

You see here the most astonishing and honourable CONNEXIONS between GOD and man thrown open to our ravished eyes. GOD a father, and we his beloved children ; Christ our vital head, and we the members of his spiritual body : he appears in the relation of a divine friend, and forming a union of souls by means of a divine nature. And let me desire my reader to remark with attention and wonder, that all the unions in the natural and moral world which imply strength, support, and fruitfulness—beauty and honour—usefulness and riches—pleasure and joy : in fine, all the unions that can fire the noblest ambition, and inspire the highest glory and boasting in GOD, are selected in Scripture to illustrate the union between Christ and every true christian. Thus we have a foundation and the structure of the temple—a corner stone and the building—a root and the tree—a vine and the branches—a graft and the stock—an advocate and his client—a representative and his constituents—a surety and debtors—a tutor and his pupils—a master and his servants—a king and his subjects—a father and his children—a friend with a friend—a brother with brother—a bridegroom and bride—a head and members—the soul and body—an union of soul with soul ; for he that is joined (kollomenos, glued) to the Lord is one spirit with him. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Yea, we are not only
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said to be members of his body, of his flesh, and his bones, and one spirit with the Lord; but, what is a higher wonder still, our union with Christ is compared to the union of GOD the father with his son, and of GOD the son with his divine father. John xvii. 21. What reason have we to glory and boast in our most honourable connexions with the Lord Jesus! Let us then freely indulge a mixture of joy and self-love with self-approbation, arising from a lively consciousness of our interest in Christ, who is the highest person in the world, and the fountain of good, of honour, beauty, and pleasure to our souls.

This sacred volume reveals the glorious privilege of ADOPTION, which is a blessing of grace that exceeds all other blessings: it even exceeds redemption, pardon, justification, and sanctification. A man may be redeemed out of a state of slavery by a king's ransom; may be pardoned by his prince, though he has been a rebel and a traitor to him; and may be acquitted from high crimes laid to his charge, and yet not be a king's son; if adopted and taken into his family, it must be by another and distinct act of royal favour; and it is more to be a son than a saint; so that to be predestinated to the adoption of children is something over and above sanctification, and what exceeds being chosen to be holy, and without blame before GOD.*

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* See Dr. Gill's Body of Div. Vol. 2. p. 323.

This glorious book shews us, in a strong and vivid light, the necessity, the nature, excellency, and beauty of REGENERATION and CONVERSION of the heart to GOD. We here see the divine Spirit infusing a new life into the soul, and bringing us into a state of spiritually-active existence in all the powers and affections of the mind, producing a new disposition and ability to live to GOD in holy obedience—restoring the lost image of GOD afresh on the soul—and inscribing the divine law on the heart, and giving us a lively sense of its vast extent and duration, and giving an ardent bent or inclination to obey that law—passing a new change on the apprehensions of the mind, creating a new choice in the will, and inspiring a new taste for all that is beautiful and lovely in the revelation of GOD; giving us new passions of wonder, love, hatred, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and pointing the affections towards the best objects in the heavenly world. This divine change is the beauty, life, and joy of the soul, and renders it a most lovely creature in the eye of GOD himself.

This sacred volume assures us of the most suitable and faithful ASSISTANCES of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD in every part of religion, and in the whole course of evangelical holiness to the end of life. We see here the divine Spirit assist the understanding to receive, discern, and retain
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spiritual ideas of heavenly objects : he awakens our recollection and enlivens our memory : he guides the conscience to an honest decision, and thus secures us from self-flattery and despair : he influences our wills to a free and good determination : he fixes our volatile attention, and thus assists us in holy contemplations : he regulates and directs our passions to their proper objects in heaven and earth : and he aids our executive powers in the ease and pleasure of religious action.

How necessary ! how welcome ! how richly endearing is such gracious assistance from God to creatures so weak and insufficient as we are for every good work, and how grateful ought we to be to that good Spirit who enlightens our darkness, infuses and cherishes a favourable taste for the sweetness of the gospel ; inspires us with an active and ardent zeal for the glory of Christ ; suppresses our aversions, and cures our sad indifference of heart to God ; conquers our reluctance to duty, and excites all the graces of the mind into a lively and glowing exercise towards the several objects of our free agency in heaven and earth.

The Scriptures enforce, beautify, and enlarge the LAW OF NATURE, and furnish out a most complete system of NATURAL RELIGION and MORAL PHILOSOPHY. Our infidels act an unjust and absurd part, when they set up natural religion, and
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extol morality in opposition to the Bible. There is not a single article of natural religion, or one branch of the most refined morals left out of the sacred Scriptures : all is to be found in its highest perfection in our Bible, stated in the most clear and lovely manner that can enter into the human imagination.

The LAW OF NATURE is the will of GOD, relating to human souls and actions, grounded in the eternal difference of moral good and evil, and because discoverable by natural light, obligatory upon all mankind.

This law is demonstrated from the consideration of the divine and human nature, beheld in one view, and in the relation that GOD and man bear to each other.

We can demonstrate, that there is a natural and essential difference between virtue and vice, and those several actions and dispositions which are denoted by these two opposite terms.

Natural reason, or the understanding of man, discovers it to be the will of GOD, in this case, that every man should look upon this essential and eternal difference in the nature of tempers and actions, as a law or rule which he is always to observe.

On a survey of the nature of GOD and the nature of man in one view, and in the relation
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they bear to each other, it will appear that some tempers and actions are conformable to the nature of God and man; and other tempers and actions are not conformable to the nature of God, but are opposite to his will, and hurtful to the nature and felicity of man. There must be, therefore, a natural and essential difference between those several actions and dispositions, which are denoted by those two opposite terms, virtue and vice, sin and holiness; which must be evident from these considerations :

Man is a lover of himself: he has a desire of his own happiness and perfection. Man is a reasonable being, and his reason makes him capable of receiving a law from his maker to rule his appetites and passions. Man is a sociable being: his inclinations carry him to society. Man is a lover of beauty and decorum: and this taste exerts itself in all mankind; and the more he is improved by education, this regard to beauty is still more visible. Man is a creature formed capable of religion: is dependent every moment on God, and has a power of knowing on whom he depends; and has an awe of God, his creator, on his mind.—Now lay all these together, and the natural difference between virtue and vice appears at first sight.

Natural reason discovers it to be the will of God, that every man should look upon the dif-

ference in the nature of things, as a law or rule of action, which he is always to observe, under pain of his maker's displeasure.

GOD, as he is infinitely good, cannot but will the perfection and happiness of his creatures; but, as he is just, he may will to punish guilty creatures.

He who has given existence to rational beings, must, if he be wise, and sees no reason to depart from his original purpose, will their preservation.

GOD has designed the nature of things as an
INTERPRETATION OF HIS WILL.

The essential rectitude of the divine nature is an incontestible demonstration of the law of nature.—The will of GOD in this matter appears with farther evidence, from the provision and wise cautions he hath made to secure the observation of all the dictates of right reason, or the law of nature, by planting several instincts and passions in the soul of man, subservient to his duty, and disposing him to practise it. GOD hath shewn it to be his will, that men should practise virtue, by so forming the mind, that maxims of truth, containing the principal duties of morality, are no sooner understood than assented to; even by persons not capable of exact reasoning, as children, and others whose understanding

standing is much of the same size as theirs ; and by others who, though they have reason, are not well accustomed to use it.—Thus we have shewn, that natural reason discovers it to be the will of GOD, that every man should look upon this difference, in the nature of actions and things, as a law or rule, which he is always strictly to observe, under pain of his maker's displeasure.

These are the heads of the clearest demonstration of the law of nature that, perhaps, was ever written by an English pen.*—But, after all, my reader, what influence will this fine proof have upon the bulk of mankind ? Not one in ten thousand will ever be at the pains to read with attention, or understand the force of the evidence. However clear, elegant, and forcible it may be, yet such is the weak and dissipated state of the human mind, that we shall not be brought to the practice of virtue in its various branches, without a superior light, which shall warm and even fire the soul with the love and admiration of the beauty and excellence of a resemblance to the moral perfections of GOD.

Our glorious volume of Inspiration, in a few lines, has enlarged and beautified the law of nature beyond all that reason ever knew.—Thou shalt

* Mr. Henry Grove's Moral Philos. Vol. 2. The Explication and Proof of the Law of Nature.—See it copied in the Preceptor, p. 263.

shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matth. xxii. 37—40. *

Our Lord Jesus, in his glorious sermon on the mount, has explained the law of nature in the clearest manner: he has enlarged and beautified this grand original, eternal law, beyond all former expositors, and has given such a sublime view of its spiritual extent as will never be equalled to the end of the world.

When we hear this most glorious law-giver say, “ Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever shall break the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven——whosoever is angry with his brother, without

* HOMER was a poet of the most rich, daring, and unbounded imagination: SOCRATES was the wisest moral philosopher: PLATO was the most sublime genius: ARISTOTLE the most sagacious metaphysician: and DEMOSTHENES the most eloquent and powerful orator amongst the Greeks. CICERO was a man of universal knowledge, and of the richest genius amongst the Romans; and SENECA was the most brilliant moralist that ever lived in the Pagan world:—but neither ARISTOTLE in his Ethics, nor TULLY in his Offices, nor SENECA in his Moral Essays, have demonstrated the law of nature, from its prime foundations, as Mr. GROVE has done. And what was the reason they did not? truly this was the reason: he had divine revelation to enlighten and guide him, and they had not; and I firmly believe that the whole united world of pagan minds never could have done it.

without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment—whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart—pluck out lusts as dear to us as the right eye—cut off right hands—swear not at all—love your enemies—bless them that curse you—deny yourselves—take up your cross daily—forgive seventy times seven in a day. I say, when we read such strict and pure precepts as these, which transcend all the imperfect mangled rules of the Pagan moralists, and all the systems of the wisest philosophers in the world, we have just reason to suspect that our deists have as keen a quarrel with the precepts of our divine master as they have with the sublime doctrines of his gospel !

The Scriptures give us the most striking evidences of the IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

Here you have the only true account of the origin of the soul, as coming from the breath of God : you see its nature as a spirit, that is, an invisible substance, with life and action, understanding and will, and endued with immortality. You have in the sacred volume such accounts of death, as represent the soul departing from the body, and of souls which have returned to their bodies again ; and you have a clear view of souls now existing in an invisible world of happiness in heaven, and of misery in hell. In the light of

divine revelation you see the vast capacities of the soul, its amazing resemblance to GOD, the dignity of its powers, and the grandeur of its passions; especially its strong and boundless ambition, arising from vast admiration of infinite beauty, and intense desire after infinite good; which desire is incessant and eternal as our existence.

On the principles of revelation, we see the infinite worth of the human soul. To save this soul GOD employed his eternal mind: to redeem this soul the Son of GOD came down to dwell in the dust; one soul cost more than the starry heavens, more than the worth of all the angels of GOD: to convince this soul, the holy Spirit has, in a moment, produced visible changes in the order of nature: to instruct and entertain this soul he has given a divine revelation of the glorious gospel, and raised up the best men in all ages to employ their immortal powers and talents: to refine and enlarge this soul he has exerted his sanctifying grace: to inhabit this soul, the eternal Spirit came down from heaven: to wash this soul the blood of GOD was shed: to cloath this soul the righteousness of GOD is wrought out: to beautify this soul divine grace is given: to comfort this soul the promises of GOD are made: to guard this soul legions of angels are every moment on the wing: to destroy
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this foul the devil's legions are hourly employed : to serve the interests of this foul the structure of the world is preserved : yea, for the sake of this foul, the world itself was created : on the behalf of this foul the Lord Jesus incessantly pleads before the throne ; to defend and preserve this foul God's infinite perfections are every moment exerted : to establish the peace, purity, and strength of this foul, God swears a most tremendous OATH : and to raise the powers and happiness of this foul to eternal heights ; all heaven is prepared, and God absolutely and irrevocably bestows himself.

O ! my reader, what infinite madness and self-murder is it to NEGLECT that precious soul of thine, by taking no deep care to have its wounds healed, its wants supplied, its welfare secured, and a watch over its best interests kept up. To ABUSE this soul is still greater madness ; and surely you ought to stand in amazement and horror at yourself, to think how you have defiled your soul with lust, deceived it with errors, distracted it with frivolous worldly cares, devoted it to the devil, and divided for it a portion of worldly dross and dung : and, what is an higher degree of self-murder and guilt, you have run your soul upon the most desperate HAZARD ;* you have exposed it to God's flaming vengeance ; you have embarked it upon a rotten bottom ; and you
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* See Mr. Henry's Sermon on despising our Souls.

have pawned your soul to the devil for one moment's lying lust, and pleasure; for all unlawful pleasure is but the lye of a moment. Pause, ponder, tremble; ponder, pause, and tremble at yourself.

This divine book gives the only true account of the NATURE and BEAUTY of VITAL HOLINESS.

HOLINESS is the intentional and direct conformity of the will, in its state of spiritual liberty, to the will and commands of God, dictating to man his duty. Or it may be described thus:

HOLINESS is that principle of the new and spiritual life from God, by which our actions are intentionally directed to produce good towards all the objects of our rational and free agency in heaven and earth.

The objects of our free and rational agency are God, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit; ourselves, our fellow-Christians, and all mankind.

Holiness towards God consists in the lively conception of true ideas of his natural and moral perfections—in an ardent affection to him as the supreme good—a serious sense and awe of his power, holiness, and majesty—a trust in his sincerity and faithful promises—an obedience to the will of his providence and the commands of his law—a lively communion with him in his love and grace.

Holiness

Holiness towards Christ is a realizing and vivid perception of his grandeur, fulness, and power, to save, as mediator—in an ardent love to him as our beautiful and generous redeemer—in obedience to his will as our Lord and master—in learning of him as our wise teacher—in imitation of his lovely example in his temper and actions—and in a daily, humble dependence on him as our intercessor and advocate before the throne of God.

HOLINESS towards the holy Spirit consists in a lively sense of the excellence and glory of his person and operations, in an ardent desire to feel his daily influences, and be filled with his graces as a spirit of adoption, liberty, love, and joy.

HOLINESS towards ourselves consists in consideration, and self-furniture—in humility, and sober self-valuation—in meekness, and wise self-vindication—in contentment, or self-possession—in prudence, or self-management—and in fortitude and constancy, or self-consistency of character and conduct—in the sobriety and government of the body as well as the mind; that is to say, bodily temperance in meats and drinks—chastity, or bodily continence—diligence, or bodily employment—mortification, or bodily subjection to reason and religion; and all attended with self-advancement, or a heavenly mind and life.

HOLINESS towards our fellow-christians and all mankind, includes love to man, justice and universal equity, gratitude, courtesy and peaceableness, truth and honesty, mercy and beneficence, or a delight in doing good to the whole world, but especially to the household of faith—forgiveness of injuries, and doing good to our enemies, which is the noble and distinguishing temper of a true christian.

We will now give what I would stile]

A scriptural VIEW OF EVANGELICAL HOLINESS and
SOCIAL VIRTUE.

Holiness with regard to GOD, the Father, Son, and holy Spirit.

A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will give you a heart to know me, that I am the LORD, and ye shall return to me with your whole heart. Jer. xxiv. 7. I will put my spirit within you. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. 2 Cor. v. 17. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Eph. iv. 23. Partakers of the divine nature. 2 Pet. i. 4. Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Phil. ii. 5. The LORD thy GOD will circumcise thy heart, that thou mayst love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. Deut. xxx. 6. To be spiritually minded

minded his life and peace. Rom. viii. 6. Faith is the existence, ground, and confident expectation of blessings hoped for, and the demonstration, evidence, and keen conviction of invisible transactions; the evidence of an invisible God and redeemer, ever present to sustain, animate, bless, and beautify the mind. Heb. xi. 1. * We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. v. 7. Add to patience godliness. Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Matth. xxii. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. John xvii. 3. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole wisdom, duty, and happiness of man. Ecc. xii. 13. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Prov. i. 7. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart: and lean not to thine understanding. Prov. iii. 5. That your faith and hope might be in God. 1 Pet. i. 21. Have faith in God. Mark xi. 22. Live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 1 Pet. iv. 2. Our fellowship is with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 3. In all thy ways acknowledge him. Prov. iii. 6. Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye prosper. 2 Chron. xx. 20. Repentance towards God.

Acts

* We have endeavoured to express something of the energy of the original Greek in this translation and paraphrase.

Acts xx. 21. Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and him only shalt thou serve. Luke iv. 8. GOD is a spirit : and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. Honour the Lord with thy substance. Prov. iii. 9. Delight thyself in the Lord. Psal. xxxviii. 4. Be imitators of GOD as beloved children. Eph. v. 1. Rejoice in the Lord always. Philip. iii. 4. We joy in GOD. Rom. v. 2. Be faithful to death. Rev. ii. 10. Trust in him at all times. Pf. lxii. 8. Enoch walked with GOD. Gen. v. 22. Noah walked with GOD. vi. 9. The grace of GOD teacheth us to live godly. Titus ii. 11, 12. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD. 1 Cor. x. 31. Glorify GOD with your bodies, and your spirits, which are his. 1 Cor. vi.

FAITH in CHRIST, as our great mediator, is an essential branch of vital holiness. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31. He that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. John iii. 16. vi. 47. He that believeth not is condemned already. He that believeth not the son shall not SEE LIFE : but the WRATH of GOD abideth on him. John iii. 18, 36. Lovest thou me? John xxi. 17. Whom having not seen, ye love. 1 Pet. i. 8. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed

till the Lord shall come. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly. Matth. xi. 29. I have given you an example. John xiii. 15. Leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Come to God by him : he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Heb. vii. 25.

WHITHER CAN I FLEE FROM THY SPIRIT ?
 Pf. cxxxix. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God.
 Eph. iv. 30. He will give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. Luke. They being sent forth by the holy Spirit. Acts xiii. 4. The Spirit of God dwells in you. Rom. viii. 9. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds or lusts of the body, ye shall live. Rom. viii. 11. Ye are led (agontai, powerfully actuated) by the Spirit. Ver. 14. The love of the Spirit. Rom. xv. 30. Your body is the temple of the holy Spirit. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Ye all drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 13. I will pray with the Spirit, and with understanding. 1 Cor. xiv. I will sing with the Spirit, and with understanding. Ver. 15. By the grace of God, I am what I am. 1 Cor. xv. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. Gal. v. 22. Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. Ver. 25. BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. Eph. v. 18. Praying