

An essay on the nature and constitution of man; comprehending an answer to the following question, proposed by a learned society : "are there any satisfactory proofs of the immateriality of the soul? If such proofs exist, what conclusions are to be formed from them with respect to the soul's duration, sensation, and employment, in its state of separation from the body?" / by R. C. Sims.

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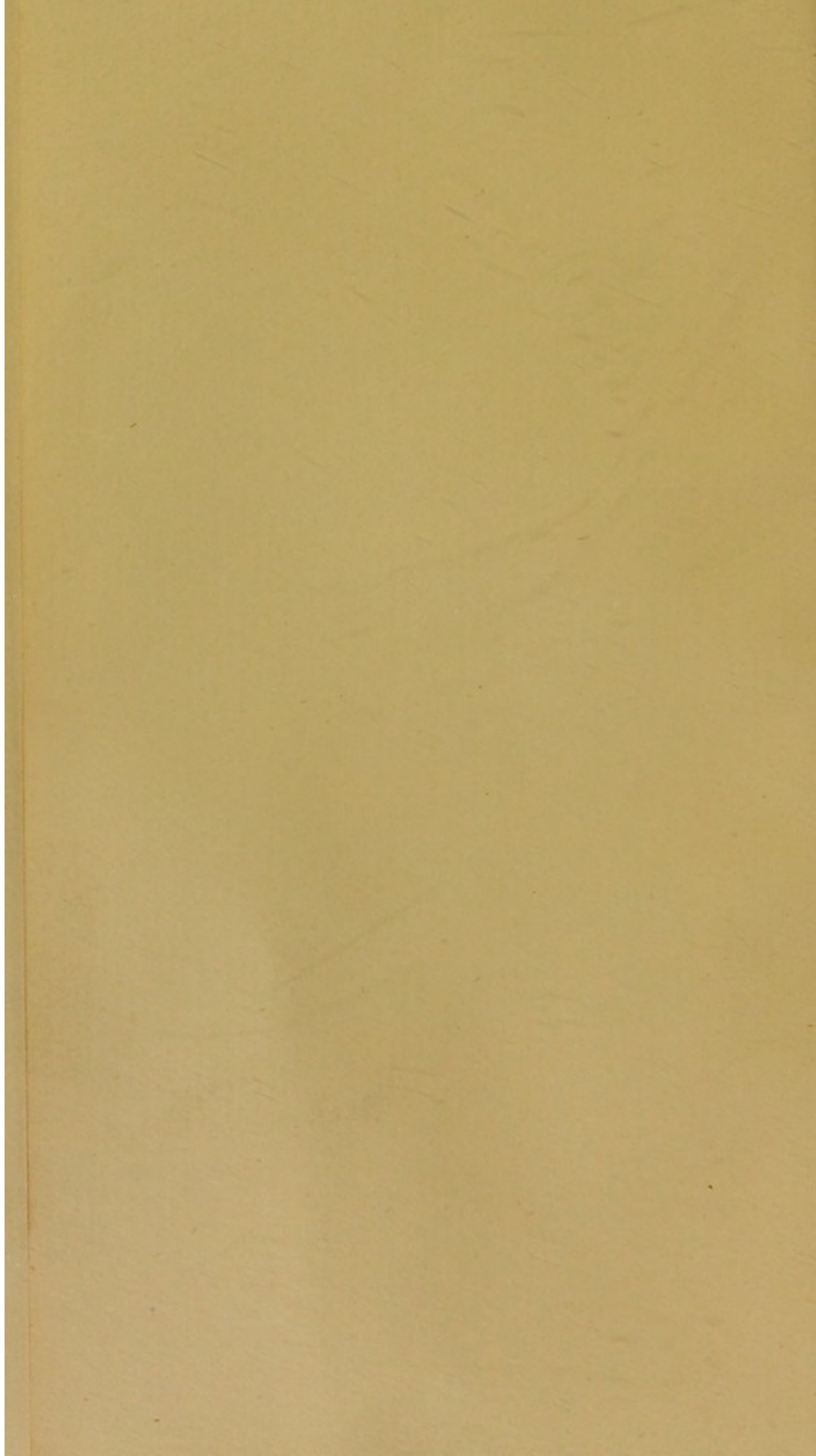
NATURE AND
CONSTITUTION OF MAN

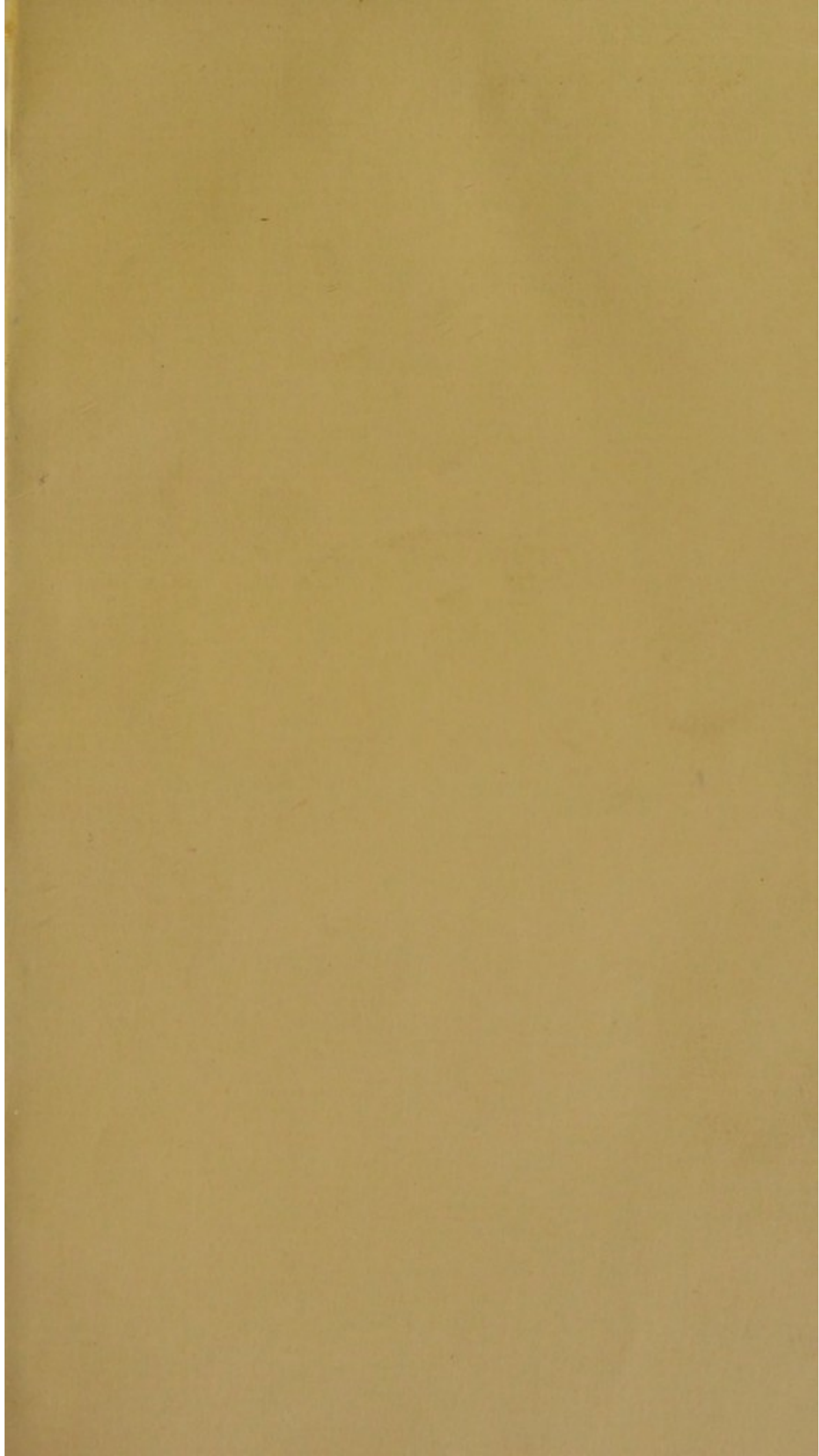
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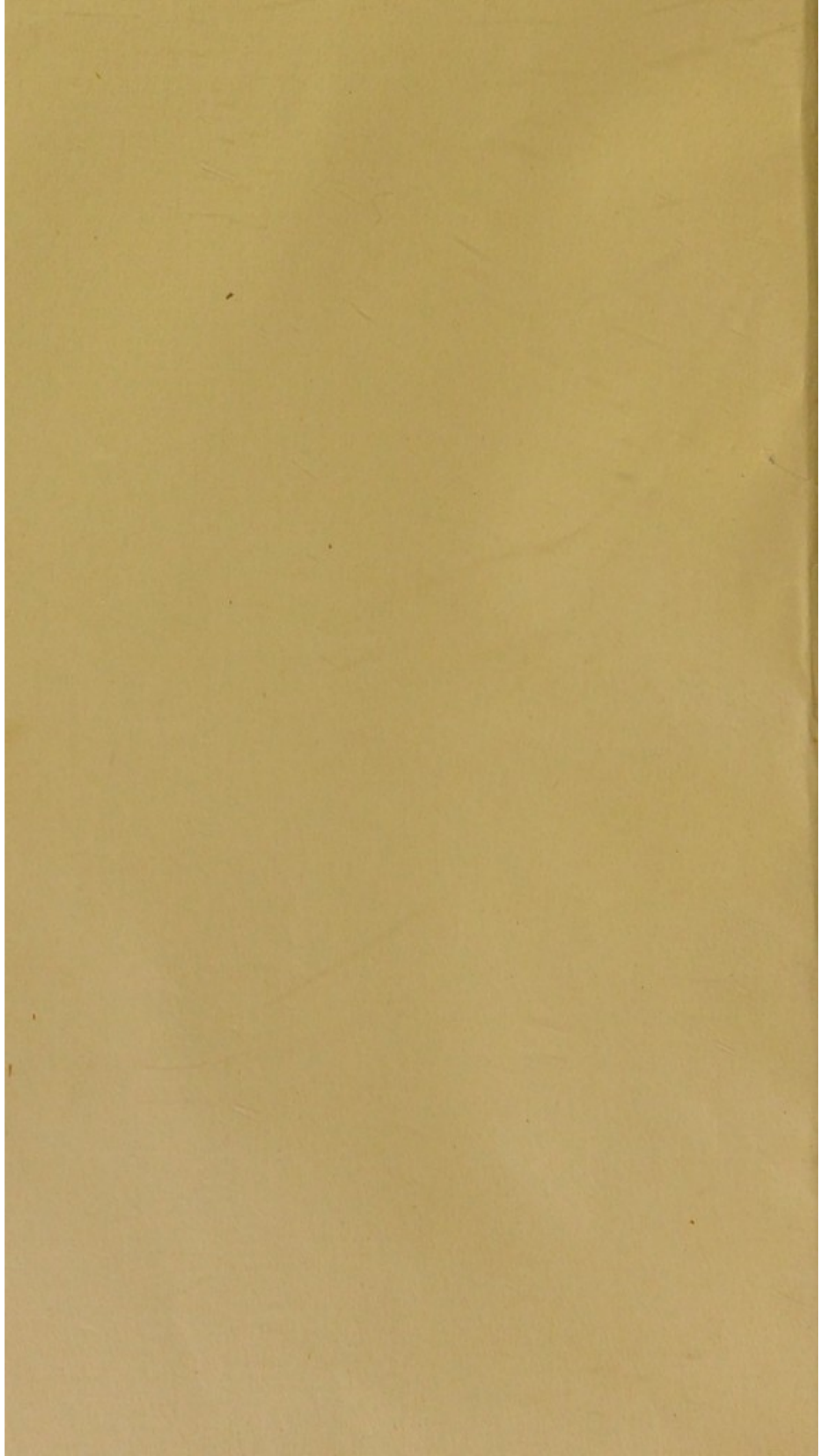
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AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
NATURE AND CONSTITUTION
OF
MAN.

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P R E F A C E.

HAVING formerly been assailed with arguments to prove, that what we seem to see with the eye, or hear with the ear, are only ideas in the mind thinking of them ; and since, with others, in support of the contrary opinion, that men, and all things in the world consist entirely of matter ; the author could not be brought to disbelieve his senses ; nor to suppose matter, however modified, capable of thinking, feeling, and willing ; nor to believe that man was formed upon any plan of deception whatever. When Dr. Priestley's Disquisition on Matter and Spirit was put

into his hands, he began to write his own thoughts on the subject; but soon grew weary. Yet when he saw in the Monthly Review, that Teyler's Theological Society at Haarlem, had proposed the question recited in the title page of this Essay, as their prize question for 1788, he reviewed and arranged his papers for an answer, which, with some alteration and addition, he now ventures to publish from the following motive.

Curiosity, so natural to man, prevails especially in youth, who are ever fond of prying into the nature of things. The constitution of man, as well as of the world in general, appears a noble theme for the exercise of their intellectual powers; and the very name of philosophy charms. Thus prompted, many eagerly read such books, and listen to such discourses on these subjects, as come in their way, without suspicion of danger. Nevertheless there are several philosophical theories which

which stand on mere suppositions, or on metaphysical speculations carried beyond the limits of the human faculties; and these ought to be read with great caution: for they are not only unfit to promote useful knowledge, but have also an evident tendency to lead into doubts, uncertainties, and difficulties inextricable. A sad example of this danger is a late ingenious philosopher, who went so far as to profess a delight in uncertainties, to deny that any one proposition is more probable than its contrary; and to glory in the suspense or balance of the mind between two opinions, as the triumph of his philosophy. To be always in uncertainty, or to think we can know nothing at all, is a miserable state of mind, and so highly prejudicial to every civil, moral, and religious improvement, that it behoves us to guard carefully against it, by confining our inquiries to the things which are within the reach of our powers. Indeed nothing can de-

serve the name of philosophy, that is not founded upon a patient observation of facts, and chaste inductions from these facts; for where such observation fails, knowledge must stand still. How far the following Essay is conformable to this plan, is submitted to the judgment of the publick.

THE
C O N T E N T S.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

IT is generally believed that Man is composed of a material Body, and of an immaterial Soul, united into one living Person. Different opinions of Philosophers in opposition to that belief. Page 1

These opinions are contrary to one another, yet each is so accommodated to the appearances in nature, as not to admit of direct refutation, or of proof. The reason of this. - - 4

To avoid the doubts and uncertainties, which attend hypothetical and metaphysical speculations, it is proposed to confine the Inquiry into the Constitution of Man, to those sources of knowledge, which lie open to a common understanding. 7

A firm foundation of belief sought for, by investigating the sources

OF

*OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR OWN
EXISTENCE.*

This most certain knowledge arises in the understanding from every conscious exercise of our natural faculties. - - Page 8

THE ORDER OF THE INQUIRY.

Since all our natural faculties are exercised either by means of the bodily organs, which give all the information we have of material bodies, or by the internal energy of the soul itself, which gives every information we have with respect to the soul, or mind; all the objects of human knowledge may be arranged in three classes: Material Bodies; Immaterial Beings; and Animals, or living creatures, each composed of a material body and an immaterial soul. The place of Man is at the head of the animals of the Earth; and the order, in which the inquiry into his constitution will be carried on, is; first, to consider the Body, and the Soul, apart; then as they are united in the living man; and lastly, the state of the Soul after its separation from the Body, by death. - - - 10

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I. OF THE BODY.

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OF THE SENSES.

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II. OF THE SOUL.

The Soul is an active principle, inscrutable by any organ of sense; and whatever can be known of its nature, must come from observing its operations. The operations it performs by the mediation of the bodily organs, and those it performs by its own internal powers, both prove the immateriality of the Soul, or that it differs in nature from every organization or modification of matter. - - - 21

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AND RELIGION.*

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and religion among men, we are not to look for
information, relative to the state of the disembodied
Soul, from any opinions peculiar to any
people; but from such as are universal, and com-
mon to all. - - - -

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OF CONSCIENCE.

Conscience, or knowledge of right and wrong,
is common to all mankind: but since it is liable to
be misinformed, and perverted, it must be rightly
informed, before it can judge properly; and it has
two sources of information. - -

67

The first source is human reason. Those insti-
tutions of morality and religion, which rest solely
on the conclusions of reason, are insufficient to
guide human actions in all cases. - -

68

And can give no other information, respecting
the state of the disembodied Soul, than what has
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The

The second, or divine source, is the spirit or
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ERRATA.

Page 25, Line 3. Between *known* and *existence*, add
material.

57, 5. After *creation* put . and for *and*,
read *And*

8. After *governor* put , instead of .
and *he* instead of *He*

59, 13. After *the* at the end of the line,
add *things of the*.

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
CONSTITUTION OF MAN,

THE nature and constitution of Man have engaged attention in every age; and the general belief has ever been, that man is composed of a material body, and an immaterial mind, or soul, united and forming one living person.

Nevertheless, this belief has been opposed by divers philosophers, ancient and modern, who contend that all the appearances in man and nature may be accounted for, upon the supposition of the

B whole

whole world being formed of one uniform composition; that it is needless to have recourse to two such distinct principles, as matter and mind; and that it is impossible for these principles, which are so essentially different in their nature, to have any connection with, or mutual operation upon, each other.

*OF THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF
PHILOSOPHERS.*

THE Philosophers, who agree in rejecting two distinct principles in man, and in admitting only of one uniform composition, when they proceed to explain the nature of this uniform composition, differ widely in opinion, and split into divers sects.

The most numerous sect, at present, rejecting the existence of mind, contends

that

that the whole world is material, and that what is called the soul in man, is nothing more than certain powers resulting from the peculiar organization of his brain and nerves. The second sect, rejecting the existence of matter, maintains that there is nothing in the universe but minds, and the ideas in them; and that the sun, moon, stars, earth, men, cattle, plants, and other bodies which seem to be external, and to compose the frame of the world, are in reality nothing but ideas in the minds thinking of them, and have no real existence when they are not objects of thought. A third sect, denies the existence both of matter and of mind, and contends, that there is nothing in the world but impressions and ideas; that what is called a body is only a bundle of sensations, and what is called a soul a bundle of thoughts, passions, and emotions, without a subject on which they may be impressed.

Of opinions so contrary, one only can be true ; and, since the first contradicts the feelings, the second the senses, and the third the understandings of men, there is room to suspect all the three to be false. To an unprejudiced mind, the appearances in nature do not suggest that the world is composed entirely of matter, or entirely of minds, or entirely of ideas independent of both. Nor do the reasons assigned for the supposition of an uniform composition, appear to be well-founded. For if it be unphilosophical to admit more causes of natural things than is sufficient to explain them, it is equally so to reject any true cause, or to ascribe to any cause effects which are not shown to be produced by it. And all the operations of nature, and of art, appear to be carried on chiefly by a mutual action of things of a contrary nature upon one another ; and it seems reasonable to expect, that an uniform composition of any kind should produce a similar

similar uniformity of operations and effects, rather than such a diversity as occurs in every department of nature and art. That there actually is a connection and mutual operation between the body, and the soul that animates it, will, it is hoped, appear when the human economy comes to be explained,

The almost universal belief, that man consists of a body and a soul united, is a proof of the conformity of this doctrine to the common experience, sense, and apprehension of mankind; and the appearances in nature are accounted for in a more easy, useful, and scientific manner, upon this opinion, than upon that of any uniform composition. Human conduct is naturally governed by opinion. The common belief that man is composed of a body and a soul, is attended with many beneficial effects, and in all the concerns of life we may act according to it, with the greatest propriety. But this is so far from being the case with respect to the

three opinions, opposed to the common one, that if these philosophers suffered their notions to influence their conduct, they could neither live, talk, nor act like reasonable people.

Nevertheless, each of these theories has been set forth, and accommodated to the appearances in nature, with such ingenuity, as has given it a plausibility not easily to be overthrown by argument. Yet this appearance of equal strength in three contrary opinions, while it exhibits a striking specimen of the vanity of the metaphysical speculations on which they are founded, proves that there must have been some error in the investigation, or method of treating them; which seems to have been this: Divers learned men of great parts have arisen at different times, who, desirous of unfolding the nature of man, but impatient of the slow progress they could make by careful observations and chaste conclusions drawn from them, and urged by the impetuosity of genius, have presumed to substitute

substitute conjectures in their stead, and to carry their speculations beyond the reach of human faculties; but theories thus erected are generally equally incapable of direct refutation, or of proof.

These considerations determine the author to avoid all deep metaphysical speculations, as tending rather to bewilder, than to inform the judgment: nor will he aim at mathematical demonstration; because however beautiful and convincing in its proper province of contemplating things capable of being numbered or measured, it seems to him inapplicable to the purpose of investigating the nature of man. This, he thinks, may be done more successfully by confining the inquiry to those sources of knowledge, which lie open to a common understanding; and in this sober way of philosophizing he hopes to meet with evidence, on which he may rely with confidence. And, since the knowledge of the things which pass within ourselves is

common to all men, the following inquiry will be carried on in the first person, that the reader may more readily compare what is said, with his own experience in each case, and judge for himself.

The first step in the inquiry, is to procure a firm foundation for belief; and since the most certain of all knowledge is that which a man has of his own existence; let us seek out how we come by it.

*OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR OWN
EXISTENCE.*

I do now exist: this is a truth of which I am most certain, however unable I may be to demonstrate it to another, who may please to deny it. How comes this certain knowledge into my understanding? The process seems to be this: whenever I perceive any external object
with

with my organs of sense; whenever I feel any bodily or intellectual pleasure, or pain; whenever I perform any voluntary action, bodily or mental; I have an immediate conception of the operations performed, joined with a belief of the existence of these operations, and that I, who perform or suffer them, do also exist at the time. Hence it appears that it is the conscious exercise of our natural faculties, which gives us the knowledge of our own existence: therefore when all such exercise ceases, as in a sound sleep, swoon, or apoplexy, this knowledge ceases also, and returns immediately upon the renewal of the exercise, when waking or recovering from the fit; yet the person so recovered remains ignorant of what passed during the sleep, or fit, and incapable of ever regaining any other knowledge of that part of his existence, than such as he might have of things done before he was born.

THE ORDER OF THE INQUIRY.

HAVING seen that the conception and sure knowledge which we have of our own existence, is received from the conscious exercise of our natural faculties ; we proceed to inquire what information can be had from the exercise of the same faculties, with respect to the nature and constitution of man: for it is reasonable to expect, that the evidence given by the sources of the most certain of all human knowledge will be satisfactory.

If we consider the means we have of acquiring knowledge, it will be found, that the consciousness, or perception, which a man has of what passes in his own mind, is the true source, not only of the knowledge he has of his own existence, but also of all his other knowledge of every kind.

Consciousness is distinguished into two kinds, according to the natural faculties
from

from which it arises. The first, arising through the medium of the bodily organs, is usually named perception; it comprehends the perceptions of sense, and sensation; has for its proper objects the sensible qualities of external bodies, and the present state of a man's own body; and is the source of every information we can receive with respect to matter, or things external to the mind. The second kind, named consciousness simply, comprehends every conception or operation of the soul, arising from its own internal acts; whether relative to the understanding, the affections, or the will.

This division of the human faculties, and of human knowledge depending on them, is so consonant to common experience, that in all ages, men in general have arranged the objects of their knowledge into three primary classes; material beings, the proper objects of sense; immaterial beings, minds, spirits, souls, which are
inscrutable

inscrutable by any organ of sense ; and animals compounded of a material body, and an immaterial soul, united into one living creature.

At the head of the animals of the earth is placed MAN, the nature of whose constitution is now to be investigated. Order requires that we consider, first, his body and his soul apart ; then, as they are united in the living man ; and lastly, the state of the soul after it is separated from the body by death.

*OF THE BODY OF MAN, AND ITS
MATERIALITY.*

THE human body is a visible, tangible frame, of a particular figure, magnitude, structure, and consequently material ; since the term, matter, is applied to every existence indued with any quality that can become an object of sense.

OF

OF THE SENSES.

MAN is informed of the things in the world, by means of the organs of sense. If it be asked, what evidence is there for believing their testimony, when they report the presence and sensible qualities of external bodies? While I am walking in a garden, viewing the beauties of the vegetable and animal creation, attending to the voice of the company, gratifying myself with the fragrance of the rose, or the flavour of fruit, my organs of sense are exercised; and their reports give me an immediate conception of certain sensible qualities, attended with a firm belief, that there exist externally certain bodies in which the qualities perceived do reside, as in their subject. The senses, indeed, report only the qualities perceived; but since these cannot exist by themselves, but must be in something else, to which they belong as qualities, I, from the perception of these qualities, naturally judge and believe

lieve that certain material bodies are present, in which they reside. And thus the reports of the senses give me, without reasoning, an indubitable evidence that my own and all other bodies, which I see with my eyes, hear with my ears, or handle with my hands, are material.

It is true, we know nothing of the nature of the impressions made on the organs, nor how the several impressions produce the correspondent perceptions; yet such is our constitution, that we believe every clear perception of the senses naturally, and without reasoning. No man requires a reason for believing what he sees or feels; and we may observe in infants, before they are capable of reason or prejudice, plain tokens that they believe such things do exist, as mother, breast, food; even the immaterialist, when out of his closet, and engaged in the common concerns of life, appears to place the same confidence in the testimony of his senses,

senses, as other people. Farther, if the objects of my perceptions of sense were nothing but ideas in my mind, when thinking of them; then should I be in the cheerless situation of a solitary being, who could hold no conversation with any thing else than my own thoughts: but I do perceive material bodies, as existing externally, and not as ideas in my mind, nor as the operation of any other mind on mine. Nor can I avoid having the perceptions which the objects produce, or make any alteration in them: but when my eyes or ears are closed, the perceptions of sight and sound instantly vanish, and as quickly re-appear upon opening these organs, unless the objects be removed; and those who have the misfortune to be born and continue blind or deaf, never receive the perceptions, or have the conceptions, of colour and sound like other people. And these appearances evince, that the material bodies which excite these perceptions have a real existence out of the

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the mind, and do not depend upon our thinking of them.

Before we leave the senses, it seems necessary to consider the accusation of those philosophers, who charge them with great imperfection, and represent their reports as dubious, and deserving to be always suspected of fallacy, until they are confirmed by reason.

Perfection and imperfection are relative terms. Every instrument which fully answers the end for which it was constructed, may be justly termed perfect. If the grocer does not call his scales imperfect, because they will not weigh to a fraction of a grain, like those of a banker or mint-master, much less ought the organs of sense to be accused of imperfection, seeing they are formed with great wisdom, and perform their respective offices most completely. The eye, indeed, is not formed to discover the component particles

ticles of material bodies, nor the ear to hear weak sounds at a distance, nor the organ of smelling to follow a friend through a croud, like a spaniel: but these circumstances denote only a limitation, not an imperfection, in the powers.

Since the office of the senses is to report the various qualities of material bodies, as they affect the senses, and not to inform us what these bodies are in themselves, they ought to make different reports concerning the same objects, whenever the particular circumstance under which they are examined, causes them to make different impressions on the organs. Such different reports may be all true: for, (to consider the instance that has been much insisted on) when the same tower, which at a distance appeared small, round, and dim, gradually alters its appearance on a nearer approach, till at last it is found to be large, square, and bright; there is no false information given

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by the eye. The tower, indeed, remains of the same real magnitude and figure; but these are not properly objects of sight, but of touch only, and to be ascertained, must be measured by some known rule. The eye distinguishes objects by their colours alone, views only the surface next to itself, but not their thickness, and measures their visible or apparent magnitude by the angle they subtend at the eye: consequently the tower must vary in its apparent magnitude, according to its distance; in its visible figure, according as the change in the point of view alters the angular distances of its several parts from one another; and in colour, according to the distance of the object, and the state of the atmosphere. Yet in all this diversity of reports concerning the same object, there is no falsity, nor deception; but such a variation as accords with truth, and gives useful knowledge.

And

And seeing the senses do report the perceptions simply, without making any inference, they seem indeed incapable of making false reports. If they did make false reports, we should of necessity be often deceived; for we have no faculty that could detect their errors. Reason certainly is incapable of detecting them, because it cannot perceive external objects. It can only compare and consider those perceptions, which the organs of sense have already reported to the understanding, and draw conclusions from them: these reports must be therefore true, before any reasoning founded thereon can be so. So far indeed is reason from being able to correct and over-rule the reports of sense, that even those mistakes, which are commonly called deceptions of sense, will be found, on a fair examination, to arise from wrong conclusions rashly drawn by reason from true reports of sense.

For example ; if a person, not used to it, looks steadily at the post in the middle of a windmill, while the miller is turning it round slowly from the left hand to the right, he will apprehend that the post is running round its own axis, very fast, from the right hand to the left ; nor will he discover his mistake, until he looks out upon some object which he knows to be fixed. In this notable deception, the only fact reported by the eye is, that fresh parts of the post are seen to come into view from the right hand, and to pass out on the left, in a quick succession : and this report is true. But the observer, who is standing still, and does not observe that he is carried round with the mill, ascribes the appearance seen, to the motion of the post round its own axis ; whereas it is really owing to the motion of the whole mill, with himself in it, round the immoveable post on which it stands.

II. *OF THE SOUL, AND ITS IMMATERIALITY.*

By the SOUL, is meant the living and active principle in man, which animates him with all the bodily and mental powers possessed by him. This part of the human constitution being inscrutable by any organ of sense, all we can know of its nature, must be learned by considering those operations of it in ourselves, of which we are conscious. Some of these operations it performs by means of the bodily organs; others by its own internal powers.

With respect to the first kind of these operations, I find, that whenever I examine material bodies with my organs of sense, I not only perceive their sensible qualities, and know them to be such precisely as I perceive them to be; but at the same time I am also conscious, that there is a principle in me which perceives;

and that this principle is of a nature different from that of the objects perceived, or that of the organs through which it perceives. When I feel any pleasant or unpleasant sensation, I am conscious of the particular kind and degree of the sensation, and of the member in which I feel it; and at the same time am conscious also, that the principle in me which feels, is distinct, and of a different nature, from the member in which the sensation is felt. When I am writing, speaking, or walking, I am conscious of what I am doing; and naturally judge and believe, that the active principle in me, which causes and governs the motions of my hands, tongue, and feet, at its own will, is of a different nature from that of the members it moves. Thus in every perception, sensation, and voluntary action, I am conscious of the operations performed, and of an internal agent, which performs them: and as consciousness is certain knowledge, I naturally judge and know, without reasoning,

soning, that this agent is distinct, and quite of a different nature, from the material frame of the organs by which it acts; and that consequently it is immaterial.

With respect to the internal operations of the soul; when I think, remember, arrange, compare, and consider the perceptions and sensations received from my organs; when I judge, reason, believe, doubt, or perform any other intellectual operation; when I change my thoughts at will, and direct them to any subject, past, present, or to come, with more or less attention, for a short or long time; or turn them from the transactions of former times at Jerusalein or Rome, to things now doing in England or America, and thence in an instant to China, without hindrance from the distance of time or place; when I receive pleasant or painful feelings in the exercise of my own thoughts, and am thereby moved with various affections, passions, or states of

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mind,

mind, as with love, hope, fear, joy, grief; when I distinguish truth from falsehood, or beauty from deformity; when I desire what appears to be good, and avoid what appears to be evil; when I propose, choose, consent, refuse, or contrive means to bring about my own purposes; when I govern the motions of my body, and of my mind, at my own will; I find, that in the exercise of these several powers of my understanding, affections, and will, I am conscious both of the operations performed, and of an internal agent which performs them; and also that these various operations do not proceed from several principles, but are different acts of one and the same agent: and from this consciousness I naturally judge, believe, or know, that this agent is totally different in nature from every organization of brain, through the medium of which alone it acts, while united to the body; and, consequently, that it is immaterial.

This

This agent is named the SOUL. If we reason concerning its nature, it differs from every known existence, by being inscrutable by any organ of sense; and the above recited perceptive, sentient, contemplative, affectionate and active powers, distinguish it from every organization, or other modification of matter, with as much precision and clearness, as any characters can discriminate one class of natural beings from another.

Thus I am convinced, beyond a doubt, of the materiality of the body, from the testimony of my senses; and of the immateriality of the soul, from the testimony of consciousness. These are the sources of all our knowledge, and their testimony is all the evidence we have, or can have, for believing any thing, even our own existence, the most certain of all knowledge: and the evidence which they give with respect to the materiality of the body, and the immateriality of the soul, seems to be as intuitive,

intuitive, clear, and irresistible, as it is with respect to a man's own existence. Or if the latter strikes him with greater force or vivacity, than either of the two former; the difference, if any, may be fairly attributed to the conception of mere existence being more simple, than the conception either of body or of soul, the two parts which compose the whole man.

Indeed, the knowledge we have, even concerning our own nature, is limited to what is useful in life. For, as all we can know of our own, or other bodies, must come from the reports of sense, which give no information relative to the internal nature of matter in itself, nor of the component particles of bodies; so all we can know concerning the soul must come from the conscious exercise of its powers, which gives no information concerning the internal nature of the soul, independent of its operations; nor of the tie that connects it with the body; nor of the mode

mode of the mutual operation of these two principles upon each other. Consequently we must be ignorant of all these things. Nevertheless there seems to be some relation, or fitness for union, between the soul and the body, unknown to us: for although we cannot explain the mode, the creation of the world out of nothing proves it possible for an immaterial being to act upon matter: and the following sketch of the human economy will, it is hoped, be sufficient to prove the fact; that the soul and body, though essentially different in nature, are united, and mutually act upon each other, in every living man.

III. *OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL, AS UNITED IN THE LIVING MAN.*

EVERY living man consists of a body and a soul united. The body is a most curious frame, organized into brain, nerves, vessels

vessels containing blood and various other juices, and organs or instruments of sense, of motion, of nutrition, and of other animal powers, wonderfully connected and interwoven. The soul is the living active principle in man, whose life consists in the union of the soul with the body; and the dissolution of this union, is his death. The soul is connected with the world, interested in its affairs, and made a partaker of its enjoyments and sufferings, by the mediation of the body: and the intercourse between the soul and the body, is carried on by means of the brain and nerves.

The brain seems to be the chief seat of the soul, or the organ of consciousness and thought; in which alone it perceives, feels, understands, and wills. The nerves may be considered as bundles of minute threads of brain, continued from this organ to every part of the body; and terminating either in sentient extremities,

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the immediate organs of sense and sensation; or among moving fibres, the immediate organs of the motions of the body.

The organs of sense are the medium through which the soul is informed of the things in the world. Vision is performed by means of the different coloured rays of light, which proceeding with great velocity from the sun, candle, or other luminous body, are reflected from every point of visible objects, and passing through the transparent humours of the eye, strike upon the sentient extremities of the optic nerve, expanded over its bottom. Hearing is performed by the intervention of the air, which being agitated by the tremulous motion of sonorous bodies, enters the ear. In smelling, the subtle particles exhaled from odoriferous substances, are in breathing drawn into the nostrils with the air. In touching and tasting, the substance examined is applied immediately to the organ. The impression, thus made by an object of sense upon the sentient extremities

ties of the nerves in the proper organ, is propagated, along the nerves affected, to the brain, and there excites in the soul a perception of the sensible quality; seen, heard, smelt, touched, or tasted.

A large portion of nerves are also detached to the other sensible parts of the body, where, being variously affected by the different states of these parts, they occasionally produce certain pleasant or painful sensations, according to the nature of the parts, and the manner in which they are affected by the operations of health, disease, or applications. By these sensations the soul is informed of the present state of the body; and moved with certain natural appetites, tending to the preservation of the body in health. The chief of these appetites are the desire of breathing, hunger, thirst, the expulsion of the excretions, sleep; which arise from the present state of the lungs, stomach, intestines, bladder, or brain. They always have relation to the present

present wants of the body ; urge to such actions, or to the pursuit of such objects, as are proper to relieve these wants ; generally commence on particular occasions ; and are more or less urgent, according to the occasion. Thus respiration being an action necessary to life, though in some degree subjected to the will for useful purposes, is commonly performed with such ease, that we are scarcely sensible, either of the sensation or desire ; but if we attempt to hold the breath for a few minutes, the uneasiness and consequent desire of breathing become sensible, urgent, irresistible. Upon these sensations and appetites a great part of the enjoyments and sufferings of human life depends. And they are also the foundation of instinct.

By instinct is meant that knowledge which man, as well as other animals, receives naturally from certain states of the body ; whereby he is not only led, but also

also taught how to do many important actions, chiefly such as relate to health and well-being, without the exercise of reason. A child comes into the world ignorant of every thing in it; but certain sensations, then taking place for the first time, give him every knowledge necessary to his new condition. He breathes, cries, moves his head from side to side in search of the breast, takes the nipple into his mouth, moves his lips and tongue into the proper form, sucks, and swallows the milk; and though these are nice and compound operations, as well as altogether new, he performs them well and with ease, unassisted by reason, experience, or instruction. Nor is instinct confined to infants: in many cases it prevails also in ripe age. We seldom eat, drink, wink, take exercise, or lie down to sleep, merely with a view to health; nor marry purely for the sake of having children: but we are excited to these actions chiefly by the present uneasy state of the organs, to be relieved

relieved by the action; or because we find pleasure, or satisfaction, in doing them. In things that relate to the health and preservation of the body, instinct seems a stronger principle of action, and a safer guide, than reason: yet this faculty may, in many cases, superintend, govern, and even over-rule it, with advantage.

Another portion of the nerves terminates among the moving fibres, the immediate organs of motion, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary motions are performed by means of those bundles of red moving fibres, called muscles, which constitute the flesh of the limbs, trunk, and other parts; and are subjected to the government of the will, to enable man to pursue the objects which appetite and reason recommend; and to avoid such, as these faculties represent as evil. When the soul wills any certain ends to be obtained by moving certain members, this volition acts upon the brain; and the impulse, being con-

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tinued

tinued along the proper nerves to their termination among the moving fibres, causes an immediate contraction of all those muscles, whose contraction is necessary to produce the action willed. And it is worthy of remark, that men who know nothing of the structure and nature of these instruments of voluntary motion, can use them with the same ease and advantage, as the most skilful anatomists.

The involuntary motions comprehend all those movements and internal operations, which are continually carried on within the body, independent of our will, or knowledge. The chief are the motions of the heart, arteries, and veins, by which the blood is circulated: the worm-like motions of the stomach and intestines, which are of great use in the digestion and passage of the food: the motion of the absorbing vessels; which arise from the internal surface of the intestines, whence they take up the nutritive portion
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of the digested food ; and from every cavity and interstice of the body, and the external surface of the skin, whence they receive a clear lymph : these absorbing vessels are extremely minute and numerous at their origins, but soon uniting form larger and larger vessels, which have frequent communications, and at length carry both these fluids into one common receptacle : from which they are slowly poured into a large vein under the left collar-bone, to supply the blood with a constant recruit of nourishing and diluting fluids. These internal motions being immediately necessary to life, and to be performed without ceasing, are not entrusted to the will and reason of man. They consist of frequent alternate contractions and relaxations of the moving fibres in the coats of these vessels, excited to action by the gentle irritation of their contents, which are thereby agitated and pushed forwards. Thus the influence of the brain and nerves, or

rather of the soul, which acts in them, is conveyed so silently into these organs, that we are not conscious either of the irritation, or of the motions produced thereby; unless they become unnaturally violent, or remifs.

Laftly, the soul of man appears to exercife all its intellectual, affectionate, and active powers in the brain, in a way that is far beyond human comprehension. Yet every obfervation concurs in declaring that the brain is the chief feat of the union of the soul with the body, and the proper organ of confcioufnefs, thought, and voluntary action, of every kind, as long as the union of the soul with the body continues.

The foregoing brief fketoh of the human economy may be fufficient to fhew, that the whole is carried on by the union of the foul with the body, and the operation of thefe two different principles on each other.

And

And we are now to inquire what becomes of the soul after the death of the man.

IV. *OF THE SOUL IN ITS STATE OF SEPARATION FROM THE BODY.*

OF DEATH.

THE human body is liable to be put out of order by diseases arising in itself, as well as by age and by causes acting on it from without; and when any such cause affects the brain, heart, or lungs, to such a degree, as to render them utterly incapable of performing their offices, the powers of life cease, an end is put to the intercourse between the soul and the body, and the man dies. Such however is the love or inclination of the soul towards the body, that it seldom breaks off its connection therewith wantonly, or of its own accord; nor does it seem to have power so to do,

in any other way than by commanding the organs of voluntary motion to do some action, that shall bring fatal mischief upon the vital organs.

When the body is deprived of life, it loses its beauty, and soon undergoes a putrefactive fermentation, by which it is gradually resolved into its component elements.

OF THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

EVERY attempt to explain the state of the human soul, after the dissolution of the body, is attended with many and great difficulties. It is necessary in the first place to consider what may be known with respect to its nature. The soul is that part of the constitution of man, in which his powers of life, as well as those of his understanding, affection, and will, do

do reside. Little objection can lie against the name, as used to distinguish this part of his constitution from the others: the disputes are about its nature.

Since the soul is invifible, intangible, and inſcrutable by any organ of ſenſe, all we can know of it, muſt come from our conſciouſneſs of what paſſes within ourſelves. But we are conſcious only of ſome of its operations; and the conſciouſneſs we have of theſe gives no information at all, with reſpect to the internal nature and conſtitution of the ſoul itſelf, or of the mode of its operation: therefore we have no means of examining this nobleſt part of man by itſelf. Nevertheleſs, ſince we can obſerve many ſenſible effects, which thoſe operations of it of which we are conſcious, produce in our own minds and frame, and can compare with theſe the ſigns of ſimilar operations and effects, that appear in the words, countenances and actions of other people; we may thus obtain a

very limited, not unimportant knowledge of the soul. By such observations, we know that all the life and activity of the body, and all the exerted powers of the human understanding, affection, and will, are effects produced by the operations of the soul; and these effects afford a satisfactory proof, that the soul is, from its very nature, a living and active being, altogether different from matter, and from every organization, modification, or motion of matter,

*THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL
DEFENDED.*

THAT we have the same evidence for a firm belief of the existence and immateriality of the soul, as we have for believing our own existence, has been proved already (p. 21 to 27): and the effects of the union of the active soul

soul with the human brain have been explained (p. 27 to 37). To which may be added, that the universal prevalence, among people of all nations and ages of the world, of the notion of spirits and disembodied souls, denotes such notion to be agreeable to the common apprehension of mankind.

Against these proofs of the immateriality of the soul, the materialists object, that since there is a necessary connection between the brain, and a man's ability to perform the mental operations, it is more philosophical to ascribe these operations to the peculiar organization of the brain, than to an immaterial soul united to it in an inexplicable manner. And they say this opinion is confirmed by the observation, that whenever this organ is rendered incapable of performing its office, as in a swoon, the person is unable to perform any of the mental operations.

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It is granted that the soul, while united with the body, acts only by the mediation of the brain; and therefore when this organ is greatly disordered, the mental operations are deranged, or suspended. These circumstances, however, neither prove, nor denote, these operations to be the mere effects of the peculiar organization of the brain: and it is far more agreeable to common apprehension and reason, to ascribe them to the active nature of the living soul, exerted in the brain. The recovery out of a swoon, or from a drowning, is a proof not only that an unfit condition of the brain renders a man unconscious, but 'also that the soul may be present in the body, while the person ceases to be conscious, and may still preserve an internal energy under a total cessation of all its perceptible operations.

It is trifling to require an instance of the soul's acting independent of the brain; or an explication of the mode of union
between

between the soul and the brain ; since the materialists do not profess to have any conception of the manner in which the mental operations can arise from organization of brain, nor how unconscious inactive matter can become a thinking, feeling, intelligent, and active being ; nor how the brain, an assemblage of many separable parts, can be the subject of individual consciousness.

Perhaps the subject may be a little illustrated by comparing the mental powers of man with the projectile powers of a bow. As the projectile operations of the bow depend upon the elastic nature of the yew or steel of which it is made, as connected with its string ; so the mental operations of man depend upon the active power of the soul, as connected with his brain. The fit condition of the brain, like the fit stringing of the bow, is the efficient cause, without which the powers cannot be exerted ; and the unfit condition
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of the brain, like unstringing the bow, suspends every operation of the mental powers.

Upon the whole, therefore, it is safely concluded, that the soul is, from its very nature, a living and active being, immaterial, and altogether different from organization of brain.

*OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL,
DEDUCED FROM THE CONSIDERATION
OF ITS NATURE.*

THOSE who hold the soul to be material, and all the mental operations to be nothing more than the natural result of the peculiar organization of the brain and nerves, assert, that on the dissolution of this organization by death, the whole man becomes extinct, until he be raised again by the same power that created him at first,

first. But I do not see how such a resurrection can differ from a fresh creation, which would destroy his identity, responsibility, and individual interest in the doctrine of a future state.

Against the immortality of the soul it has been objected, that whatever has begun to exist, may cease to exist. Certainly the existence of every being depends upon the will of the Creator, who gave to each that nature and those properties which seemed good to him. But we find no traces of annihilation in any department of nature. Vegetable and animal bodies, which are the most perishable parts of the terrestrial creation, grow, die, decay, and are soon resolved into their elementary particles; and these by a fresh arrangement, may be again employed, as the component parts of other vegetables and animals. In all these changes there is no annihilation of parts, but only a new arrangement of them: there is therefore

no reason to suppose that the soul of man will cease to exist, or be deprived of its nature, upon the dissolution of the body. For the being which is continually receiving such a variety of different impressions, not only from the senses, and the present state of the body, but also from its own thoughts and affections, and attends to so many different objects without confusion, cannot be composed of separable parts; but must be of a spiritual nature. It is one, simple, individual, uncompounded, conscious being: and consequently having nothing in itself that can occasion dissolution, or be liable to corruption by causes out of itself, is naturally incapable of dissolution, or death. He only who gave it existence, can make it cease to exist: and we have no reason to think he will ever do so.

This noblest part of the constitution of man, which animates his body with all the powers of life, and is the efficient
cause

cause of all his bodily and mental operations, and which often restores the powers of life to persons, who appear to be dead; cannot be dependent upon the bodily frame for its existence. It is in itself a principle of life, or possesses life in itself, and will continue to live after its separation from the body.

*OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL,
DEDUCED FROM THE GENERAL BELIEF
AND EXPECTATION OF MANKIND.*

INDEPENDENT, however, of any philosophical conclusions, men are assured that they shall continue to live after their death, as to this life, in a way more level to every understanding, and therefore more useful and fit to produce conviction, from natural, moral, and religious considerations.

The thought, that a man's death is the utter extinction of his being, or even of his sensitive, intellectual, affectionate, and active existence, is too repugnant and irksome to human nature, to be entertained even by the most savage people. The belief, as well as the desire, of living after death in some way or other, is so natural and common to the whole human race, that they every where look forwards to this future state of existence, with some degree of hope and fear. Therefore, since no general apprehension, or desire, is found implanted in the human mind, without having its proper object, this universal concurrence in the belief and hope of a future existence, may be reasonably, taken as an intimation given by the Creator, that they shall continue to live after the present life is finished. And if it be believed, that the soul survives the death of the body; there is no reason to believe it will die in any succeeding time.

Or

OF THE SOULS OF BRUTE ANIMALS.

MANY philosophers have considered the intellectual soul of man, as superadded to his animal nature; and therefore free to enjoy a separate existence, without supposing the lower animals capable of the same privilege. These may object, that the foregoing account, by ascribing the vital and sensitive powers of man to the activity of his soul, tacitly admits that the souls of the lower animals, since they possess these powers in common with man, are also immaterial, and consequently immortal.

But reflecting on what passes within me, I have no perception of having two distinct souls; the one rational, the other animal: but I conceive that the soul which exercises intellectual powers in the brain, is the very same which sees with the eye, hears with the ear, governs the moving
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members, and animates the vital organs with the powers of life. Therefore, since my senses inform me, that the lower animals are furnished, not only with organs of life, sense, and motion, by the use of which they give unequivocal signs of being endued with perception, feeling, and voluntary action; but also with some degree of understanding and affection to guide their will and actions; I must admit that they have also a soul, or immaterial principle of activity.

Some philosophers, to avoid this supposition, which they deem derogatory from the dignity of man, have looked upon the lower animals as mere machines, destitute of the powers of perception, sensation, affection, or voluntary action; yet so curiously formed, that the simple impression of light, sound, and other external agents, upon their organs, produce in them that course of actions, which is commonly imputed to a soul. But this
opinion

opinion is repugnant to appearances, and to our natural apprehensions. When we cut, slice, and tear to pieces, the curiously organized fruit of a cucumber, or the leaves of a lettuce, we have no such sympathetic pity, as we feel for a dog or a horse, treated with cruelty. This argues a belief, that these animals have a feeling soul: nor is this a new opinion. The most ancient writer extant enumerates beasts, birds, and reptiles, as creatures having a soul. The prerogative of man over the lower animals is more effectually vindicated, by living up to the greater dignity of his nature, than by denying them to have what they appear to possess.

My conceptions with respect to the animal creation, are, First, That the several kinds and species of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, serpents, insects, and worms, which inhabit the earth, replenish the waters, and fly in the air, are allied to one another, and even to man their chief,

by having one common constitution; an organized body, and an active soul, united into one living creature.

2. That since they are distinguished into their several species by different modifications in the form, size, colour, and clothing of their bodies; and exhibit an equal diversity in their senses, appetites, affections, manners, pursuits and modes of life; it seems reasonable to conclude, that there is as great a difference in the souls, as in the bodies, of the different animals.

3. It may, perhaps, be also presumed, that there are as many distinct kinds of souls, as of animals, in the world: and that each species of animals has a body and a soul, nicely adapted to each other, and to its peculiar mode of existence.

4. Animals are the only terrestrial creatures, that are capable of enjoying pleasure, and of suffering pain; and furnished
with

with organs and desires to seek the one and avoid the other; and their several kinds may be considered as so many suits of different labourers, created for, and constantly employed in, the natural administration of the earth; in which work each kind has a proper office and place assigned to it.

5. The main business of life, in all animals, is the pursuit of pleasant objects, and the avoiding of such as give pain: and in the exercise of those active powers, which their senses, feelings, instincts, and understanding, prompt them to exert for these purposes, they most effectually answer the ends of their creation. Thus labouring for themselves with unremitting diligence, they promote the public service; and in so doing find every pleasure and enjoyment, of which their nature is capable. This order is an astonishing instance of the goodness, as well as of the wisdom and power, of the Creator.

6. Each species of the other animals seems brought into existence, for the sake of doing its proper office in the natural administration of the earth; and for this purpose to have received a certain fixed and determinate choice of pursuits, which the individuals follow invariably, having the same desires, pursuing the same objects, and doing the same actions, as others of the same species and sex. But man is placed at their head, to superintend, regulate, and govern them; and to maintain the whole earth in a beautiful, wholesome, and useful state: and for his natural reward for this service, he receives every emolument and pleasure, that arises from his care, skill, and labour.

7. The actions and manners of the lower animals, when contrasted with those of man, clearly evince the great inferiority of their intellectual powers; which although fully sufficient to guide them in the work they have to do in their several modes

modes of existence, appear to be confined to the immediate objects of their senses and sensations ; and therefore altogether incapable of directing their actions by rational, moral, or religious considerations. Consequently the brute animals have no conception of a future life, and are not proper objects of reward and punishment in it. If it be asked, What then becomes of the brutal soul after the death of the animal ? Does it perish with the body, as many suppose from observing, that all the actions of brutes tend only to the care of the body ? or what use can there be for such inferior souls in the other world ? We cannot answer these questions, because we have no means of making these things become the objects of our knowledge.

*OF THE SUPERIORITY OF MAN OVER
OTHER ANIMALS.*

THE vast capacity and strength of the human intellectual powers, which surpass that of the most sagacious brute to a superlative degree; the use of articulate language, by which each perceives the sentiments of others, and makes his own known to them, with greater precision than could be done by any natural expression in countenance or gesture; the surprising variety of genius, taste, and character among mankind, which is such, that instead of being tied down to some determinate set of actions, like other animals, each individual has choice of pursuits, and a way of thinking and acting, peculiar to himself; a restless curiosity, carrying the attention to all sorts of objects; and the high style of his society and polity, by which all his powers are called into action, and many can unite their labours to accomplish the same end; constitute

stitute man lord of the earth. And this superiority, variety, and versatility of the human faculties, qualify and excite man to administer his dominion over the terrestrial creation; and to enable him to exercise this government with prudence, propriety, and a good conscience, becoming an accountable governor. He alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, is endued with an inward sense of right and wrong, in thought and conduct, towards the lower animals, himself, other men, and the Creator of all things; connected with the belief of a future life of rewards and punishments for deeds done in this.

We are now to consider,
THE STATE, FEELINGS, AND EMPLOYMENTS OF THE DISEMBODIED HUMAN SOUL.

THE mode of existence, feelings, and employments of the disembodied soul, are so remote from observation, that the investigation

vestigation of them lies at the utmost verge of human knowledge; and the greatest care is required, lest, led by curiosity, we should wander beyond the bounds of information, into devious paths of conjecture and uncertainty.

The little knowledge we can have of the state of the disembodied soul, must be deduced from consideration of the operations of the soul in the living man, and the general belief of mankind with respect to morality and religion.

V. *OF THE STATE OF THE DISEMBODIED SOUL, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE OPERATIONS OF THE SOUL IN THE LIVING MAN.*

WE are conscious of many operations of our own souls, and this consciousness is the foundation of all our knowledge in relation to other souls. For as a man knows nothing of his own soul, but from the operations of it which he observes in himself;

himself; so he has no other means to acquire the knowledge of the operations of the soul in other men, but the consideration of such sensible effects apparent in their frame, actions, or speech, as are similar to those which he has experienced to be produced in himself by the operations of his own soul. Therefore, since no such effects of the soul ever appear in the deceased, we have no means of holding any intercourse with them: neither have we any natural faculty, by which we may come to the knowledge of the future life, as we may of things past by memory, and of things present by the senses and consciousness. The gulph of ignorance, which thus separates the dead from the living, is so extensive, that we have no possible means of deriving knowledge from the dead. Even persons recovered from a swoon, or drowning, cannot tell what happened to them during the fit, or apparent death.

*OF ITS NATURE AND MODE OF
EXISTENCE.*

ALTHOUGH the precise mode of the existence of the disembodied soul be unknown; yet the consideration of the nature and activity of the soul, gives good reason to believe its future existence will not be merely simple duration, like that of a bar of gold; nor a life of inactivity, like that of a person in a deep sleep; but that it will continue after its separation from the body, a living, conscious, active being; and retain its essential powers of perception, feeling, understanding, and willing. Nay, since the soul of a living man is found to be limited in its operations by the present state of the brain, many have considered its union with the body, as a general limitation of its powers; and have supposed, that when this limitation is removed by death, the disembodied soul will be susceptible of a higher degree of perfection in the exercise of its powers.

Or

OF ITS BODY.

MANY believe, that the same body which perishes at death, will be raised again, and have its own soul re-united to it. But it must be confessed, that neither the appearances at death, nor any other natural observation, suggest, that the disembodied soul will ever re-animate the same body, from which it was separated; or be again clothed with a material frame, like its former. Nevertheless, since infinite space and duration belong only to God, the disembodied soul must exist in some place, as well as time; and consequently have something in its nature that gives it a relation to some place and time. 'This something is unknown to us, as is also the nature of the soul itself: yet it may perhaps with propriety be called the soul's body, however spiritual its nature.

OF ITS EMPLOYMENTS AND FEELINGS.

WITH respect to the employments and feelings of the disembodied soul ; let it be remembered, that man, who is formed to inhabit and govern the earth, has such a relation to material objects, that he can neither receive, nor communicate knowledge, or sensation, nor make any voluntary motion, but by the mediation of his bodily organs. Therefore, since the soul, when separated from the body by death, is deprived of all corporeal organs, it must then have a mode of existence, faculties, and affections, very different, both in kind and degree, from what it had while united with the body : and its employments must also be as different from human occupations. But as we can form no conception of these things, different from those we perceive and feel in ourselves, the knowledge we can obtain of them will be very little and imperfect.

Some

Some philosophers have pleased themselves with the thought of being employed in the next life, in contemplating the wonderful works of God, in the creation and preservation of the universe; and the mathematical laws, by which the motions of the vast revolving bodies, in the several systems in it, are regulated. But they have not sufficiently considered that we have no conception of any other means of surveying material bodies, besides the organs of sense which perish at death; and do not know that such employment can be suitable to disembodied souls.

Another opinion, more general, because more agreeable to the common apprehension of mankind, and therefore more probable, is; that since we are social beings on earth, and the greater part of the enjoyments of human life flow from love, friendship, mutual kindness, and other social affections; we shall be social also in the next life, and take delight in the company of
other

other souls. It is natural for a man, who has lost a dear wife, child, or friend, to desire and expect, when he himself shall be called into the other world, to meet and converse with the deceased, and to know one another. Yet this subject seems incapable of a satisfactory determination. Perhaps, since the bonds of love and society amongst men, do all arise from bodily perceptions and sensations, to which an end is put by death; it may appear as probable, that these affections will be dissolved, and another bond of union and society commence, upon a foundation more suitable to disembodied souls, than any relation to their former persons, kindred, or friendships.

Thus we see that such difficulties occur in contemplating the state, feelings, and employments of the soul after its separation from the body, as evince these subjects to be inscrutable by a philosophical investigation of the nature of the soul,
while

while it is united to the body in the living man. But since men are formed to be governed, in the most effectual manner, by the hopes and fears of a life to come, it remains to consider, whether all that is necessary for us to know, may not be learned from the doctrines of morality and religion.

VI. *OF THE STATE OF THE DISEMBODIED SOUL, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY AND RELIGION.*

WONDERFUL is the diversity of manners and religion, which have been established among men in the different nations and ages of the world. We are not, therefore, to seek information, relative to the state of the disembodied soul, from any opinions that are particular, or peculiar, to any people; but to confine the inquiry to such as are universal, and common to all.

Men are social, moral, and religious beings. Born and educated in different relations and bonds of society, natural, civil and religious; in which the good of the whole requires there should be a diversity of condition, subordination of ranks, a multiplicity of occupations, and a distinction of property; they find themselves to stand in continual need of the mutual assistance and benevolence of one another. From this diversity of situation there arises a variety of civil and religious offices and duties, which vary in different persons, according to the difference of their stations. And it has pleased the Creator to place every individual in a capacity of knowing, and doing, his respective duties in every station and circumstance of life, by implanting in man the noble internal principle of Conscience.

OF CONSCIENCE.

CONSCIENCE is that knowledge, or power of the understanding, by which a man judges of the right or wrong, in the conduct of his own thoughts, words and actions; or of the truth or falsity of any doctrine proposed to him. Conscience is the characteristic and noblest part of the constitution of the human soul; and its secret judgment is the law or rule for the well-ordering of life, which every man is bound to obey. Nevertheless, he ought always to remember, that his conscience is liable to be misinformed, lulled asleep, or perverted; that it must be rightly informed, before it can be qualified to pass a proper judgment on things; and that it is his duty, and highest interest, to watch with care, to keep it always tender and open to information, as well as to act according to its dictates. Its sources of information are two: the one human, the other divine.

THE HUMAN SOURCE, is human reason. Connected in society with other persons in various relations, man perceives several duties of life, and offices of industry and benevolence, which he ought to practise. The works of the creation, visible in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, suggest to him the existence, power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator, and his providence in supporting them, and confirm the natural expectation he has of a life of retribution to come; he perceives certain things in his thoughts, words, and actions to be right, and others to be wrong; feels himself to have some power over his own conduct, and the determinations of his will; and consequently knows, that he is a free and moral agent, accountable to other men, and also to his Creator. Upon this rational foundation many elegant systems of morality, and even of religion, have been framed, containing useful rules for proper conduct in the several stations, offices and duties of life.

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, the conclusions of reason, however beautiful and useful in their proper places, are altogether insufficient for the sole guide of conscience: for education and custom have great influence on the conclusions of reason, and on the conscience that is guided by them. Hence the several people of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, all approve of the customs, manners, and religious doctrines and practices, in which they are brought up: and we find even among the most polished and enlightened nations, that reason is often employed to pervert, or lull conscience asleep, by finding excuses to justify what the allurements of pleasure, impetuosity of passion, interest, or bad example, give men an inclination to do. Morality, therefore, will always need the support of the religious principle. For every precept which stands on mere human reason alone, can have only human authority; and its sanction can be no more than the approbation, or disapprobation, of himself, and other fallible men, especially those of the same society.

Now such morality and religion can give no other information, respecting the state of the soul after its separation from the body, than that of philosophical investigation; and this has already been noticed.

THE DIVINE SOURCE of information, is the holy spirit, word, or law of God, manifested in the heart or conscience of man. God, who is present in every place, and in every creature according to its nature, has not only formed man with a strength of understanding and reasoning powers, far surpassing those of any other animal, and with a capacity of receiving the holy spirit; but has also been graciously pleased to place in his heart, or conscience, a measure or manifestation thereof; and this measure, if duly attended to and obeyed, is sufficient to enlighten his reason, to regulate his disorderly desires, and to teach him what he ought to do, or to leave undone. This divine monitor is not a part of the

the human constitution; but is the grace, or free gift, of God, given to each individual for his instructor and guide through life. I can exercise my reason, when and how I please; but I have no power at all over this divine gift, to procure its aid, or to prevent its reproofs for evil. My reason is fallible, and too apt to misinform and misguide my conscience: but the divine gift is neither fallible, nor liable to misinformation, or perversion. I find myself naturally prone to evil: but the divine gift reproves for evil, and never consents to it, but always leads into holiness; and by these properties it is clearly distinguished from the conclusions of human reason.

*OF THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF
RELIGION.*

THIS divine gift in the heart, is also the root or principle on which all real religion is founded. Our common Creator, who is equal in all his ways, and no respecter of

persons, has graciously bestowed upon every individual of the human race, wherever scattered upon the face of the earth, a measure of this divine gift. A steady belief in this gift, and a faithful obedience to its dictates, are sufficient, under every dispensation of Providence, to give ability to worship God acceptably, and to exercise justice, mercy, and goodness to all men, and even to the lower animals, according to their nature. But the simplicity and purity of this universal religion, which, by the oldest writer extant, is emphatically called, "Walking with God," has indeed been sadly defaced by the addition of various rites, ceremonies, and superstitious practices; which human reason and policy have introduced among different people, in the several ages of the world. Yet I believe, it is the influence of this universal principle of religion, rather than the conclusions of reason, which has preserved among all people, even the most savage, some conception of the
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the existence, power, wisdom, and goodness, of the Creator; of his providence over all his works; of right and wrong in thought, words, and actions; and of their being accountable for the same in a life to come, after this is finished, where good men will be happy, and the wicked miserable. And if the manifestation of this religious principle appears to be less in degree or clearness among some people, than among others; it may be presumed, that where little is given, little is required, and that obedience to that little will be accepted. Obedience to the dictates of this pure religion is recompensed with the peace and approbation of God spoken in the heart in this life; and a comfortable hope of happiness in the next: but disobedience is attended with a painful sense of his disapprobation here, and a fear of punishment hereafter.

VII. *OF THE STATE, EMPLOYMENTS, FEELINGS, AND SOCIETY, OF DISEMBODIED SOULS, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE OF RELIGION.*

IT is now time to inquire what conclusions concerning the state of departed souls in the next life, may be safely drawn from the consideration of universal principles of religion.

OF ITS MODE OF EXISTENCE.

VARIOUS are the external forms and beliefs, annexed to the different religions, established in different nations and ages: and they all explain their several notions of the feelings and employments of disembodied souls, and of their happy or miserable state in the next life, by terms taken from things of this world; from
which

which they are, doubtless, very different. Yet, notwithstanding the diversity of their notions, they all agree in this one point; that men will be happy or miserable in the future life, according to the good or bad deeds they have done in this. This agreement of all people arises from the universality of the gift of the true principle of religion to all the children of men: and since very little more of the manner of the existence of disembodied souls is discovered to the most enlightened people, than to the more ignorant; it may be concluded, that a more precise knowledge of it is unnecessary to any useful purpose, and probably inconceivable by man, while living on earth.

Nevertheless, since universal religion teaches that the future life will be a state of reward, or punishment, for deeds done in this; it follows, that the soul, after its separation from the body, will still be conscious of its own identity,
and

and know itself to be the self same soul, which animated such a body on earth, and in it did such and such deeds; that it will remember and recognize these deeds, both the good and the bad; will retain the sensibility of its nature, and stand naked before the Creator: consequently it will retain and exercise its essential powers of perception, feeling, memory, understanding, affection, and volition; though we are altogether ignorant of the manner how, and of the objects about which, these powers will be employed.

OF ITS EMPLOYMENTS AND FEELINGS.

The nearest resemblance of the employment and enjoyments of happy souls in heaven is, I believe, that which good men experience here at times, when they are favoured in prayer, or meditation; when they are enabled to worship God,
and

and do his will, acceptably; and when his peace, spoken in the heart, gives them a taste and foresight of the heavenly joys and glory of a happy life to come. And the accusations of an awakened conscience, sometimes cause the wicked to feel a foretaste of the misery, which awaits them in the next life for their evil deeds, without repentance: yet this state of mind is far better, and more hopeful than a hardness of heart, which is insensible either of good, or of bad.

OF ITS SOCIETY.

Since we shall be conscious in the next life, who ourselves were while living on earth, many virtuous men have been of the opinion, that we shall then be able to know, and converse with our dear relations and friends, who have departed this
life

life before us, or shall come after us. But it seems as probable, that all the ties of human love and friendship will terminate at death ; and that, in the state of happiness, the principal bond of union will be the pure love of God.

THE CONCLUSION.

We may now see, how little we know of the mode of the future state ; yet this little knowledge is, doubtless, sufficient for every useful purpose of human life. And to compare great things with small, we may also observe, that every kind of the lower animals seems to be endued with the kind and degree of knowledge, which is required for the proper management of its own affairs ; that a greater degree than this is equally denied to all, as useless, and perhaps hurtful ; and that all appear contented with their portion. Shall man, who

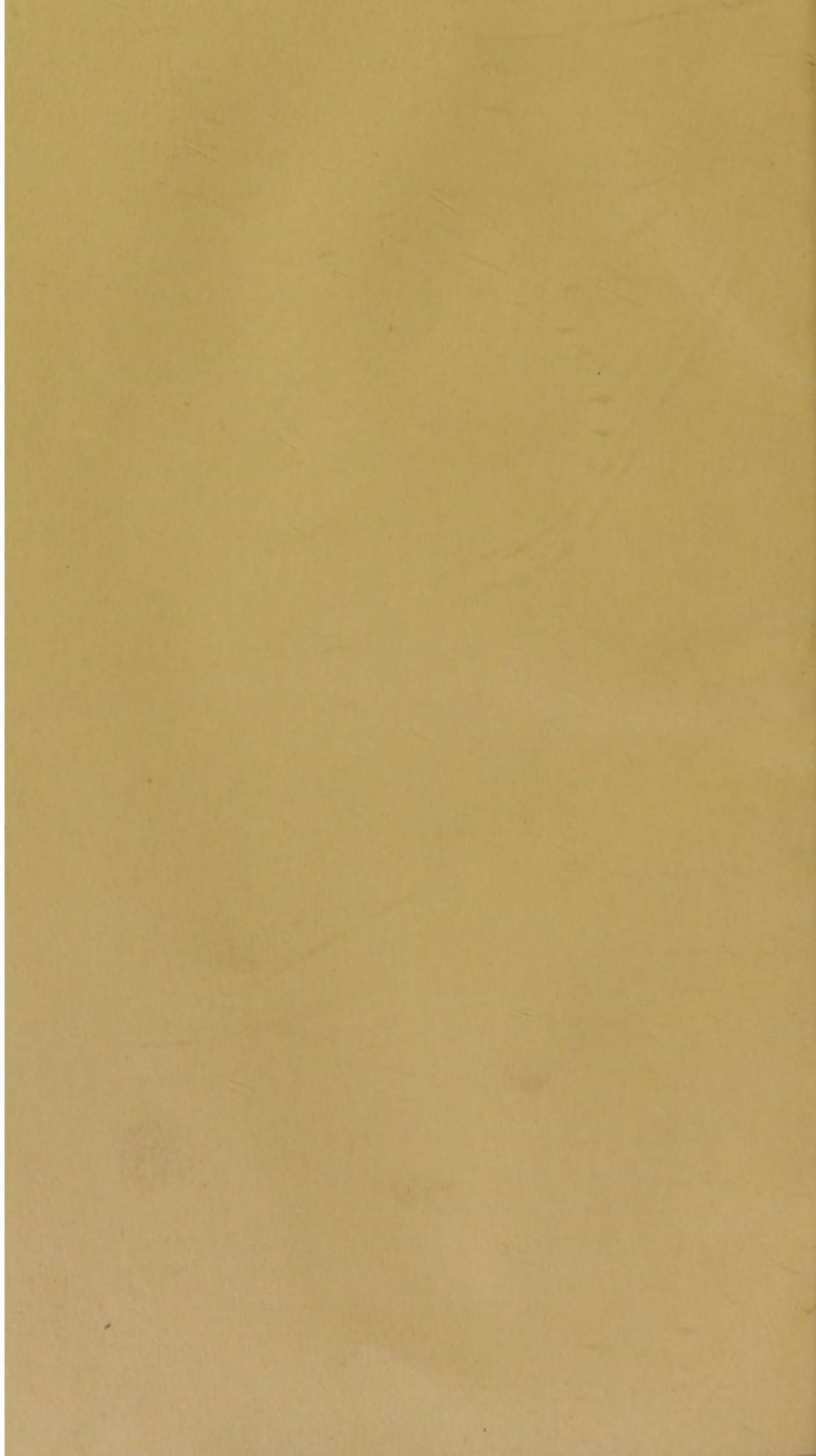
who has received an understanding, incomparably more comprehensive, than the most sagacious brute, be alone discontented; and want to extend his knowledge beyond the powers of his faculties, vast as they are? The attempt is vain; and can only lead into the dark and inextricable mazes of metaphysical uncertainty.

THE END.

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comparably more comprehensive, than
the most ingenious brain, he alone dis-
contented, and went to extend his know-
ledge beyond the powers of his faculties,
vast as they are. The attempt is vain,
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inextinguishable abyss of metaphysical un-
certainty.

THE END.









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