and perfections of the most high God.

Happiness

Happiness consists in pleasure, and pleasure is the aim of all human actions: 'tis the aim of the severest virtue and holiness.

The excellency of pleasure is to be estimated by the nature and duration of the capacities; to which that pleasure is adapted, and which are fit to enjoy it.

The pleasures of a man are above the pleasures of a beast

The pleasures of an oyster, a bird, a beast, and a man, cannot be in all things the same, either as to kind or degree.

The pleasures of an angel are above those of a man.

The pleasures of the man Christ Jesus are above those of an angel; and the pleasures of the eternal son of God are infinitely above the pleasures of his human nature.

The desire in man after pleasure is unboundedly violent, and eternally inextinguishable: and, without a full gratification of this desire, man must be a most cursed and miserable creature for ever.

A state of ease, in all the powers and affections of a rational and immortal being, must be inevitably a state of pleasure.

As holiness in man is a lively and ardent inclination or disposition to cleave to God, and  
produce

produce good to all the objects of rational agency; so pleasure is a lively sensation of the inward presence of the purest good: and such a sensation the sacred writers felt when they penned their immortal writings, under the impressions of the goodness and beauty of GOD.

Trace out the pleasures of knowledge, contemplation, reflection, and hope, that Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, felt in writing their holy books.

The pleasures of a wise and worthy man must consist very much in the perception of the purest and noblest truth: in daily contemplations on objects of the highest grandeur, of the most astonishing novelty, and the most attractive beauty: a perpetual reflexion on these objects will be a perpetual spring of new pleasure; and a possession of the goodness contained in these objects must vastly increase the pleasure of reflecting upon them, especially if we add the consideration of a vigorous hope of eternally enjoying these pleasures, without the possibility of a disappointment. Now let us apply all this to Moses, David, Isaiah, and Paul.

Let us enter into the bosom of Moses, and consider what infinite delight he must take in all the glorious objects which GOD opened to his ravished understanding! O! Sirs, what a prospect

pect is here ! to be informed of the whole process of creation : to see, with the eyes of his mind, the heavens and earth leaping from nothing into existence : to see the light spring out of God, and expand its rays over the dark chaos : to see the earth and waters divide from each other ! to see the trees, plants, and flowers, sprout up in a moment in thousands of forms : to see the mighty mass of fire, the sun, fixed in the centre, the moon and stars all starting into view, to bespangle the grand dome or arch of heaven ! to see the birds leap into existence, life, and action, and fly in the open expanse : to see, by the light of God's spirit, all the fishes, from the little minnow to the mountainous whale, spring into life and motion, and sport in the almost boundless ocean ! to see the beasts, both wild and tame, in their various forms, rise out of the earth and play in the fields and forests.

What unutterable pleasure must Moses feel on contemplating, in the light of the blessed spirit, the original perfections and beauties of the soul and body of the first man, when he saw him, in the clearest point of view, under the forming hands of God, rising out of the dust, and endued with a living and rational soul from the immortal breath of God.

He saw that this man, just sprung into life from the hands of his maker, had a soul shining

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with rays of divine and heavenly light, and adorned with the brightest wisdom and most beautiful knowledge and prudence, whereby he was not only perfectly master of the nature of created things, but was charmed and delighted with the contemplation of uncreated truth: the eyes of his understanding being constantly fixed on the perfections of his GOD, from the consideration of which perfections he deduced, by the clearest reasoning, what was equitable and just, what worthy of GOD, and what worthy of himself, as a creature, perceptive of what was fit and beautiful in temper and action.

He had likewise the purest holiness of will, resting in GOD as the supreme truth; and revering him as the most tremendous majesty; loving him as the chief and only good; and, for the sake of GOD, holding dear whatever his mind divinely taught, pointed out as grateful to GOD, resembling his holy nature, and expressive of his perfections: in fine, whatever contributed to the acquiring an intimate union, an immediate connexion with him; delighting in the communion of his GOD, which was now allowed him, panting after farther converse with him, raising himself to this correspondence with GOD, by the various creatures, as so many scales or steps: and, finally, setting forth the praises of his most unspotted holiness as the most perfect pattern, according

according to which he was to frame both himself and his actions to the utmost of his ability and zeal.—This was delighting himself in God. Job xxxiv. 9.

The rectitude and beauty of his soul \* was accompanied with a most regular temperature of the whole body; all whose members, as instruments of holiness and justice, presented themselves ready and active at the first impulse and motion of his holy will.

Nor was it becoming God to form a rational immortal creature for any other purpose than his own supreme glory; which glory the rational creature himself, unless wise and holy, could neither perceive, discern, nor celebrate, as shining forth in the other works of God. Destitute of this light, and deprived of this endowment of holiness, what could the creature man prove, but the reproach and disgrace of his creator; a silly foolish child, every way unfit to answer the great end of his creation.

We

\* Read that prince of all divines, Dr. Witfius's *Oeconomy of the Covenants*; in which work you see the finest combination of taste, elegance, learning, and manly devotion, that perhaps ever appeared in any body of divinity in the World. I began the study of it in April, 1746; and do assure my young friends, that it has endeared itself to me more and more to this day: Hervey might well say, "I lament it as one of my greatest losses, that I was acquainted with this excellent author no sooner." I am happy to inform the English Reader, that a new edition of the translation is now to be had at Mr. Dilly's, on very easy Terms. 3 vols. 8vo.



We should now proceed to consider the farther pleasures of Moses, in his views of all the grand scenes and facts, which rose up in his mind whilst writing his sacred books.

We should then view the pleasures of the holy psalmist, the prophet Isaiah, and the other prophets; with the sacred evangelists and apostles: but these must be omitted, as a large discourse on this excellent theme would make this part of the work disproportionable to the rest—every intelligent reader will please to enlarge on it in his own meditations.

We now proceed to the most delicate and difficult part of our work, on the nature of Inspiration: I shall have infinite reason to adore God to eternity, if he will please to conduct me with wisdom and success through this branch of my design; so that my dear readers, for whose sake I principally write, shall have a clear and judicious apprehension of the nature of Inspiration. The great difficulty lies in steering our course between the two extremes of a wild enthusiasm, and a cold and barren speculation; but to treat the subject with clear and determinate ideas, and in such just and proper language as shall at once enlighten the understanding and warm the heart.

In the name and fear of God let us proceed.

IV. GOD

IV. GOD infused the THOUGHTS and MATTER  
of the SCRIPTURE into the SOULS of the sacred  
PENMEN,

Here let us proceed with prudence and caution, and make every step good and firm as we go: and we will, by way of preliminary, introduce the words of a very judicious divine, whose sentiments we adopt as proper to our present purpose. \*

I. When we say that the scriptures are the word of GOD, or that this word is of GOD, we do not mean that it was ALL spoken with an articulate voice by him, or that it was ALL written immediately by the finger of GOD. The law of the Ten Commandments were indeed articulately spoken by him, and the writing of them was the writing of GOD. Exod. xx. 1. God spake all these words, saying, Exod. xxxi. 18. And he gave to Moses—two tables of stone, written with the finger of GOD. xxxii. 16. And the tables were the work of GOD: and the writing was the writing of GOD; graven upon the tables: in which GOD set an example to his penmen in after times, to write whatever might be suggested by him to their souls, that it might remain upon record to be read. But it is certain that all the Bible was not spoken or written in the same manner as the law on mount Sinai. It is sufficient that

\* Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, vol. 1. page 42.