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LETTERS TO A FRIEND

ON THE

HUMAN SOUL;

ITS

IMMATERIALITY AND IMMORTALITY;

AND MORE ESPECIALLY ON

ITS PECULIAR CHARACTERISTIC

AS BEING

A FORM AND SUBSTANCE

DERIVING ITS LIFE CONTINUALLY FROM GOD;

BY

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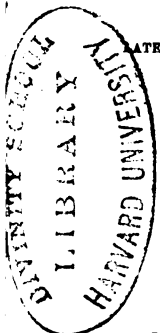
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ADDRESS TO THE READER.

DEAR READER,

The *soul* of man, which is at once both his nearest and dearest *property* or *possession*, is perhaps less considered and understood, as to its real essence, qualities, and character, than any other property or possession belonging to him. Indeed, it appears questionable (if we are to be guided by the authority of strict and accurate definition respecting the precise meaning of words) whether it can be asserted, with any degree of truth, that any other property does *belong to him*. For, can that, with any show of reason, be called man's *property* which he is to quit for ever, immediately on his removal from this world to another? Is not the soul, therefore, his *single exclusive* possession, as being that alone which he can carry with him beyond the grave? Of consequence, is not the soul a possession which merits his attention, his concern, and his daily investigation of its astonishing powers and capacities, infinitely above every other?

It has been my design, in the following Letters, to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, by attempting to prove, so far as the subject will admit of proof, that the human soul is not a mere vapour, ether, or fire—as some writers suppose—which is destitute of form and substance, and in possession of an independent life of its own; but that, on the contrary, it is both a substance and form, created to receive life continually from its GREAT CREATOR, who is, and ever must be, the sole Fountain of all Life, whether it be angelic, human, animal, or vegetative.

From this view of the living principle by which man is animated, as being not *in itself a fountain*, but only *perpetual stream from a Divine source above and within itself*, an entirely new light is thrown on the philosophy of the parentage, birth, and growth of the human soul; whilst at the same time a satisfactory solution is given of the riddle (otherwise inexplicable), of its astonishing capacities and operations; and especially of that preëminent and distinguished faculty by which it is enabled, through the power of evangelical faith and love, to ascend to and conjoin itself with its MAKER in an eternal bond of the nearest and most endearing relationship! From the same consideration, too, is pointed out the high reasonableness of some of the most important duties inculcated in the Gospel, such as humility, self-denial, repentance, and faith in the internal operation of a DIVINE SPIRIT in the soul of man, for the double purpose of purification and regeneration; since these duties are evidently calculated

to recall man to the humble and grateful acknowledgment of his continual dependance on his HEAVENLY FATHER, not only for his life in *general*, but for all its *particular* capacities, powers, and enjoyments; and in so doing, to place him in the fittest state to receive all that fulness of bliss which that HEAVENLY FATHER is ever eager to communicate to all His returning, penitent children.

Such, dear Reader, is the outline of the contents of the following Letters; to which I have only to add my devout prayer, that they may be read with all that serious attention which the subject demands,—and may thus be instrumental in opening a door in your mind for the admission of that holiness, wisdom, and happiness, the promotion of which is the ardent wish of

Your affectionate friend,

J. CLOWES.

April 16th, 1825.



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LETTERS TO A FRIEND, &c.

Letter I.

In reply to the question,—“How can you prove to me that there is within me any principle distinct from matter?”

MY DEAR SIR,

In demonstrating to you the important certainty, that, in the constitution of your nature, there exists a principle perfectly distinct from matter, I might be content to require of you to hold up your arm, and then tell me whence you derive the power of thus elevating a large and weighty mass of combined flesh, blood, sinews, and bones; or by what new law it comes to pass, that a lump of mere matter, whilst itself remains at rest, can raise a part of itself above all the other parts, contrary to the known laws of gravitation? If you say that animate and organized matter has the power of elevating itself, and thus of overcoming the natural force of gravity, and that by this power it is distinguished from inanimate and unorganized matter; I would then ask, What is it you mean by animate and organized matter, or how do you discriminate between it and inanimate and unorganized matter? You will tell me, perhaps, that animate and organized matter differs from inanimate and unorganized matter, by virtue of its possessing a *principle of life*. It is evident, then, from your own definition, that there is something in you besides ordinary

matter, which something you call a principle of life; and that, by means of this principle, matter possesses qualities and faculties which, in itself, separate from that principle, it does not possess. By your own confession, then, there is in you a principle *distinct* from matter; unless you will have the extravagance to assert that *life* and *matter* are homogeneous, and thus mean the same thing. But allow me to ask, Have you ever considered with due attention what life is, and especially what that principle of life is, which you say distinguishes animate and organized matter from inanimate and unorganized? Have you considered, I say, that this principle is *various*, according to the subjects in which it exists; consequently, that it is not precisely the same in a *vegetable* as in an *animal*; nor the same in *animals* as in *man*? Have you further considered, therefore, that in man it implies *thought* and *volition*; and this, not only a thought and volition confined to the narrow circle of worldly and sublunary objects, but a thought and volition extending beyond the boundaries of time, and reaching to the grand certainties and realities of the eternal world; yea, even to the GRAND FOUNTAIN of all life, volition, and thought,—the DIVINE CREATOR? But is it conceivable that matter, of *itself*, is capable of such thought and volition? As well might we suppose that a *stone* is capable of exploring and apprehending the attributes of God, and of thus attaching itself to His perfections, of adoring His magnificence, of delighting in His mercy, and of drawing daily nearer and nearer to Him, by faith and love, as the Source of all its happiness!

In the single act, then, of lifting up your arm, if you will attend to it, you have a sufficiently convincing proof, that in the mechanism of your corporeal frame there is a living principle, not only *distinct from* matter, but *superior to* matter, so superior, that it has the power to guide and control matter, exciting it to motion, and by composing it to rest. You have a sufficiently convincing proof, too, that this living principle is endowed with thought and volition, since it is im-

possible for you to lift up your arm, unless you first *think* and *will* to do so. Yet, what is thus true respecting the act of lifting up your arm, is equally true of every other bodily act and motion, inasmuch as every gesture, whether manifested in the ordinary operations of the hands and feet, or in the wonderful translation of the whole body from one place to another, carries along with it the force of demonstrative evidence that in *matter* there is *mind*; and that, separate from mind, it would be as impossible for matter to put itself in motion, and to continue its motion for a given length of time, and to a given distance, as for a stone to move out of its place, and by virtue of its own activity, to continue its progress in a direction determined merely by its own fancy and choice.

Do you, then, occasionally change the situation of your body, by transferring it from one place to another, and is this change determined by your own *free choice* and *inclination*? Do you sometimes go to the house of GOD, sometimes to the houses of men, sometimes extending your movements to distant countries, sometimes confining them to the different apartments of your own house; and is the weight of your body, in all these cases, impelled and overcome by a single act of thought and volition? What further proof can be wanting of the existence of an active power in yourself, which can thus counteract the general law of the gravitation of matter? What further proof, therefore, can be wanting of your possessing something in yourself distinct from matter; and a something, too, endowed with the most astonishing and almost incredible qualities; since it is capable, by virtue of the single energy of *will*, of putting matter in motion, and propelling a large bulk of it, such as is that of the human body, in any direction, and to any distance which it deems convenient?*

* If any additional proof be wanted of man's perpetual communication with some supernatural principle of life, and that, consequently, there is in him a something distinct from matter; it may be sought for, and found, in the astonishing consideration of the constant regular warmth of the blood, and of

You are not, however, to suppose, my dear Sir, that because your reason, when properly consulted, can thus discover to you the existence in yourself of a principle distinct from matter, the same reason can also inform you what that principle is, by defining precisely its particular qualities, characters, powers, and modes of operation. For reason, howsoever competent it may be to decide on points within its own sphere of intuition and observation, is yet utterly incapable of extending its views beyond that sphere; and, consequently, it cannot enter into *the sanctuary* of the human mind or spirit, so as to inform us what is passing there;—what that principle is which we call *life*,—what is its *origin*,—what is the *first form* adapted to its reception,—what are the *properties* of that form, and what its *destination*. To acquire, then, this interesting knowledge, we must have recourse to a source of information superior to that of reason; which source is no other than what we call *Revelation*, or the discovery which the GREAT CREATOR hath been pleased to make to us respecting Himself; respecting His eternal kingdom,

the equally constant and regular motion or circulation of that blood; continued, in some instances, during the protracted period of a hundred years or more. For, how can such fixed warmth and such undisturbed motion be accounted for on any principle of materialism? It is a well known fact, established by universal experience, that all mere matter is subject to perpetual vicissitude, both as to the degree of its heat, and of the velocity with which it moves; and that this is a certain consequence of its properties, and of the necessity imposed upon it of submitting to the general laws of matter. But the human blood, it is evident, is exempt from any such necessity, since its heat *remains unchanged*, and its motion *continues unimpeded*, notwithstanding all the changes, both in warmth and velocity, operative in the material world by which it is surrounded. What, then, is the plain and sure inference to be drawn from this extraordinary circumstance? Or rather, what is the *demonstrative evidence* which it forces on the thinking mind? Does it not prove, with all the power of mathematical certainty, that there must, of necessity, be something in man perfectly *distinct from matter*,—since the fluid which is in perpetual circulation in his body is preserved in an uniformity of temperament and of motion,—and this through a long period of years,—in defiance not only of all the changes which operate in the material world, but of all his own free-will, consent, prudence, and determination?

and the peculiar constitution of our own being ; together with the near relationship in which we thus stand to Himself, and the great realities of an invisible and eternal world.

If I am not mistaken, I have heard you declare your decided and unfeigned assent to the sublime truths of the above Revelation ; and therefore, it will not be necessary for me to encroach on your time by attempting to confirm your faith on a point of such momentous concern. But, although you entertain no doubts concerning either the authority or importance of that manifestation with which the ALMIGHTY, in His adorable mercy, has graciously vouchsafed to favour us, in relation both to Himself and our dearest interests, as connected with Himself ; yet, possibly, you have never heretofore been led to pay any minute attention to what is developed in it respecting the *immateriality* of the human soul or spirit ; also respecting its nature, dignity, relationship, and eternal destination.

Allow me, then, to suggest to you a few considerations on each of these interesting points, as I find them presented to our notice in the Divine pages of the ETERNAL TRUTH.

I shall begin with the immateriality of the human soul or spirit ; in other words, with its perfect distinction from matter.

On this point it will be sufficient to refer you to the words of the GREAT SAVIOUR, (Matt. x. 28.) where he says, "*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" For how manifest is it from these words, that the DIVINE SPEAKER, in His Divine idea, distinguished between the body and the soul ; and not only distinguished between them, but also adverted to a property of the soul which cannot possibly be predicated of any material organization whatsoever, viz., its *indestructibility* by man ! Of the body, therefore, He says, that men may *kill* it ; but of the soul, that they are *not able* to kill it. And what is this but a

positive and peremptory declaration that the soul is something distinct from the body; and that it is, moreover, endued with an indestructible life, which the body, of itself, does not possess? If you believe, then, the words of JESUS CHRIST, you must of consequence believe also, that you yourself are a compound, consisting of two perfectly distinct principles, the one called soul, and the other body; and that the former of these principles is *immaterial* and *imperishable*, whilst the latter, as being formed out of the elements of the world of nature, is merely *material* and *perishable*; and thus subject to all that decay and destruction of its organization which is a necessary result of its elementary texture and composition.

In the parable, again, of the rich man and Lazarus, we learn from the same DIVINE SPEAKER, that when the latter died, *he was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom*; and that when the former died, *he was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, &c.* How evident is it, from this description, that both the rich man and Lazarus were in possession of something in themselves distinct from matter, and that this something was not affected by the death or destruction of the body? For of Lazarus it is said, that after death, (or the dissolution of the body) *he was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom*; and of the rich man it is said, that when he died, *he was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, &c.* But, is it conceivable that the *material body* of Lazarus was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom? or rather, are not we compelled, both by reason and truth, to conclude, that the material body was at death left behind to rot in a grave, or on the ground; and that what was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom was the *immaterial* and *immortal soul* which had once animated the material and perishable body, but was now set at liberty from its prison, to enjoy itself in a world better suited to the *spirituality* and immateriality of its nature? In the case, too, of the rich man, is it to be supposed that *mere matter* in hell

lifted up its eyes, being in torments, when yet it is expressly said of that matter or bodily covering, that it was *buried*,—by which expression must of course be meant, that it was *left behind in a tomb*; and that, consequently, what lifted up its eyes in hell, being in torments, was the *immaterial* and *spiritual substance*, disengaged from its material husk, and now exposed to all that torment which impenitence, unbelief, and worldly-mindedness never fail to entail, sooner or later, on their miserable subjects?

You see, then, my dear Sir, that neither Revelation nor reason will allow you to *materialize* yourself, by banishing from your constitution the existence of mind or spirit, and thus degrading yourself into the substance of stone, or wood, or some other species of gross elementary matter. On the contrary, both Revelation and reason cry aloud, with an united voice, that a principle superior to matter enters into the composition of every human being. Revelation also teaches concerning this superior principle, that it forms the *real man*; that it survives the decay of the material body; and that, according to its quality, it must hereafter, when it enters upon the great eternal realities of future existence, either be carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom; or, in hell lift up its eyes, being in torment!

But what an awful conclusion is that at which we are now arrived! How consolatory, too, to the true believer! For what reflecting being can endure the idea of *annihilation*? And yet, if man be supposed to be a mere mass of matter, how is it possible for him to believe in its immortality when he beholds it assailed by sickness, and deprived of all its life and activities by death? Let us leave, then, my good friend, the creed of the materialist to be cherished by those unthinking mortals who have no concern about any other world than the present; and who are thus content to feed on the husks of mere worldly and sensual gratifications, without ever attempting to elevate their minds to that better and more

enduring world, with its myriads of delights, for the enjoyment of which they were originally created. But let you and I, being warned by their frightful example, and opening our eyes to the bright light, and our ears to the cheerful sound, and our hearts to the blessed consolation both of rational and of revealed discovery, assert the high privileges and prerogatives bestowed upon us by our MERCIFUL CREATOR; and, claiming our superiority above matter, indulge in the delightful confidence that we possess immaterial and *immortal* souls, as well as material and perishable bodies; and that, by virtue of possessing the former, we stand in a sacred relationship with a HEAVENLY FATHER, and with the *thousand times ten thousand* of the heirs of His eternal kingdom! I appeal to your own feelings in confirmation of the truth of this relationship. For, tell me, now, are not you made sensible, at times, of the power of elevating your thoughts and affections above the cares, concerns, and interests of this lower world? Do not you feel a principle within you which finds a delight in the contemplation of GOD—in a view of the wonders of creation, and of the evident traces of Infinite love and Infinite wisdom in every thing around you? Cannot you think of GOD as often as you please, and do not you perceive a secret and interior joy in thinking of Him? Is not the thought, also, of immortality (a thought of which, it is remarkable, none of the inferior animals are capable), both animating and gratifying to your mind? And can you for a moment suppose that a benevolent GOD would have endowed you with such a faculty of thinking, and of deriving gratification from the thought, unless He had intended, in His adorable mercy, sooner or later, to put you in possession of the grand object of your contemplation and your joy? Away, then, with all your systems of materialism, whether fabricated in the wayward fancies of a Hartley, a Condorcet, a d'Alembert, a Darwin, or a Priestley, or of any other kindred writer. For, what are all such systems but *the spider's web*, of which it is written, "*Their webs shall not*

become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works"? (Isa. lix. 5, 6.) And do you, my friend, recollecting the conclusions of sound reason, and the declarations of a Divine Revelation, and conscious at the same time of a living principle in yourself which pants for immortality, and aspires to the high honour and happiness of being acquainted with its **MAKER**, labour to confirm yourself in the grand discoveries of the gospel; and thus to cover yourself with that "*fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints.*" (Rev. xix. 8.) Let the **ETERNAL TRUTH** thus be exalted in your mind as a *polar star*, for guidance through the tempestuous sea of this world's troubles, cares, and uncertainties; and do you, like a wise pilot, follow its guidance, until it brings you (as it certainly will, if your own imaginations do not counteract its notices) to the *haven* where you would be, by leading you to an everlasting conjunction with your **MERCIFUL CREATOR**, in love, in wisdom, in innocence, well-doing, and peace!

I should now find a peculiar gratification in pursuing this interesting subject, by endeavouring to impress on your mind a due sense not only of the *existence* of that immaterial and immortal spirit which animates the whole and every part of your material body, but also of its *nature*, its *dignity*, its *defilements*, its *destination*; and especially of the methods pointed out in the gospel to cleanse it from all its natural impurities, by renewing it in the lost image and likeness of its **DIVINE CREATOR**, and thus restoring it to the honour and happiness for which it was created; but the consideration of all these points, important as they are, must be deferred to a future opportunity. In the mean time, believe me to remain

Sincerely yours, &c. &c.

Letter II.

On the nature of the human soul, or spirit, as being a spiritual substance and form intended to receive life from God.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have already endeavoured to prove to you, and this on the authority both of reason and Revelation, that what you call yourself, is a *compound*, consisting of an *immaterial soul* and a *material body*; and that thus there is a living principle within you distinct from mere matter. Will you now permit me to suggest what, on the same high authority, I conceive this principle to be; and will you promise me neither to start, nor to be offended, when I avow my unfeigned belief that, in opposition to generally conceived opinions, the human soul or spirit, is a *spiritual substance and form, intended to receive life from God*?

I am well aware that, on this occasion, I neither adopt the language nor the sentiments of what is in general called the *learned world*; which world, nevertheless, in its philosophical school, has exerted its utmost subtlety in the investigation and discussion of the subject under consideration. But what, let me ask, has been the result of all its disquisitions? Are not we told by one school, that the human soul or spirit, is some subtle and active principle like *air*, or *ether*, or *fire*, but of a spiritual nature, and totally destitute of *form*? And does not another school inform us, that this subtle and active principle, like *air*, or *ether*, or *fire*, has *life in itself*, independent of any life which it receives from the GREAT AUTHOR of its being? Thus, if we are to give credit to the speculations of those who have acquired the distinguished and sacred name of philoso-

phers, we are to believe that there is indeed in us a living principle, but that this principle has neither *substance* nor *form*, being only like something of *aerial vapour*; and that, besides, it was originally gifted by its CREATOR with *independent life*, and of course possesses a *life of its own*, which has the power of *willing*, of *thinking*, and of *operating*,—not as a *stream indebted* continually to a DIVINE SOURCE, — but as a *separate fountain*, whose waters *originate in itself*.

But will you allow me to ask, Does this philosophy contain or convey a satisfactory solution of all the difficulties and perplexities connected with an inquiry into the nature of the human soul or spirit? Or rather, is it not, in the highest degree, both unphilosophical, unsatisfactory, untrue, and unintelligible? For, what definite idea can we form of an *active, shapeless, vapour*? And yet, without an idea, how is it possible to apprehend the true and proper nature, either of such a vapour, or indeed of any thing else?

Would you, then, rise above the clouds of obscurity and darkness, in which all speculation on the nature of the human soul or spirit has been heretofore involved? And would you thus feast your intellectual eyes on the discovery of the distinct characteristics of that interior and spiritual part of your constitution, which at once guides, governs, controls, and vivifies the external and material part? You must then believe, as I before intimated, that the human soul or spirit is both a *substance* and a *form*, and that its form also is *human*; and that thus it is an *organized* substance, in itself *void* indeed of *life*, but so created, through the Divine mercy, as to be capable of receiving continual *influx of life from God*, and of exercising that life *freely*, as if it were *its own*.

I do not wish you, however, to receive this definition on the ground of any authority of mine, or indeed of any sanction but that of reason and Revelation; and, therefore, if I shall not trespass too much on your time and patience, I will proceed, in

as summary a way as possible, to prove to you that both reason and Revelation unite their strong testimony in its favour.

I shall begin with the testimony of reason.

And here let me ask, in the first place, Is it not in agreement with all the speculations and conclusions of the best informed rational minds, that whatsoever has *existence* must also have *substance*; and that whatsoever has substance must also have *form*? For, how can we conceive of any thing which is unsubstantial, or of any thing substantial which is at the same time *void of form*? You will tell me, perhaps, that you fully believe, and this on the evidence of reason, that the human soul or spirit is a substance, but you cannot so clearly see, from the same evidence, that it is a form; neither have you any rational apprehension how an immaterial soul or spirit can have a form, and still less what is the nature of that form. But, allow me to ask, Are not you convinced, by the evidence of your senses, that your body has a form; and is it not reasonable to conclude that this form has been produced, not by the body itself, but by some power superior to the body; or, as it may otherwise be expressed, by some *interior* power? Is it not reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that this superior or interior power, which is productive of the material bodily form, has also itself a form; since it is highly credible that there must exist some secret harmony or agreement between every produced *effect* and its producing *cause*; by virtue of which harmony or agreement, the produced effect can possess nothing which did not previously exist in its producing cause? To say, then, that the body has a form, and that the soul or spirit from which it is derived has no form, is to ascribe something to an effect which is not in its cause; and thus, in contradiction to all sound reason, to deny the harmony or agreement necessarily subsisting between *cause* and *effect*. Let me not, however, be understood as asserting that the soul, or producing cause, has *precisely the same form* with the *body*, or produced

effect, for this is far from my intention. It will be sufficient for my purpose to establish the fact, that the soul or spirit, as being the producing cause of body and its form, must be conceived to possess also itself a form; and further, that if the decision of sound reason be consulted, this form must be *human*, yet in a state far more perfect than the human form of the body, because in a degree interior, and thus more elevated.

But I perceive that you still find a difficulty in conceiving an idea of the form of the human soul or spirit; will you, however, allow me to point out to you the cause or ground of this difficulty? Will you allow me, I say, to hint that you have not, heretofore, been sufficiently in the habit of exploring, by rational thought and investigation, *the degrees of life in man*, and thus how man consists of mere forms for the reception of life; and that one form is more interior than another, but that each exists and subsists from another; also that on the dissolution of an inferior or exterior form, the superior or interior form still lives. Thus, the human *will* constitutes one form or degree; the *understanding* another; the *memory* another; *sciences* and the *senses* another; the *faculty of speech* another; and the *faculty of action* another: all of them having a distinct perfection, according to the capacity of *receiving life* from God, whether proximately or more remotely. To this cause or ground of your difficulty, may also be added another,—that you have not, heretofore, been in the habit of reflecting, and of confirming your reflection by rational argument, that there is but *one fountain of life*, and that is GOD; and that all other beings, whether angels, men, or animals, are merely *receivers* of life; and were created for this high and blessed purpose,—that they might receive, and thus *enjoy*, and by enjoyment make manifest, the goodness, wisdom, power, and beneficence of the DIVINE BEING from whom they momentarily receive life. Let me advise you now to accustom yourself to these reflec-

tions, so as to make them familiar to you; and I will then venture to assert, that you will no longer find any difficulty in conceiving an idea of the form of the human soul or spirit. Accustom yourself, I say, to reflect that man, from *first* principles to *last*, or from *inmost* principles of mind to *outermost* principles of matter, is a *complex of forms*; which forms are in such connexion with, and so wonderfully arranged and adapted to, each other, as to be instrumental in effecting the *descent* of life from one to another; and thus of exhibiting it under all its various modifications of action, joy, and delight. Accordingly, you will find that the human will, which is the *first* or *inmost* form, was created to receive and make manifest the life of the Divine love, with all its powers and blessings. The human understanding, again, which is the next *interior* form, was created to receive and make manifest the life of the Divine wisdom, with all its multiplied beauties, splendors, and energies of truth and gratification. The *memory*, also, which is a subordinate and more *exterior* form, was created to be the receptacle or storehouse of all the perceptions, thoughts, and blessednesses communicated to the will and understanding, that so they might be preserved for future use. In like manner, science and the five bodily senses, together with the faculties of speech and of action, are other forms, still more *external*, but yet accommodated to the reception of the principle of life conveyed through the *higher* or *interior* forms; and so accommodated as to become instrumental, not only in effecting man's communication with all the beauties and wonders of outward creation, but in promoting a descent into that creation of the united blessings of the Divine life of love and wisdom, with all their joys. Let me entreat you, I say, to accustom yourself to this view of your own constitution, and of that of every human being, and to confirm it rationally in your own mind; and I will then undertake to say, that you will no longer cherish a moment's doubt respecting the *human*

form of your soul or spirit; and also respecting its possession of a distinct life from that of the body, and of its retention of that life when separated from the body.

But I forget that I am merely writing a *letter*, and not a treatise on *metaphysics*, and, therefore, I will no longer intrude on your time and patience than only to hint that, in conceiving of the above several *degrees* and *forms* which enter into the composition of your own soul or spirit, you are not to suppose that they differ from each other only in point of *purity*, or as the parts of the atmosphere differ from each other according to their respective altitudes, but you are rather to conceive that their difference is comparatively like that of different elements, as *fire, air, water, &c.*, which is such as to render those elements distinct from each other, not according to degrees of purity only, but also of *essence* and *vitality*. The distinction, therefore, between *will* and *understanding*, also between *reason, science, and sense*, is not a distinction of purity only, since no purity of understanding can ever effect an approximation to will, neither can any purity of sense make any approach to science and reason; but it is a distinction grounded in the distinct capacities of each principle to receive the life which is from God; the *will* being capable of receiving *the life of love*; the *understanding, the life of wisdom*; *reason*, the life of the confirmation of the supreme excellence of love and wisdom united; whilst *science* and *sense* are adapted to the reception and enjoyment of every order and degree of inferior goods and truths. Recollect, then, that you contain within yourself a variety of forms adapted to the reception of life from God, in all its several degrees of excellence and of blessing; and whensoever from henceforth you study the works of your favourite metaphysicians, whether Locke, Hartley, Berkeley, Dugald Stuart, or Reid, never forget this distinguishing perfection of your being, which will at once qualify you not only for supplying what is sadly deficient in their respective theories, but for

reading their subtle and ingenious remarks to greater advantage.

Having thus, then, endeavoured to convince you that, in agreement with the testimony of sound and enlightened reason, your soul or spirit is a *substance* and *form created to receive life from God*, I shall now proceed to examine the testimony of Revelation, or what the WORD OF GOD teaches us to believe on the same important subject.

And first, in regard to the assertion that the human soul or spirit is a substance and form.

On this point, it must be confessed that the sacred oracles do not supply us with any *express testimony*; because we never find it asserted in *direct terms*, that the human soul or spirit is either a substance or a form. Nevertheless, what is deficient in express testimony, and in direct terms, is abundantly supplied by *implication*; in other words, by the meaning involved in a variety of qualities and properties which, in the WORD OF GOD throughout, are ascribed to man's soul or spirit. Thus we read perpetually of the soul or spirit *praising God, blessing God, waiting on God, trusting in God, speaking unto God, thirsting for God, being joyful in God, &c.* (see the Psalms throughout); from all which distinct acts it must be manifest to every reflecting mind, that the soul or spirit of man is *a substance*, for how else can it be supposed capable of such distinguished energies? For what shall we say is a substance, but something in which are inherent certain qualities and properties? If, then, the human soul or spirit possesses the wonderful qualities and properties of praising, of blessing, of waiting on, of trusting in, of speaking to, of thirsting for, and of being joyful in God, &c. &c.,—we are compelled, by all propriety of language, to call it a substance; and a substance, too, of a most extraordinary kind, unless we deny to *soul* and *spirit* what we grant every day to *body* and *matter*. In respect also to the *form* of this substance, it might be sufficient to assert that, inasmuch as the substance itself is

established on the authority of the sacred Scriptures, a *form*, also, must be established on the same authority; since, as was before observed, it is impossible to conceive an idea of a substance void of form. On this point, however, we are not left for guidance to the uncertainty of metaphysical speculation, because it has pleased the Divine mercy and providence to fix our faith on a sure and more solid basis, and this by the record of a most curious and singular fact, as we find it described in the 28th chapter of the first Book of Samuel. For in this chapter we are informed, that Saul, when he *received no answer from the LORD, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets*, went to consult a woman who had a *familiar spirit*, on which occasion the woman asked him,—“*Whom shall I bring up unto thee?*” And he said, “*Bring me up Samuel.*” Accordingly we read, that Samuel appeared to the woman, and when Saul asked,—“*What form is he of?*” She said,—“*An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel.*” (Verses 6.—15.) From this history, then, we learn that the soul or spirit of Samuel, when it appeared to the above woman, had a form, and that this form, too, was that of an old man, or a *human* form; by which circumstance every doubt is dissipated respecting the form proper to the soul or spirit of every other human being. For if, according to the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, the soul or spirit of Samuel, after its separation from the material body, was in a human form, we are sanctioned, by the highest possible authority, in the conclusion, that the soul or spirit of every other human being must also be in a human form; unless it be supposed (what is in the highest degree improbable) that the soul or spirit of Samuel differed, in this respect, from the souls or spirits of all other men.

But the Divine testimony on this interesting subject, we find, is not limited to one solitary fact, since, in the book entitled “*The Revelation of St. John, the divine,*” we are supplied with

an additional proof that the proper form of the human soul or spirit is no other than human. For, in this wonderful book we read how the favoured Apostle and Evangelist, when his spiritual eyes were opened to behold the great realities of the eternal world, was attended by an angelic being; and how, on one occasion, when he fell at the *feet* of this being, with intent to worship him, he was checked in his purpose by these words, "*See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS.*" (Rev. xix. 10.) From these words, therefore, we learn that this angelic being, who now appeared to John, had formerly been a *human* being; and that the only difference between his human and angelic state was this, that in the latter he was divested of his *material body*, and was become a *pure spirit*; so that when he appeared to the Apostle, he was seen in the *form* and *aspect* of a pure spirit; in other words, in the form and aspect which his soul or spirit had during its abode in the body. What eye, then, cannot see that this form or aspect was human, since it is evident, from the repeated testimony of the sacred Scriptures, that whensoever angels or angelic beings have appeared to men, they were always seen in a human form — thus, as *men*, — with this only difference, that they were divested of *material* bodies? Accordingly, in the gospel according to Mark, the angel who appeared to Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, in the sepulchre, after the LORD's resurrection, is called a *man*; for it is written, "*And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment.*" (Mark xvi. 5.) To the same purport, when the LORD, at His ascension, was taken up into heaven, the two supernatural beings who appeared on the occasion, and announced to the wondering disciples the certainty of their LORD's second advent, are called *men*; for thus we find it written, "*While they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said,—Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye*

gazing up into heaven? this same JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 10, 11.) There is every reason then to conclude, from the above testimony, that the angelic form is *human*; and that, consequently, the form of the soul or spirit of every man who becomes an angel, is also *human*.

Taking it, therefore, for granted that you are now fully convinced, on the high authority of the sacred Oracles, that the soul or spirit of every man is both a substance and a form; and also, that this form is human; I shall beg leave to detain you only for a moment longer, whilst I endeavour to prove, from the same high authority, that this human form was originally created to *receive life* from GOD; and that, consequently, it possesses no life in itself but what it receives *every instant* from the DIVINE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

In establishing the truth of this proposition, it may be sufficient to call to your recollection the following memorable circumstance, as you will find it recorded in the original history of man's creation, and as it is thus expressed, "*And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [lives]; and man became a living soul.*" (Gen. ii. 7.) For, from this record it is manifest, that man originally derived life from GOD; and, therefore, the only question is, whether this life from GOD was imparted to him as his own, *independent* of its DIVINE SOURCE, or, as his own by virtue of its *continual connexion* with that Source? Now, whatsoever doubt or difficulty may occur in deciding on this question from the words of the above record, it vanishes and is totally dissipated, when we consult the bright light presented to our view under the dispensation of the gospel. For, when the GREAT SAVIOUR said to His disciples, "*I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: he that abideth in ME, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without [severed from] ME ye can do nothing.*" (John xv. 5.) and when

He declares further, "*I am the resurrection and the life :*" (John xi. 25.) and again, "*I am the way, the truth, and THE LIFE :*" (John xiv. 6.) what shall we say is the plain intelligible language of these combined declarations? Do they not speak, with an authority that cannot be gainsayed, and with a clearness which cannot be disputed, that JESUS CHRIST, the *manifested God*, or the GOD made known and visible in a DIVINE HUMANITY, is the SUPREME FOUNTAIN OF ALL LIFE; and that this life is imparted to mankind, as the life of a *vine* is imparted to its *branches*; consequently, as a life derived momentarily from its DIVINE SOURCE? For, what eye cannot see that the branches of a vine, and indeed of every other tree, have in them no life, and can have none, but what they receive perpetually from the parent stock? If, then, the relationship subsisting between GOD and His creatures be similar to that which subsists between a tree and its branches, (and who can doubt a fact established by so high an authority) then the question respecting the *life* of man, is set at rest for ever: because we are compelled to call it, not *independent* life, but life continually derived from another; thus, life which is in perpetual connexion with its DIVINE FOUNTAIN.

And here allow me to remark, that the above distinction between independent life and derived life, supplies us with a grand characteristic by which to discriminate between the CREATOR and the *creature*; and a characteristic, too, which at once humbles and exalts, abases and ennobles us. For, how plain is it to see, that the proper distinguishing characteristic of the CREATOR is the possession of *independent life*, whilst the proper distinguishing characteristic of the *creature* is the reception of *derived life*! JESUS CHRIST, accordingly, in speaking of the FATHER, or the ETERNAL Source of all being, describes Him as *having life in Himself*, consequently independent life; and to prove that He Himself, as to His Divine essence, was that FATHER; and that this Divine essence was finally to be fully united to His human essence, so that both

were to be One; He adds, "*So hath He given to the SON to have life in Himself.*" (John v. 26.) The interesting conclusion, therefore, is, that there is but one Fountain of life, and that is the LORD GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, in His DIVINE HUMANITY; and that all other beings, whether angels, men, or the inferior animals, are, at their best estate, merely the receivers of life from that Fountain.

Having thus, then, endeavoured to prove to you, and I hope successfully and satisfactorily, that, in agreement with the testimony both of reason and Revelation, your immortal soul or spirit is a substance and form, created to receive life perpetually from GOD, I should now proceed to point out to you some of the interesting results to be deduced from the truth of this proposition; but this must be the subject of some future communication. In the mean time believe me to remain, as usual,

Ever yours, &c. &c.

Letter XXX.

On the peculiarly important situation in which every individual of the human race is placed, as a receiver of life momentarily from GOD, in consequence of the danger to which he is exposed of being deceived by the appearance that this life is his own, and self-derived.

MY DEAR SIR,

Having, I trust, convinced you, by the contents of my two former letters, that, under the outward covering of your material body, you possess an immaterial and immortal soul or spirit which is a real substance and form, created to receive life from GOD; I should feel myself greatly wanting in the regard I owe to you, as well as in the duty which that regard so powerfully imposes on me, if I did not now proceed to give you a few words of cautionary counsel, respecting the Divine origin of the life with which you feel yourself animated; and in regard also to the conduct, on your part, which will be necessary to preserve it from defilement, from perversion, and from destruction; and thus to improve it to all those blessed purposes and ends for which it is given.

Allow me, then, to observe in the first place, that, notwithstanding the positive evidence which both reason and Revelation supply, of the astonishing fact that your life is imparted momentarily from GOD; and that you are thus dependent on your GREAT CREATOR, every instant, for its continuance; yet your senses, and the persuasions to which they give birth, will be for ever opposing that evidence, by endeavouring to seduce you into a belief that your life is, as

it **indeed** *appears* to be, absolutely *your own*, and totally *independent* of any foreign source. Nor is this circumstance at **all** to be wondered at, inasmuch as the senses, we find, are **perpetually** liable to be imposed on by *appearances*, and to **decide** accordingly, whether in explaining the phenomena of **nature** or of life. Thus, in regard to the phenomena of nature; it **is** the ordinary fallacy of the senses, that the sun performs a **diurnal** revolution round the earth, and that when he *appears* to **rise** and set, he *really* rises and sets; nor is it an easy **matter** to correct this fallacy, even by demonstrations of the **most** enlightened philosophy. It is, again, an ordinary fallacy of **the** senses, that the *eye sees*, and that the *ear hears*; when **yet**, a sound and sober philosophy teaches that the mind alone **sees** and hears, and that the corporeal eye and ear are mere **instruments** for the conveyance of sight and sound to the **mind**. The case is precisely the same in regard to the phenomena of *life*. A *sensual* man, therefore, or one who is **under** the guidance and government of *sense*, will of necessity **contend**, in spite of all argument to the contrary, whether **grounded** in reason or Revelation, that his life is *his own*, and *independent*, since such is the appearance, and appearance is **what** on all occasions influences and determines his judgment.

But, methinks I see you collecting all your powers of argumentation, and setting them in battle array against the representation which I have here stated, of the delusion imposed by the senses, and especially of the fallacy which they induce in regard to your continual reception of life from God. You contend, therefore, that had it been a matter of any great importance for you to believe in such reception, the Divine providence of the MOST HIGH would surely have so constructed the *senses* that, instead of opposing your belief, they would have united all the force of their testimony in confirming it; and you would thus have been exposed to no danger of seduction, but would have embraced the salutary and edifying sentiment without difficulty, and particularly without

the regret of thinking that the difficulty was excited principally by "*the foes of your own household.*"

Your reasoning is exactly what I anticipated, and, therefore, I am the better prepared to reply to it, by observing, that, in the above instance, no blame at all attaches to your senses, since they only do what the DIVINE PROVIDENCE ordained them to do; viz., confirm the appearance that your life is *your own, independent of any other source.* For such, it is manifest, is the divine will and intention respecting the senses, inasmuch as, notwithstanding the eternal truth that all life is from GOD, yet it is necessary that this life from GOD, should appear to be man's own, and that he should exercise it *as his own*; since, otherwise, it would be impossible for him to exercise it *freely*, and if he could not exercise it freely, it would be equally impossible for him to exercise it with *happiness and enjoyment* to himself. For, let me appeal, my good friend, to yourself, and ask you, whether you think your life would be any gratification to you, if divested of the *semblance* of its being your own? Would not you, in such case, feel *perpetual constraint*, attended with an uneasy consciousness that you were *another's*, and *not yourself*, and that, consequently, you were not a creature of freedom, but of compulsion? In the exercise, for instance, of your reason and of your will, what possible satisfaction could you find in it, unless it was attended with the sensation that both your reason and your will were your own, and that you had thus the liberty to use them *as your own*? If, then, it be necessary for your happiness that you should be a *free agent*, it is at least equally necessary that your life should *appear* to be *your own*, and *underived*, even at the very moment that both reason and Revelation assure you to the contrary. Let not, therefore, the senses be blamed for suggesting a fallacy which is pregnant with so many advantages to yourself, but rather let the ALMIGHTY be adored for His astonishing providence in their constitution and operation; by virtue of which you are rendered capable of

exercising and enjoying your life freely, as if it was your own, and yet of referring it, at the same time, to another, that is to say, to God, as the continual unmerited effect of His adorable love and bounty !

Besides, I am persuaded your own discernment will enable you to discover that the faculty of *freewill*,—that high and super-eminent gift with which man is endowed, and of which I have frequently heard you speak in terms of the most unqualified eulogy,—is connected, in a great measure, with the fallacy of the senses of which I am now speaking. For, if no such fallacy was in operation, in other words, if your senses did not suggest the idea that your life is your own, *independent* and *undervived*; and if, consequently, they did not tempt you to transgress the laws both of Divine truth and Divine goodness, where, let me ask, would, in such case, be the *freewill* of which you boast? For, can freewill be said to exist where there is no *opposition* of principles? Does not this admirable faculty consist in *choosing* either what is good and true, in preference to what is evil and false, or what is evil and false, in preference to what is good and true? If, then, you had no temptation from your senses to believe and to do what is evil and false, you would, of course, be *necessarily* kept in a belief and practice of what is good and true; and how can you reconcile such necessity with the idea of freewill? Supposing, for instance, that in Paradise there had been no *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and no prohibition against eating of its fruit, and that Adam and Eve had thus been exempt from all trial and temptation; and, consequently, had been *necessarily* exempt from all evil and error; how, in such case, could they be said to have had freewill? How, therefore, in such case, could they have been the subjects of praise or blame; of commendation or of condemnation; in short, of happiness or of misery, both of which, there is every reason to believe, are in the closest and most indissoluble connexion with man's *freedom*? Now, what the *tree of the knowledge of good and*

evil was to Adam and Eve, that your *senses* are to you ; and the *prohibition*, in each instance, is the same, and sanctioned, too, by the same penalty ; since *death*, in both cases, is the declared result of *eating of the forbidden fruit*. But, then, it ought never to be forgotten that, in both cases, the benefit to be derived from the trial is, at least, equal to the mischief ; since the trial involves in it the exercise of freedom ; consequently, the sole qualification for bliss, because the sole characteristic either of responsibility, of obedience, or of duty.

Let not, then, any sentiment of indignation or resentment be excited in your bosom against your bodily senses, as if, by the fallacies which they are perpetually presenting, and by the temptations to which they continually expose you, you were a sufferer from their operation. For, so far from this being the case, I will be bold to assure you, that you have every thing to hope both from their treachery and their seduction, provided you maintain your guard, by consulting and obeying those interior powers and principles with which the **ALMIGHTY**, in His mercy, and by virtue of the life which He momentarily communicates, has been pleased to gift you.

It is true that your senses are for ever attempting to impose upon you, and thus to extinguish all consideration of duty, whether owing to **GOD** or man. But then it is equally true that you have power and light from **GOD** to detect the imposition, and thus to assert your dominion over your treacherous organs. And what, on this occasion, shall we say will be the happy consequence, provided you maintain your ground by taking part with **GOD** against those treacherous organs ? Will not those organs, in such case, supply the laurels of victory ? Will not they, by bringing your *freewill* into exercise, not only make manifest to you the incomparable value of that high faculty, but tend, at the same time, to increase your bliss, by demonstrating to you the nearness, the omnipotence, the mercy, and tender regard of your **HEAVENLY FATHER** ? And will not the snares and deceptions to which

you are exposed by your connexion with *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, contribute finally to give an additional flavour and relish to the fruit of *the tree of life*?

But here, perhaps, you will contend, and say that, provided man's general conduct be pure and unblamable, it is then of little or no importance whether he believes his life to be *underived* and *independent*, or believes it, on the contrary, to be *a living stream flowing continually from its DIVINE FOUNTAIN*. True; but here arises an interesting question,—Is it possible for man's general conduct to be pure and unblamable, so long as he remains confirmed in a belief that his life is underived and independent? For, can it be supposed that such a belief will have no influence on a man's actions? On the contrary, will it not *necessarily* affect his ways and manners both of *thinking* and of *acting*? since, if he believes his life to be underived and independent, he must of course believe his science, his reason, his intellect, and his will, to be underived and independent also. He must thus conclude, that in all the common concerns of life he is left to be the *sole arbitrator* of right and wrong; — that all his powers and faculties are *absolutely* his own; — that the ALMIGHTY, so far from being *present* with him in the deep centre of his being, by virtue of momentarily communicated life, is at an immeasurable *distance*; and that he is, consequently, at liberty to follow his own inclinations, without any check from a witness and monitor so near to him as a life-giving GOD.

But, perhaps, this point may be set in a stronger and clearer light by examples; and, therefore, for the moment, let us conceive two young men, whom for the present I will call *Callidus* and *Sophron*, entering together on the great journey of human life; the former of whom had been educated in a belief that when GOD created man, He endowed him with a power of propagating not only forms *receptive* of life, but *life itself*; whilst the latter had been instructed, on the contrary, that man has no power at all to propagate life, but only the forms

receptive of life. The former, viz., *Callidus*, of consequence regarded his life as *his own*, independent of any Divine Source ; whereas the latter, viz., *Sophron*, whilst he, in like manner, regarded his life as his own, conceived it to be derived continually from GOD, as a stream in connexion with its fountain-head.

What now, let me ask, would in your judgment be the probable effect of the different persuasions of these two young men, as manifested in their conduct, or in the general tenor of their lives ?

Callidus, we have seen, regards his *life* as something independent, and unconnected with the life of God. Will he not, then, of course, think you, regard his talents, his affections, his thoughts, his words, his works, his delights, &c. according to the same idea ; and thus consider all these things as the results of some independent faculty, inherent in himself, rather than as the manifestations and blessed fruits of that life which is continually imparted to him from above ? Will he not, consequently, be in danger of attributing to *himself* what properly belongs to the DIVINE BOUNTY ? We will suppose that his talents are of a superior order, so as to entitle him to distinction, by commanding the respect and admiration of all who know him. But lo ! that very respect and admiration, in consequence of being claimed as his *own due*, when it ought to have been referred to the DIVINE AUTHOR and GIVER of his talents, intoxicates his mind with pride and vanity, and thus becomes in him the source of crimes and of misery. We will suppose, again, that he is celebrated for what the world calls *virtues*, because he is liberal, generous, and zealous on all occasions of promoting the welfare of others, whether publicly or in private. It is well : but what shall we think or say, if these virtues also are claimed as *his own* ; and he is thus found to rob the ALMIGHTY of the honour due to his HOLY NAME, as the sole proprietor of all virtue ? Will not, in such case, the very virtues of *Callidus* draw down upon

his head a greater condemnation, by leading him to exalt himself more than GOD; and thus to bow his knee in the idolatry of *self-worship*, instead of bending it in acceptable worship before the throne of the INFINITE and the ETERNAL? Yet, if *Callidus* calls his life his own and independent, how can it be expected that he will call his virtues by any other name? How, therefore, can it be expected that either in his affections, his thoughts, his words, his works, his delights, or in any other properties either of mind or body, he will look up to any Being above himself as the *prime* author, agent, director, and controller? Besides, if *Callidus* calls his life his own, instead of regarding it under its proper character, as the life of GOD *in* him, is it to be supposed that he can attribute to it all that high value, sanctity, and importance, which its proper character involves? Is it to be supposed, too, that he will be watchful, as he otherwise would be, to guard the HOLY THING within him from perversion and from defilement, that so it may grow, like *the grain of mustard seed, into a tree, and the birds of heaven may come and lodge in the branches thereof?* It is evident, then, from the example of *Callidus*, that as nothing can be more untrue, so nothing can be more dangerous and defiling, than the idea that man's life is his own, *self-begotten* and *independent*; consequently not as a stream from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN, with which it is in perpetual connexion, but as a separate spring, possessing virtues, qualities, and properties of its own, which, in like manner, are severed from every other source.

But the truth for which I am here contending, will be seen in still fuller lustre and importance, if we turn our attention to young *Sophron*, whose education, it was shown, was formed and conducted on this principle, that his life, though apparently his own, and imparted with the manifest design that it should *seem* to be his own, is yet a continual derivation from the DIVINE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, and in perpetual connexion with that fountain.

Observe, then, the countenance of this young man, and you will see it always composed, yet full of energy; serious, yet cheerful; intelligent, but perfectly free from the vanity and conceit of intelligence: and all this in consequence of his being continually impressed with a devout sense of his momentary connexion with the DIVINE FATHER of his being, by virtue of the *living principle* which he momentarily derives from that HEAVENLY PARENT. Extend now your observation to the daily current of his affections and thoughts, to the exercise of his talents, to his words, his works, his delights; in short, to the whole circle both of his mental and bodily operations, and you will find that all is influenced by some high consideration, grounded in the consciousness that he is not left for a moment *self-dependent*, since his life, with all its activities, is derived from *another*; whilst to himself belongs nothing but *reaction*, or a dutiful compliance with the imparted vitality. *Sophron*, therefore, though possessed of high intellectual powers, which might entitle him to eminence in any situation of life, and though distinguished, too, by splendid virtues, manifested in a regular course of the most disinterested charity, and of strict attention to duty under every relationship in life, is as humble as he is intelligent, as lowly as he is virtuous. And would you know the reason? It is because he never appropriates to *himself* either intelligence or virtue; but, on the contrary, refers those excellencies, and every other, to the DIVINE SPRING in himself from whence they flow. In this respect, therefore, more especially, the religion of *Sophron*, and the worship which it enjoins, differ essentially from the religion of *Callidus*, and from the worship which he pays to the GREAT AUTHOR of his being. For *Callidus*, in all his addresses to the ALMIGHTY, looks up to a GOD *out of* himself: whereas *Sophron*, in his addresses, looks up to a GOD *within himself*. *Callidus*, again, in the exercise of his reason, and in the discharge of the common business and duties of life, rather separates himself at a *distance* from the FATHER of his being,

in consequence of regarding his reason, his talents, and his virtues as things separate: whereas *Sophron*, in the exercise of his reason, and in the discharge of the common business and duties of life, finds his GOD *nearer* to him than at other times; because in the use of his talents, whether in thought or work, he considers GOD as the *principal* agent, and himself only as the *instrumental* one. Still *Sophron*, notwithstanding his regard to GOD as a principal agent, and to himself only as an instrumental one, feels himself in possession of the same freedom of operation with *Callidus*, and even of a greater, inasmuch as it is a prime article of his faith that he ought, on all occasions, to exert himself *freely as of himself*, yet under the secret, inward acknowledgment that all his power to do so is from *another*. But what, above every other consideration, marks the superior excellence of the faith of *Sophron*, is the high value and importance which it imparts to *his life*, and the consequent watchfulness which it induces to guard that vital and holy principle from defilement, from disorder, and from death. For, being accustomed to view his life as a continual gift from the MOST HIGH GOD, his mind is impressed with a deep sense of the inestimable treasure thus momentarily committed to his care by his HEAVENLY FATHER, compared with which, all the wealth and glory of this world are but as empty baubles. On this *treasure*, therefore, his inward eyes are continually fixed, as on that "pearl of great price" for which the wise "merchantman selleth all that he hath, and buyeth it;" (Matt. xiii. 46.) and his grand, his daily study is to buy this pearl: in other words, to make it his own, by incorporating it into all his affections, thoughts, purposes, and ends of life. For he is well aware that his *senses*, and especially the powers of darkness, who are in communication with his senses, are ever eager to lessen the value of that *pearl* by tarnishing its lustre; and not only so, but are intent also on its destruction, by leading its infatuated possessor to forget, to despise, to defile, and to annihilate it.

It would be endless, my excellent friend, to enumerate all

the advantages by which the faith of *Sophron* claims a decided superiority over the faith of *Callidus*; and thus proves to a demonstration, that the persuasion that man's life is a continual gift, and not a principle inherent in himself, is not only true in speculation, but of the first importance also in practice. I shall not, therefore, detain you at present any longer on this subject, than only to observe, that the situation of every individual human being, at this day, in regard to his eternal destination, is precisely the same with that of *Adam* and *Eve* in Paradise; and that, consequently, he is no sufferer by the transgression of those *first* offenders, but only by his own transgression; or so far as he also listens and yields, like them, to the seducing language of the *serpent*. For, how plain is it to see, from what has been already said, that in every man's *intellectual garden* are still planted *two trees*, the one of *life*, and the other of the *knowledge of good and evil*; and that he has still power from GOD, by virtue of his freewill, to eat of the former tree, and to reject the temptation to taste the fruit of the latter! It is true indeed that, in consequence of hereditary evil, and the accumulation of disorder, by which both our voluntary and intellectual faculties are thus tainted, and their forms distorted, the fascinations of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, aided by the serpentine cunning of the spirits of darkness, have acquired at this day a more powerful and alarming ascendancy than at the period of the first creation. But, then, it is equally true that, in consequence of the redemption wrought by the GREAT SAVIOUR, and the fuller communication of Divine strength imparted through the GLORIFIED HUMANITY of that INCARNATE GOD, the ability to resist those fascinations is proportionably increased; so that the *equilibrium* is still preserved, and we are thus *free* and at *full liberty* to be the arbitrators of our own eternal lot, either by yielding to or resisting the powers of seduction. Let you and I, then, my good friend, only look to that GLORIOUS REDEEMER, as we are kindly invited to do, and humbly beg of Him the grace to keep us in the pure and blessed path of His most holy command-

ments ; and we shall then assuredly experience, to our unspeakable joy, and with an evidence incontrovertible, that the gates of the garden of Eden are still open, and that, as we enter in, we shall find, and may eat of, *the tree of life in the midst* ; agreeable to the gracious promise of that REDEEMER, — “ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of GOD.” (Rev. ii. 7.) Thus shall we be taught, by demonstrative testimony in our own bosoms, that we have lost nothing by the sin of our first parents ; but that, on the contrary, if we are faithful, we may be *gainers* by it, inasmuch as that sin hath been instrumental in bringing into manifestation and operation a greater fulness of the Divine mercy and truth, by virtue of which a more abundant communication of heavenly graces and blessings may be opened to us ; agreeable to the declaration of the GOOD SHEPHERD, where He says of His sheep, — “ I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it MORE ABUNDANTLY.” (John x. 10.)

Having thus, I trust, convinced you of the importance of your situation as a momentary receiver of life from GOD, and of the imminent danger to which you are exposed by calling that life *your own*, and thus exercising it as *independent* life, I shall now leave you to your own reflections on the interesting subject, yet not without the hope of being able to resume it at a future opportunity. In the mean time I shall not fail to pray earnestly that the ALMIGHTY may be pleased to bless the contents of this letter to your eternal good ; and thus to teach you that heaven and hell, life and death, the blessing and the curse, are all of them within your reach, and all of them likewise soliciting your acceptance : so that to you is extended the full force of the Divine and ever memorable words, — “ I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” (Deut. xxx. 19.)

I remain, yours, &c. &c.

Letter IV.

On the progressive and gradual operation of the life of GOD in the soul or spirit of man, from its first commencement in the mother's womb, to the completion of man's growth in the several degrees of life, called corporeal, natural, rational, spiritual, and celestial.

MY DEAR SIR,

If the contents of my former letters on the human soul or spirit, have made that impression upon you which it was my ardent wish and devout prayer they should make, by convincing you that you possess within yourself a spiritual substance and form, momentarily receptive of life from GOD ; and that what you call your own life is thus, as it were, a continual stream from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN ; you will then naturally be led to inquire concerning the nature and properties of that vital principle by which you are animated. Perhaps, too, on your first view of the subject, you will find yourself perplexed by its intricacies, and at length nearly lost in a labyrinth of doubts and conjectures. For, it is more than probable, that whenever you begin to reflect seriously on the term, *life from GOD*, you will be led to conclude that it involves in it the idea of something *Omnipotent* : and that, consequently, it must, sooner or later, effect its own purposes without any regard to the agency of man. Possibly, too, you may be betrayed into the persuasion that since life from GOD must of necessity be, in itself, both *pure* and *holy*, therefore, you also, as a receiver of that life, must of necessity be pure and holy also. Or lastly, you may perhaps ask, Why does not GOD so entirely rule and control man by the *life* which He imparts, as to keep man in a

perpetual state of innocence and enjoyment, without the possibility of declining from that state by lapsing into sin and misery?

I am well aware that some such thoughts as the above will force themselves on your mind, from the first moment that you begin to take into serious consideration the above term,—*life from God*. Allow me, however, to suggest on the occasion, what I am persuaded your own good sense will dispose you both to believe and confirm, that the ALMIGHTY, in all His operations, is bound by the laws of His own Divine order; since to act contrary to those laws would be to act contrary to Himself, which is a thing impossible. The single question, then, is, What do the laws of Divine order require, with a view to render man a subject of innocence and bliss?

In reply to this question, I am sure you will agree with me in the confident assertion, that it is absolutely impossible for man either to be innocent or blessed unless he be a *free agent*; since if he be not a free agent, he must then be a *compelled agent*; and in compulsion there can neither exist innocence or blessedness: at least, not such innocence and blessedness as are the proper distinguishing characteristics of a human being. God might, indeed, by compulsion, have preserved man from sin, and kept him also in a state of natural enjoyment like that which is proper to the brute creation; but how plain is it to see that such compelled goodness, and such compelled enjoyment, are perfectly distinct from the goodness and enjoyment to which man is called, and for the attainment of which he is endowed with every necessary qualification? Taking it, therefore, for granted, that the laws of Divine order require that man should be gifted with *freedom of will*, and consequent freedom of operation, as the only proper ground in which either human innocence or human happiness can be implanted and grow, it remains now only to inquire how, or by what means, this freedom was to be attained and secured. And here I would ask, Was it possible to gift man with such free-

dom, unless he was first gifted with a life *apparently his own* ; which life, in consequence of such appearance, would expose him to trial and danger, by tempting him to believe that it was not only apparently, but *really* his own ; and that, thus, he was an *independent* being, capable at once of guiding, of governing, and of gratifying himself ? For, how can man be *spiritually free*, unless he be acted upon both by good and evil ; or, what is the same thing, by truth and error ? For, supposing him to be acted upon by good and truth *alone*, he must then be *necessarily* the subject of good and truth ; consequently, not a *free* subject : as, on the other hand, supposing him to be acted on by evil and error *alone*, in this case also he must be a creature of *necessity*, and not of *choice*, because he must necessarily be under the tyrannical rule both of evil and error. Mankind, therefore, cannot possibly be placed in a state of spiritual freedom (by which freedom is meant the freedom of choosing either good or evil, either truth or error), unless they be first placed in a state of *equilibrium* between good and evil, between truth and error ; and be gifted, at the same time, with the faculty of determining themselves in any direction by virtue of their own *free choice*.

Taking, then, these premises along with us, let us now turn our attention to that adorable, wonderful, and most merciful providence of the ALMIGHTY, by virtue of which, mankind, from the beginning, have been gifted with a life *apparently* their own ; and thus placed in a state of trial and of danger, and all this for the blessed purpose of endowing them with spiritual freedom ; consequently, of qualifying them for the attainment of eternal innocence, peace, and blessedness, through conjunction with the SUPREME SOURCE of life and of every good.

Now, it is evident that the first state of existence into which mankind, in all ages of the world, have been introduced, is of the above description ; inasmuch as it is a state of life *apparently* their own, and thus a state of trial and of danger. For,

the first state of man's existence is what is commonly called his *natural* state; or that state into which he is first born here below, and in which he continues for a longer or shorter period, until he acquires the capacity of distinguishing between good and evil, between truth and error, and of forming his life accordingly. The Apostle accordingly testifies to this effect, when he says,—“That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual.” (1 Cor. xv. 46.) You fancy, perhaps (as every man must fancy who judges only from *appearances*), that this natural birth is a product solely from natural parents, being begotten by the natural father, and conceived and born by the natural mother. But allow me, on this occasion, to observe that natural parents have no power to produce *life*; they can only supply *forms* adapted to the *reception* of life; the father, the *spiritual* form, or what is commonly called the *soul* or *spirit*; and the mother the *material* form, or what is commonly called the *body*. Into these forms life from GOD immediately enters; or, as it is expressed in the book of creation, “The LORD GOD breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life; and he became a living soul.” (Gen. ii. 7.) The first access, then, of the ALMIGHTY to every man is in the mother's womb; agreeable to the Divine declaration,—“I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art my GOD from my mother's belly.” (Psalm xxii. 10.) And again,—“Thus saith JEHOVAH that made thee, and formed thee from the womb.” (Isaiah xlv. 2, 24.)

Behold here, then, the first rudiments of a *living soul* and of a *material body*, in every individual of the human race! Behold, too (and let the view excite at once your astonishment and adoration) how the ALMIGHTY is ever present and ever operative in those rudiments; to the intent that He may finally create a human being, capable of enjoying a life *apparently his own*, and at the same time, by virtue of the *freewill* with which he is perpetually gifted, capable of referring that life to its proper, its Divine source, and thus of enjoying it, with a

hundred-fold increase of blessedness, as the *real property* of his HEAVENLY FATHER and his GOD! But it may be useful to consider, more attentively and minutely, the progress of this new and wonderful creation, in which the ETERNAL, the INFINITE, the OMNIPOTENT GOD is momentarily at work. I shall not, however, detain you with an inquiry into the mysteries of the Divine operation in the mother's womb, previous to the birth, which is to make that mother forget "*her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world;*" because your own discernment will enable you to see clearly, that in the gradual process of the formation of the infant body,—that most astonishing of all mechanism, whether viewed in the whole or in all its parts,—the natural father and mother of the babe are mere *instruments*; whilst the HEAVENLY FATHER, by virtue of His *inspired life*, is the *principal* designer and operator. For, what human understanding can be so grossly blind as not to discern that the beautiful symmetry of the body of a child; the orderly arrangement of its varied organs and members; the adaptation of one to the other; and especially that combined harmony by which all are directed to the accomplishment of the same grand end and purpose; cannot possibly be the results of any contrivance, skill, and operation, either of the one natural parent who begets, or of the other who conceives and cherishes in her womb the nascent offspring? I am persuaded, therefore, that on this occasion you will unite your voice with that of revealed wisdom; and, seeing how the mercy and omnipotence of the GREAT FATHER of all flesh commence their grand work of man's first creation, and continue it for a period of nine months, in the bowels of his natural mother, you will exclaim with joy and thankfulness, in the words of the inspired writer of old, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture!" (Psalm c. 3.)

Taking it, then, for granted that you are fully convinced of a divine, supernatural operation, which unremittingly exerts

itself in the formation of every infant during its hidden residence in the mother's womb; allow me now to call your attention to the gradual development and process of the same operation from the moment that this infant begins to breathe the air, and to be affected by the objects of this lower world. And here, let me ask, What think you is that power or principle by virtue of which the several distinct senses of *seeing*, *hearing*, *tasting*, *smelling*, and of the *touch*, are by degrees opened in the new-born child? It is the height of absurdity to say that the child himself opens them; and it is equally contradictory to common sense and reason to assert that they are opened by surrounding objects. We are compelled, then, to confess that they are opened and rendered operative, in consequence of a latent principle of life *within* the child; and that this principle is no other than the life from GOD of which we have been speaking, and which can alone explain to us, in a rational and satisfactory manner, the stupendous birth of the sensitive part of our being.

But, behold! a thousand other wonders present themselves to our observation, alike inexplicable, unless we take into account the Divine activity and fruitfulness of that *vitality* from GOD which first forms us in the womb, and afterwards adds to that formation by imparting to us the joys and delights of sensitive life. For, lo! no sooner are the *five doors* of sensation opened, by which we are rendered capable of holding communication with external objects, than those objects are admitted into the mind under the form of ideas; which ideas are at first stored up in the memory, and being thence afterwards selected, as occasion requires, become the future materials for the composition of those astonishing principles called thought, reflection, and understanding. You fancy, perhaps, as many great philosophers have done before you, that external objects possess the power of impressing the above ideas; and that *matter* thus operates upon *mind*, in consequence of some inherent quality with which it is gifted for that purpose.

But are you aware that, according to this hypothesis, you render the human mind the mere creature of *material activity*, and at the same time assign to matter a principle which, in the nature of things, it never did or can inherit? For, *passivity*, not activity, is the proper characteristic of matter; and to deny this axiom, is to introduce a dreadful confusion of thought, by confounding all distinction between matter and spirit.

Here, then, if you are disposed to open your eyes, or rather to suffer them to be opened, to the bright light both of rational and revealed truth, you may discover at once the origin of all your ideas; consequently, of all the principles in yourself of thought, reflection, and understanding. You may discover, I say, that the impressions derived from external objects, are not made by the objects, but are more properly *taken from* the objects, and this by virtue of the activity of the *mind*; which activity is the result exclusively of that life from GOD to which I am eager to direct your attention. For, separate from such an Omnipotent agency, the formation and operation of the human mind are altogether inexplicable: and man, with all his wondrous powers both of sensation and ratiocination, is a *riddle* to himself; as the writing, alas! of too many profound metaphysicians have too plainly demonstrated. Whereas, let the simple truth be once admitted, that the human soul or spirit is in continual connexion with a *vital principle*, infused into it perpetually from the GREAT FATHER and FOUNTAIN of all life; and thus gifting it with the faculty of receiving ideal impressions from external objects, and of combining, analyzing, and reasoning from those ideas,—and all difficulty and perplexity instantly vanish: whilst at the same time is discerned, in all its magnificence and consolation, the grand eternal truth,—that as GOD originally created man “in His image, and after His likeness,” (Gen. i. 26, 27.) so He still, by virtue of His perpetually *influential life*, continues at this day momentarily to create him.

Let us here stop a moment to recollect ourselves before we proceed in our inquiry respecting the further operation of that vital principle from GOD which, as we have already seen, is the primary cause of our existence; since it is the producing cause, first of the formation and growth of our bodies in the womb; and afterwards of the formation and growth of our minds, by means of the materials introduced through the organs of sense.

It is then to the Divine mercy alone, operating perpetually in the deep centre of our being, that we are indebted both for the beauty, symmetry, and perfection of our corporeal frame; and also for the superior and more distinguished faculties called thought, reason, and intelligence of our mental one. But, have we ever considered as we ought, the state and situation in which we are placed here below in consequence of these splendid favours and benefits bestowed upon us by Divine liberality? Have we considered, I say, that these very favours and benefits expose us to trial and suffering; and that if they did not so expose us, they would not be favours and benefits? You start, I see, at this remark, and therefore it will be necessary that I explain myself.

I have already shewn that human happiness requires that man's life, though derived continually from GOD, should yet *appear* to be his own; since otherwise it could not be exercised in freedom, consequently could not be blessed. I have shown, also, that this freedom must be extended to every principle of the human constitution, and especially to the determinations of the will respecting good and evil; since, otherwise, man would be a compelled, not a voluntary agent. Behold here, then, the two distinct sources of trial and of suffering to which every individual of the human race is exposed, in consequence of being endowed, through the Divine operation, with a human body and a human mind as above described! For, how plain is it to see that such a human body and mind, with all their beautiful form and symmetry,—gifted, too, with the astonishing

excellencies of sensitive and intelligent life,—created also under the necessary law that this sensitive and intelligent life should *appear to be their own* ; how plain, I say, is it to see that such a body and mind, in consequence of such appearance, must unavoidably be a perpetual source, to their possessor, both of trial and of suffering, by tempting him to suppose that his life is not only apparently, but really his own ; and that, of course, his talents, his virtues, and his joys, are likewise his own ; so that he is the sole arbitrator and controller of all his purposes, thoughts, words, and works ! Yet, how plain is it to see further, that unless man had been endowed with such a body and such a mind, and thus been exposed to trial and suffering, he could not possibly, in such case, have enjoyed freedom of will ; since, as was above observed, freedom of will implies that man *be placed in the equilibrium between good and evil, with the perfect liberty of choosing either the one or the other !* You see then, my good friend, that your very perfections, whether corporeal or mental, whilst they tend to excite all your gratitude towards your DIVINE BENEFACITOR, have a tendency, at the same time, to call forth all your watchfulness, lest they should tempt you to confirm the appearances, which they are for ever suggesting,—that your life is really your own ; and should thus lead you to forget that your talents, your virtues, your joys, and all that you have, whether of corporeal or mental excellence, are the continual results of the Divine life and its operation with which you are gifted. Do not, however, be alarmed, I entreat you, at the idea of being called to a state of *watchfulness* ; for what shall we say is involved in such a state ? Is it not a state of heavenly light and of heavenly security ? For, without heavenly light there can be no watchfulness ; and whensoever the guidance of heavenly light is faithfully followed, heavenly security is a certain infallible consequence. Be not alarmed, again, at the trial and suffering necessarily resulting from the appearance that your life is your own ; for, without trial and suffering,

or, what amounts to the same thing, without the labour of combat against *appearances*, with a view to the possession of *realities*, how is it possible that those realities should either be secured, or even known? You, yourself, I am persuaded, are willing to allow that there are such things as *real* goods and evils, which, in themselves, are perfectly distinct from *apparent* goods and evils; and not only distinct from them, but in many cases directly opposed to them. Thus, you will allow that the love of God and of your neighbour is a real good, and that whatsoever opposes that good is a real evil. You will allow, also, that the love of yourself, of the world, and of the flesh, is an apparent good, and that whatsoever opposes that love is an apparent evil. I would ask, then, how is it possible that the love of God and of your neighbour, which is a *real* good, should be known and secured, except by the labour of combat against the delusions and disorders suggested by the *apparent* good,—which is the love of self, of the world, and the flesh? For, how manifest is it that every good, whether real or apparent, is eager to maintain its own dominion; and that thus, the apparent good is ever at war with the real one, whilst the real one, at the same time, is ever endeavouring to establish its authority over the apparent one!

You see, then, my friend, the situation in which you are placed, in common with every other individual of the human race, as a continual receiver of life from God, and as a possessor, at the same time, of a life apparently your own. You perceive, I say, that as to your better part, your eternal soul or spirit, you thus stand *in the midst* between real goods and apparent ones; endowed, too, with the free power of choosing to which of these goods you will assign the superiority and preëminence. You believe, too, because the Scriptures of truth teach you so to believe, that God, with all His heavenly host of ministering angels, takes part with *real* goods; and is at all times in the endeavour to prevail upon you to take the same part, by giving them the uppermost place in

your love and affections. On the same authority, also, you believe that the spirits of darkness, called the *Devil* and *Satan*, are arranged on the side of *apparent* goods, and are ever in the act of tempting you to eat of this *forbidden fruit*, by attaching yourself to appearances more than to realities. The important question, then, is, which of these goods will you prefer, the real or the apparent?—for you must of necessity give the preference to one or the other: since, as the SAVIOUR of the world testifies, you must either “hate the one, and love the other; or else you must hold to the one, and despise the other;” and for this plain reason, because “you cannot serve God and Mammon.” (Matt. vi. 24.)

Do you feel alarmed at this view of your awful position between heaven and hell, between life and death, and of the important consequences attendant on your own decision? Do you complain, too, of the strong propensities which you feel within yourself to exalt *apparent* good above *real*, and thus to live to yourself and the world more than to God and His kingdom? Let me admonish you, as God Himself admonishes you, rather to be of good courage, and to hope every thing from the DIVINE MERCY and providence of your HEAVENLY FATHER, who hath been pleased to place you in this situation, the *only* one fitted to qualify you for the eternal blessedness which He has prepared for you. Remember, too, in regard to the propensities of which you complain, that an evil propensity is not an Evil only so far as it is cherished by non-acknowledgment and non-resistance; but that it even becomes a Good whensoever it is renounced, and its infernal origin and tendency made manifest by the light of truth; since, in such case, it is made to administer to the splendor of Divine victory, and to add to the laurels of *Him that overcometh*. Learn, therefore, only to distrust yourself, and in the spirit of sincere repentance, to put your whole trust in God, and you will then have nothing to fear; because then you will discover, to your inexpressible joy, that OMNIPOTENCE is always on your

side ; and that the dangers, the difficulties, the oppositions which excite your alarm, are the very means and instruments of promoting and securing your greater salvation.

I shall hope for the satisfaction of pursuing, at some future opportunity, my discussion on the operation of that principle of life from God which has been the subject of this letter ; assuring you at present how truly I remain, in devout prayer for your eternal well-being,

Yours, &c. &c.

Letter U.

On the progressive operation of the principle of life from God in the human soul or spirit: by virtue of which life man is not only gifted with corporeal, sensitive, and intelligent life, but also with spiritual and celestial life; and is thus exalted to the high honour and happiness of being regenerated in the image and likeness of his GREAT CREATOR, and finally of entering into eternal conjunction with Him.

MY DEAR SIR,

In my last letter I endeavoured to convince you that you are indebted to your HEAVENLY FATHER for all that you possess, whether of corporeal, of sensitive, or of intelligent life; since all these several principles are the gradual and successive results of the operation of His DIVINE LIFE, from the period of your first conception in the womb, through the several stages of birth, growth, the opening of the bodily senses, the acquirement of ideas, and of the final formation of what is commonly called the rational or intellectual mind.

You fancy, perhaps, that now when your body is grown to the usual standard height of five or six feet, by virtue of the free and full exercise of all its senses; and when the rational or intellectual mind, at the same time, has been opened and formed by science, so as to be capable of presiding in that body, of guiding it by its counsels, of controlling it by its authority, and thus, of qualifying it for the discharge of all the social duties connected with its appointed station in this lower world; — you perhaps fancy, I say, that in consequence of all these acquired excellencies, you are now become a *man*: and that having attained this distinguished appellation and

character, you are arrived at the *end* of your creation ; so that nothing now remains to be accomplished, or even expected, in regard to any additional birth and growth, requisite for the happiness and perfection of your being. You conclude, therefore, of course, that you have now no other concern than to enjoy yourself, by drinking freely of the cup of natural and rational delights with which you are encompassed ; by securing also a fair reputation amongst your fellow-men ; and with this view, by conforming to those moral and civil regulations which you find established in the human society of which you are a member. Is not some imagination of this sort at work in your mind ? And let me ask further, is it not a common and prevailing imagination with the bulk of mankind ; who conceive themselves to be complete and perfect men, for no other reason than because their bodies are grown to a full size, and their minds are saturated with a full measure of worldly science, prudence, and rationality ?

But will you or any other person, have the boldness to assert that any combination of flesh, of blood, of bone, and of what is commonly called human reason, is of itself sufficient to constitute that high-born and dignified being who is distinguished from all other animals by the sacred appellation of *man* ? For, let us inquire, for a moment, what is involved in this appellation ? Does it not imply that the subject of it is a *religious*, as well as a sensitive and rational being ; and that, consequently, he is governed by religious principles ; by virtue of which principles he acknowledges a DIVINE CREATOR, PRESERVER, and SAVIOUR ; and not only acknowledges, but holds converse with Him through the blessed spirit of love, wisdom, and adoration, which that CREATOR, PRESERVER, and SAVIOUR continually inspires ? For, is it not a known fact that man is the only animal in the world *capable of religion* ; in other words, capable of having his mind elevated to the knowledge and grateful acknowledgment of the DIVINE FATHER of his being ? Does not this fact, then, prove to a demonstration,

that such knowledge and grateful acknowledgment are the proper distinguishing characteristics of man's nature ; and that, consequently, he has no lawful claim to the high and honourable title of *man*, only so far as he is in possession of those characteristics ? It is not, therefore, any construction of bodily form, be it ever so excellent ; neither is it any extent of scientific acquirements ; nor yet even the splendid faculty of rational and intellectual investigation, which properly makes a man ; since, if *religious principle* be wanting, all other qualifications are but the lifeless images of a man, and not the vital reality ; thus, they are the *shadows*, but not the *substance* of that sacred, holy, and venerable principle called HUMANITY.*

From these considerations, then, I am persuaded you will see clearly, whensoever you make them the subject of serious reflection, that your being is altogether incomplete ; and, consequently, the great end of your creation is unaccomplished, until your mind be opened to the reception and operation of religious principle, — elevating you to the noble privilege of holding converse and maintaining communication with the DIVINE PARENT OF LIFE, through the exercise of those blessed faculties of love, of wisdom, and of obedient operation which that Parent inspires. You will observe that I here connect *incompleteness of being* with the *non-accomplishment of the end of your creation* ; inasmuch as they ought not to be separated. For, if you stop short in the career of your creation, by supposing yourself a perfect man, whilst you are yet lacking in the *one thing needful* to constitute such a man, viz., in religious

* In the Prophet Jeremiah, we find a remarkable confirmation of the truth of this sentiment respecting the principles which properly constitute a *man* or a *human being* ; for thus he writes, — “ Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a *man*, if there be any that *executeth judgment*, that *seeketh the truth* ; and I will pardon it.” (chap. v. 1.) From which words it is manifest, that, according to the Prophet's idea, to *execute judgment*, and to *seek the truth*, are the distinguished characteristics of *humanity* ; and that, consequently, if these characteristics be wanting, no one has any pretensions to the high and holy title of *man*.

principle, how plain is it to see that, by the same inconsideration, you stop short also in the accomplishment of the great end of creation! For what, let me ask, is *that end*? Is it that mankind should solace themselves for a few years, in this lower world, with the pleasures of sense, with the delights of science, with the intoxications of vain glory and ambition? Is it that they should riot in the luxury of superfluous health or wealth, and in the no less fascinating enjoyment of superior talents and mental accomplishments? Is it even that they should become useful members of temporal society, by improving its morals, by encouraging its arts, by checking its disorders, and by thus adding to the store of its rational and innocent gratifications? Or, is it not, rather, that they should acquaint themselves with the GOD Who made them and redeemed them; that they should study and exalt His perfections; that they should grow wise by His wisdom, and enter into the consolations of His love; that by renouncing themselves and all that they call themselves, they should put off every form of disorder and death, and put on every opposite form of that blessed order and life which flow perpetually from their Divine source: that they should thus, in short, become the children of a HEAVENLY FATHER, the sharers of His mercy, the images of His excellencies, and the eternal inheritors of His glory: or, (to express myself in the words of a pious and learned writer,) “that their minds, being at length made intelligent and innocent, may constitute a spiritual heaven, a kingdom of GOD, or a holy society, in which the end of creation may be respected by GOD, and from which GOD may be respected as the end of ends”?

Yet, in pointing out to you this great end of your creation, which may not improperly be called its *final end*, let me not be mistaken as if I meant to annihilate, or even to object to, its proximate and more remote ends; such as are the accomplishments of mind and body, the cultivation of arts and sciences, the improvement of morals, and the benefits thus conferred on temporal society. My real meaning is, to guard you

against the danger of exalting these proximate and more remote ends above the *final* end of your creation; and by this caution to lead you to perfect your human character by the combination of *all* these ends in yourself. And since this combination cannot possibly be effected unless the final end be allowed the preëminence; in other words, unless your growth in the wisdom and love of your HEAVENLY FATHER be seen to be of primary importance, whilst every other growth is regarded as merely secondary; therefore, my further meaning is, to conduct you to the blessed discovery, that in GOD alone is to be found the *soul* and *quintessence* of your proper human character; whilst all other things, be they ever so splendid in their aspects, form only a sort of *body* and *husk*. I would also insist still further, that if the body and husk be exalted above the soul and quintessence, either by being regarded as of more importance, or by being consulted as of surer guidance; in such case, a dreadful inversion of all order is the certain result; and the terrible consequence is, that the proper form of the man is as effectually destroyed as if in the natural body the feet should take the place of the head, and the head should be degraded to the station and office of the feet. Need I add, lastly, that if the body and husk be separated from the soul and quintessence, the human character must then also, of necessity, perish; so that the *man*, (as he is called,) howsoever distinguished he may be by his bodily form, or by the more alluring accomplishments of mental energy, becomes debased in rank, and sinks even below the *brute creation*.

Keeping now your mental eyes fixed on these premises, you will be enabled to see clearly the further progress of the operation of that *life from GOD* in the deep centre of your being, to which I am desirous to call your attention, as to the sole creative power from which you derive, not only the formation of your body, but the more astonishing formation of your mind; and not only the formation of your mind, but the birth and growth likewise of all those heavenly principles in your mind, which

finally complete your creation, and stamp upon you the godlike character of MANHOOD, or HUMANITY, properly so called.

It has already been seen how the ALMIGHTY, by virtue of the principle of life perpetually flowing from His Divine fulness, commences His wonderful work of the creation of every individual human being in the mother's womb; and how He afterwards continues it so as to produce a full-grown sensitive body, vivified and controlled by a scientific and rational mind. At this period of creation, then, we behold what is commonly called a *man*, but what is, as yet, only the *shadow* of a man; because, as yet, that *substantial principle* is wanting, viz., *religious principle*, which is the only proper characteristic of humanity; and without which, therefore, the end of man's creation is incomplete: so that the man himself, in such case, may be compared to an image consisting of feet, legs, arms, and a trunk, but destitute of a head to guide and govern them.

Let us turn our eyes now to the WORKER OF WONDERS, and note, with due astonishment and adoration, the tender mercy which inclines Him to finish His work, together with the various and stupendous means which that mercy employs to effect its gracious and Divine purpose — the implantation of religious principle.

This principle, it has been shewn, implies the knowledge and love of the FATHER OF BEING in close, indissoluble conjunction; since knowledge without love is like *light without heat*, which dazzles indeed by its splendor, but is altogether unproductive and fruitless. Love, again, when separate from light, is like a *dark room*, in which all things are seen indistinctly and confusedly, so that it is impossible to discover the quality of its furniture, whether it be worthy or unworthy of its owner.

Turn your eyes, now, to your BIBLE, and behold in that most wonderful of all books, the grand, inexhaustible storehouse of *religious principle*, brought down from heaven for the express purpose of elevating man to his MAKER, by replenish-

ing him with the Divine love and wisdom of which it is the sacred repository; and by thus conducting him to glory and immortality! In every page of this book, then, you see a transcript of the Divine mind; you hold converse with the GOD who made you; you are made sensible, too, of a mighty power, not only enlightening your understanding with the bright beams of the SUPREME TRUTH, but enkindling in your will the love and delight of the SUPREME GOOD! You want, therefore, no longer any evidence to convince you of the Divine authority of these sacred records, because you feel a testimony in your own mind, confirming to you at once their high origin and heavenly import, by the purification and elevation which they give to your affections and thoughts; by the new world of holiness and of bliss to which they introduce you; and above all, by the humiliation, the self-abasement, the contrition, which they inspire; whilst they present to your view the DIVINE FATHER of your being thus condescending to invite you to His bosom, to promise the forgiveness of all your offences, and finally to purify you from all iniquity, by giving you power to become His child, the receiver of His bounty, and the inheritor of His kingdom!

But how, now, will you account for these extraordinary effects? Will you say that, of *yourself*, or by any faculty properly *your own*, thus separate from that principle of *life from God* which is the subject of our present discussion, you are qualified to understand the counsels of the ALMIGHTY; to enter into His presence; to take your seat at His right hand; and to rejoice in the participation of His mercy and loving-kindness? Alas! this would be talking as irrationally and inconsistently, as if you should assert that your body was formed of itself; and that by some power properly its own, it was introduced into this lower world, and placed in the exercise and enjoyment of all its senses! Both rationality, then, and consistency require that you should refer to GOD the blessed faculty by which you are enabled both to under-

stand His holy Word, and to rejoice in all the consolations which the knowledge and love of the eternal truth never fail to impart to the penitent and the humble.

Behold here, then, a further accumulation of that immense debt which you owe to your GREAT CREATOR; and which can only be discharged by the grateful acknowledgment of its immensity, and by the humble confession, at the same time, of your utter inability to discharge it fully! For it is at this period, now, when your natural and rational mind has been formed and opened to the contemplation and enjoyment of this lower world, that your HEAVENLY FATHER is eager to convince you that *another* mind still remains to be formed and opened; by virtue of which you may have access to Himself, and to all the blessings of His eternal kingdom, and may thus be taught that that eternal kingdom, and not this lower world, is the inheritance which properly belongs to you, and is thus the final end both of your creation, and of that of all other intelligent beings.

Do you experience, then, in the perusal of the sacred Scriptures or the Word of GOD, an illumination of your understanding; and, at the same time, an elevation of all your mental faculties to the contemplation and enjoyment of objects heretofore unknown, yet infinitely exceeding all others both in sublimity, in purity, and in duration? Do you rise thus into a new world of never-fading *realities*, by the bright light of which you are enabled to make the grand discovery, that the present world which you inhabit is, comparatively, only a world of *shadows*? Are you instructed, by this discovery, that in this world of shadows you are encompassed by *apparent* goods and evils, which you are in danger of mistaking for *real* ones; and that this danger is considerably increased by the necessary law of your existence,—that your life should *appear to be your own*? Do you, therefore, begin to see it to be a duty of the first importance, to fight against these appearances, that so the love of God and of your neighbour, that only real

and permanent good, may be exalted above all inferior and *seeming* goods; yet not to annihilate, but rather to impart to them also a measure of its own purity, stability, and use? Do you thus finally learn, that the wisdom of all wisdom, the good of all goods, the happiness of all happinesses, is to *renounce yourself*, by putting your whole trust in that DIVINE BEING who is so infinitely above yourself; yet, in renouncing yourself, to exert *freely* all your faculties, as if they were *your own*, and to execute freely every useful purpose, as if you possessed an independent power to do so? Do you, I say, in perusing the sacred book of Revelation, experience all or any of the above blessed effects? You have, then, a most unequivocal and indisputable proof that, in the deep centre of your being, there is a latent principle of life from GOD, ever in operation to promote and perfect the grand end of your existence, by replenishing you with angelic wisdom and love; by endowing you thus with power to control all the disorders of mere animal and natural life; and by finally qualifying you for the enjoyment of that heavenly and eternal society, which alone can unravel the deep mystery of human sorrows, conflicts, and uncertainties.

For ask yourself, now, the important questions, Why cannot the inferior animals be affected, as you are, by the bright documents of the Eternal Truth? And why cannot they elevate their minds accordingly, as you elevate yours, to the DIVINE FATHER of their being, and to His everlasting kingdom? And you will find it impossible to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, but by appealing to the fact, that the inferior animals do not possess, as you do, a principle of life derived *immediately* from its DIVINE SOURCE. If, then, this principle of life was to be removed from you, the certain but dreadful consequence would necessarily be, that you would be as incapable of comprehending the wisdom, and of being affected by the love, of the GREAT FATHER of the universe, as a horse or a cow: and, therefore, whenever you read the WORD OF

God with delight, and suffer your mind to be enlightened and elevated by its sacred wisdom, you have an infallible proof, not only that you differ essentially from the brute creation, but that the proper characteristic of this difference is, that you possess a principle of *life from God*, which they do not possess.

I trust, then, that enough has been said to convince you, not only that you possess in the deep centre of your being, a principle of life from God, but that this principle is in perpetual operation; manifesting itself, in the *first* instance, by the formation and growth of your material sensitive body; and in the *second*, by the no less astonishing formation and growth of an intellectual and voluntary mind, together with the implantation, in that mind, of all heavenly principles of love and wisdom, as its qualifications for an eternal conjunction with its DIVINE FATHER in His everlasting kingdom.

But, what a *prodigy* is here presented to our view, whilst we behold a principle of life within ourselves *continually derived from another*, and yet *apparently our own*: and whilst we thus perceive further, that although, to all appearance, we see, and hear, and taste, and smell, and feel, and think, and reason, and will, and decide, &c., &c., as from ourselves, yet, in reality, we exercise all these powers and faculties from another, that is, from GOD! And how is the wonder increased by the additional reflection, that unless the above *appearance* was impressed upon us we could not be *men*, neither could we attain the *great end of our creation*, when yet, at the same time, in the very *appearance* is involved our liability to all transgression; and, likewise, to all the trials, conflicts, and dangers to which we are exposed in our progress towards the perfection of our being and of our bliss! How, then, shall we unravel all this seeming mystery so as to justify the mercy and wisdom of our ADORABLE CREATOR, and also to make plain the path of our own duty, by which we are to be conducted to an eternal and blessed conjunction with that mercy

and wisdom? These happy ends can only be accomplished by a deep and solid conviction on our parts, grounded both in reason and Revelation, that the only mischief of the above appearance results from its *confirmation*; and that, consequently, we have nothing to fear from it, but, on the contrary, every thing to hope, provided we do not confirm it: since, in such case, we shall be led gradually to establish in ourselves the blessed truth, and to rejoice in its establishment, that, notwithstanding all *appearances* to the contrary, our life is, in *reality*, the continual gift of the MOST HIGH, with a view to make us the everlasting inheritors of His KINGDOM, His POWER, and GLORY!

But, the further discussion of this interesting subject must be reserved to a future opportunity, when I shall be happy, through the Divine mercy, to resume it. In the mean time assure yourself of the sincere regard with which I subscribe myself,

Yours, &c. &c.

Letter UK.

On the mischiefs and dangers to which man is exposed, by suffering himself to be confirmed in the appearance that his life is his own or self-derived; and on the contrary, the blessing and security which never fail to result from the growing conviction, that the ALL of his life is a continual derivation from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN; yet still intended to be exercised and enjoyed by him as if it was absolutely his own and independent.

MY DEAR SIR,

If you have reflected seriously, as I trust you have done, on the *mystery* hinted at in the conclusion of my last letter, you will be glad to attend to its promised development; and will, accordingly, lend a willing ear whilst I endeavour to convince you that you have nothing to fear, but, on the contrary, every thing to hope, from the *appearance* that your life is *your own* or self-derived, provided you do not confirm it.

In pursuing, however, this part of my argument, it will be necessary that I previously call your attention to what you *have to fear*, in case you should be so unwise as to confirm the above appearance.

By *confirming*, on this occasion, I would be understood to mean, not merely a speculative, but also a *practical* establishment in your mind of a denial that *your life is from GOD*; which denial leads you finally to conclude, both speculatively and practically, that your bodily sensations, together with all the higher energies of scientific, rational, intellectual, and voluntary faculty, originate merely in yourself; and con-

sequently, have no connexion with any power within or above yourself.

But, need I be at any pains to expose to you the mischievous and dangerous tendencies of this conclusion? For, do not you see, of yourself, that it is directly opposed, not only to the doctrine of *faith* as taught in the gospel, but also to the doctrine of *life*; and, consequently, that it is at variance with every evangelical precept; and this to such a degree as to render the whole economy of the gospel dispensation of none effect, either as a dispensation of truth, or as a dispensation of life and salvation?

For, let us examine now the gospel dispensation, in the first place, as a dispensation of *truth*, and then mark the striking contrast between that truth and the direful conclusion of which we are speaking, — that the all of sensitive, of scientific, of rational, of intellectual, and of voluntary life in man, *originates merely in himself*; and, consequently, has no connexion with any power *within or above himself*.

JESUS CHRIST repeatedly announces His SUPREME DIVINITY, by assuming to Himself the distinguishing, characteristic title of THE LIFE; (see John xi. 25, chap. xiv. 6.) and, at the same time, by teaching that He is the GIVER and THE BREAD OF LIFE. (John vi. 33, 35, 48.) But, what now shall we say is involved in this high title—THE LIFE, and also in the singular power of communicating it? Are not we constrained to say that the term LIFE implies the all of activity and energy in the several constituent principles both of the souls and bodies of men; and that, consequently, it bespeaks that its DIVINE GIVER or COMMUNICATOR hath some secret internal connexion with such souls and bodies? Is it not plain, therefore, to demonstration, that when JESUS CHRIST called Himself THE LIFE, and declared also that HE *giveth life to the world*, and is thus the *bread of life*, He intended to publish to mankind the interesting, the most edifying intelligence, — that He is the DIVINE SOURCE of all vital activity and energy, whether of

soul or body; and that, consequently, He hath His secret abode, as a *principle of life*, in the deep centre of every human mind?

To assert, then, that you possess in yourself a principle of *independent* life, or of life unconnected with JESUS CHRIST as its DIVINE SOURCE, is to oppose, in the most direct manner, the testimony of that GREAT and HOLY GOD; and thus to set at nought the whole doctrine of faith, or of truth, as delivered in the gospel. But this is by no means the worst effect of such an assertion; since it not only contradicts the doctrine of evangelical *faith*, or of evangelical *truth*, but it also, at the same time, has a tendency to annihilate the doctrine of evangelical *life*, by depriving it of all its meaning, power, and blessed intention. For, what shall we say is the principal or leading doctrine of evangelical life, as taught in the sacred pages of revealed wisdom? Is it any thing more or less than the doctrine of *self-denial*, or of that renunciation of ourselves which may lead us to humble and abase ourselves before our GREAT and MERCIFUL CREATOR, under the inward, devout acknowledgment that "*we are His people, and the sheep of His hand;*" consequently, that all we *have*, and all we *are*, is from Him, and is His? For, what else can be meant or intended by the precept where it is written, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple:" (Luke xiv. 33.) and again, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me:" (Matt. xvi. 24, Mark viii. 34, Luke ix. 23.) and again, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, YEA, AND HIS OWN LIFE ALSO, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.)

But how, now, is all the wisdom of these Divine precepts contradicted, and even annulled, by the deadly persuasion that man is possessed of a principle of *independent life*! For how is it possible for any one, under the influence of such a per-

suasion, to *forsake all that he hath*; since the forsaking all that he hath, evidently implies the humble acknowledgment, that he hath nothing but what he receives; consequently, that his life, which constitutes his chief property, is from GOD, as a continual momentary gift? How is it possible, too, that any one, under the influence of such a persuasion, can *deny himself*; since self-denial manifestly implies the denial of the selfish suggestion that his life, with all its powers, activities, purposes, and joys, is *his own*, and *not another's*? And lastly, how is it possible that any one, under the influence of such a persuasion, can *hate his own life*; inasmuch as his *own* life can never become hateful to him, until he is convinced of the extreme folly and danger of calling it his own, instead of acknowledging it to be the merciful and perpetual gift of his HEAVENLY FATHER?

It is evident, then, to demonstration, that in proportion as you confirm yourself in a practical belief that your life is your own independent property, and, consequently, unconnected with a DIVINE SOURCE, in the same proportion you oppose, both in speculation and practice, some of the most important doctrines of revealed wisdom. The gospel thus becomes to you not only a *sealed* but a *useless book*; because, whilst your persuasions are at variance with its truths, your conduct is at irreconcilable enmity with its purposes and its purity. And what, think you, must be the necessary result of such outrage against the light and life of heaven and its GOD, but that you will thus become one of those *branches broken off* from the TRUE VINE—the TREE OF LIFE,—of which branches it is written, that “men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned?” (John xv. 6.) For, will not all that is sensitive, all that is rational, all that is intellectual, all that is voluntary and operative in yourself, be referred solely to *yourself*, as to its highest and only source; and instead of kindling in you the flame of heavenly love and gratitude to the GIVER OF ALL GOOD, as it was designed to do, will it not add

fuel to the fire of a devouring and destructive self-love, in which you will be consumed, together with your sensations, your reason, your understanding, your will, and your operation? Thus you will play over again the part of the wicked husbandmen in the parable, of whom it is written, that "when they saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance." (Matt. xxi. 38.) For, in such case, when the GREAT SAVIOUR comes to receive the fruits of His vineyard, you will not only kill Him,—in other words, destroy His life in yourself; but you will seize on His inheritance by claiming to yourself, as your own property, that life of which He alone is the TRUE PROPRIETOR, because He alone is its daily and momentary source, sustenance, and controller.

But I am persuaded you will be glad to quit with me this painful subject, and recreate your eyes with the delightful view of the happy effects resulting from the conviction, that the all of your life is a continual derivation from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN, yet still intended to be exercised and enjoyed by you, as if it were absolutely your own and independent; and that thus you have nothing to fear, but, on the contrary, every thing to hope, from the appearance that your life is your own or self-derived, provided you do not confirm it!

Allow me, then, to observe, in discussing this very interesting topic, that in the kingdom of matter, as well as in that of mind, appearances perpetually present themselves which are opposed to real truth; and which yet, notwithstanding such opposition, are attended with no ill consequences, but are rather productive of benefit in all cases in which they are discovered to be appearances, and are accordingly corrected by the truth to which they are opposed. It is an appearance, for instance, that the sun is in a perpetual course of revolution round the earth; and that, in the mean time, the earth is stationary and at perfect rest; when yet, according to the demonstrations of an enlightened philosophy, we are convinced of the reverse;

by being compelled to allow that the sun is stationary, and that the appearance of his motion results from the real motion of the earth. So again, it is an *appearance* that the *eye sees*, and that the *ear hears*; when yet we are instructed by the documents of sound reason, that both the eye and the ear are merely organs of sight; and that in reality the mind alone sees and hears through those organs; whilst the organs themselves are totally void of any sensation like that of seeing or hearing! It would be endless to multiply cases of a similar nature, in which we are continually exposed to the danger of mistaking appearances for realities; and of thus plunging ourselves into the darkness of error and delusion.

But how plain is it to see, in all these instances, that no mischief can result from the mere *appearance*, only so far as it is confirmed, and thus converted into an instrument of first denying, and afterwards destroying physical and philosophical truth! How plain is it also to see further, that if the appearance be *not* confirmed, but submitted to the examination and decision of sound reason and an enlightened philosophy, it then acquires a new quality and character, answering to that of a *dark shade* in a well-finished picture, which, as every one knows, tends to enhance the value and beauty of the picture, by acting as a contrast to its lights!

On this ground, then, of the natural appearances by which we are encompassed, and by which also we are exposed to the danger of being perpetually deluded, we are enabled to illustrate, and in some degree explain and justify, the phenomenon of that spiritual appearance of which we are speaking, respecting the true and proper source of all life. For is it not evident, from the above natural appearances, and from the skill with which man is endowed of correcting them, that they are the appointed Providential means of bringing that skill into exercise, and thus of increasing its power and energies? Is it not manifest, also, from this correcting skill, that man is gifted with a *two-fold* judgment; viz., one grounded in the

bodily senses, and the other resulting from *mental observation* and reflection; and that the perfection of his character depends on the preëminence which he assigns, in his own mind, to the latter judgment above the former? Is it not, therefore, reasonable to conclude that man advances in intelligence, and, consequently, in all the blessings attending it, in proportion as he comes into the habit of correcting the judgment of *sense* by the higher judgment of *mind and reason*?

Let us apply, now, these remarks to the case under consideration; viz., the *source of life*. Our senses would persuade us, if we listen to their dictates, that this source is in ourselves, and utterly unconnected with any higher origin; but our reason, enlightened by the bright light of Revelation, corrects this sensual judgment, and informs us, that we are indebted to the mercy and love of a HEAVENLY FATHER for the momentary continuance of life, since, if His Divine influx of life was closed, though but for an instant, in that instant we should immediately fall down dead and lifeless, like stocks or stones. I would ask, then, To which of these judgments is it prudent and safe to give the preference? And I would ask further, Is it not reasonable to conclude, from the cases of physical appearances above adverted to, that it is of Providential appointment that man's life should appear to be *his own* and independent, to the intent, not only that it may be more freely exercised and enjoyed than it could otherwise have been, but also, that the *appearance* of independence may be instrumental in calling into operation those higher faculties of mind and intelligence which are given him for the purpose of correcting it? Lastly, I would ask, Who, on this occasion, is best entitled to the crown of wisdom,—the man who takes part with his *senses*, and confirms all their delusive suggestions; or he who, opening his mind to the light of higher and surer judgment, proves himself to be an obedient disciple of that DIVINE MASTER who said, "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*"?

Trusting, then, that you are now sufficiently convinced that no danger is to be apprehended from the appearance that your life is your own and independent, provided this appearance be not confirmed, may I be allowed to point out to you some of the more general benefits (for to enumerate particulars would require a volume) resulting from a pious, well-grounded belief, that *your life* is a continual momentary gift from the GREAT FATHER of all life and being, whose high and holy name is JESUS CHRIST?

And first, I am persuaded you will agree with me in the sentiment that it is highly advantageous for man to acquire a just and proper idea of the dignity of his nature as a *human being*; since, if this idea be kept constantly in view and acted upon, it must, of necessity, have a powerful influence on his conduct, by preserving him from every debasement of Evil, and, at the same time, elevating him to the DIVINE SOURCE of all Good. But, let me ask, what consideration can be so likely to impress him with such an idea as a well-grounded persuasion of his continual connexion with, and relationship to, his HEAVENLY FATHER, by virtue of the *life* which he momentarily derives from that beneficent PARENT OF LIFE? For, what other dignity is to be compared with this? How does all the splendor of other connexions and of other relationships fade away and disappear before the full blaze and glory of this connexion and this relationship! If, then, we think it right to call a man to the recollection of his high birth—the nobility of his pedigree—the virtues of his ancestors, &c. &c., as a stimulant to his own virtuous energies; how much more so is it to remind him, for the same purpose, of the sacred origin of his *life*; thus, of a birth and pedigree more than human; and of an ancestor, in whom, as in their DIVINE SOURCE, are centred, in an infinite degree, all the virtues, excellencies, and perfections that have ever adorned and ennobled any human being!

Do you wish, then, to be supplied with the most powerful

motive to the faithful discharge of your various duties as a man and as a Christian? Do you wish for the strongest excitement to devotion in your prayers; to depth in your meditations; to courage and constancy in your purposes; to watchfulness against evil, and vigour in opposing it; in short, to consistency and perseverance in your daily Christian conduct? Reflect, then, let me entreat you, until you have made the reflection familiar to you, that the most HIGH GOD is continually present with you in the deep centre of your bosom; and that from that centre He is every moment dispensing the rich exuberant stream of what you call *your life*; which is nothing else, therefore, but a derivation from His own DIVINE LIFE of combined love, wisdom, and potency. Recollect, further, that the all of your *love*, thus, the all of your *will*, the all of your *understanding*, and the all of your *agency*, is from this high origin alone, and nothing at all from yourself. Recollect, lastly, that the all of your best prayers is not only *directed towards* GOD, but is also *derived from Him*; so that in reality it is GOD who properly prays, whilst you are only the re-active instrument of prayer. The same is true of your meditations; of your courage and constancy; of your watchfulness against evil, and of your vigour in opposing it; also of consistency and perseverance in your daily Christian conduct: of all these virtues the GREAT and HOLY GOD is at once the supreme object, the ultimate end, and the producing cause. You are not left, then, a moment to yourself, but are every instant attended by a merciful and omnipotent Agent, who not only supplies you with the ability to will, to think, and to act, but who also, by that supply, instructs you as to the grand end and purpose of all willing, thinking, and acting.

For, secondly, in the cordial belief that your life is nothing else but a stream from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN, you will gradually be led to the happy discovery of the ultimate end or design of your creation, and likewise of the means by which it may be best accomplished. For, in regard to the ultimate end or

design of your creation, let me seriously ask you the few following questions: Is it at all conceivable that the Being whom we call GOD; the INFINITE; the ETERNAL; the ONLY GOOD; the ONLY WISE; the ONLY POWERFUL; whose manifest intention it is to communicate happiness to others from Himself; and not only happiness, but also an *image* and *likeness* of His own perfections, that He may discern, and rejoice in discerning, in those perfections a reflected resemblance of Himself!—is it conceivable, I say, is it possible, that such a Being,—after having gifted His creature man with the ardent desire of immortality; after having endowed him, too, with the astonishing faculty of elevating his affections and thoughts to the DIVINE SOURCE of his life, and of attaining eternal conjunction with that source; after having distinguished him from all other animals by the capability of comprehending with his understanding the bright documents of the ETERNAL TRUTH, and of relishing in his will the delightful savour of the SUPREME GOOD: is it possible, I repeat it, for such a Being, under such circumstances, to confine the duration of the existence of such a creature within the narrow limits of temporal life, and then to plunge him into that very annihilation which, above every other calamity, he had been taught to dread? For, shall the FATHER OF MERCIES inspire the hope of immortality, and then suddenly disappoint it? Shall He, from HIMSELF, communicate to His creature a living principle, and by virtue of that principle render him capable not only of enjoying sensitive life, like the inferior animals, but of elevating himself to the higher and nobler delights of science, of rationality, of intelligence, and finally of celestial wisdom, love, and purity; and all this merely for the gratification of a few moments? Hath this GREAT FATHER, besides, in His adorable goodness, been pleased to establish a secret, inexpressible, and inconceivable harmony between the life which He imparts to man, and the various objects of the temporal world which he has so wonderfully and bountifully supplied

for man's recreation and comfort; and shall all that harmony terminate with man's bodily life? Shall there be no other world in which it may be continued and improved, and this to all eternity? Surely it is the height, not of impiety only, but of folly and madness, to suppose that the communication of life from GOD, with all its attendant blessings and goodness, wisdom and peace, can ever cease: and consequently, we are compelled by sound reason, as well as by the documents of revealed truth, to acknowledge the validity of those weighty words of the GREAT REDEEMER, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" (John xiv. 19.) and again, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in ME, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in ME, shall never die." (John xi. 25, 26.)

Whensoever, then, my good friend, you have the piety and good sense to establish yourself in a firm persuasion that what you call your life is not so much your life as GOD's, being a continual emanation from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN, you will then be in possession of a fact confirming the great gospel testimony respecting your immortality, and the grand and ultimate end of your creation, with a force irresistible; so that you will no longer be exposed to the misery of doubt and uncertainty on the important subject. For you will then be enabled to see clearly, that in the momentary reception of life from the INFINITE ETERNAL, you have an infallible assurance, not only that you shall *never die*, but that you shall *ever live*; and not only that you shall ever live, but that (in case you are wise to follow Divine counsel) you shall live *for ever happy*; being rendered an image and likeness of the GREAT AUTHOR of your being, and thus capable of reflecting His perfections, of adoring His everlasting mercies, of fulfilling His will, and of rejoicing in His bounty; by forming one member or part of a member, of that celestial Being called *the bride, the LAMB's wife*; of whom it is written, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the LAMB is come,

and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the LAMB." (Rev. xix. 7—9, chap. xxi. 9.)

And as the immediate communication of life from the INFINITE and ETERNAL, involves in it the blessed certainty that the subject of reception is destined for the everlasting enjoyment of the imparted gift in a world which has no end, so it has a tendency, if properly considered and acted upon, to conduct that subject to the right knowledge and application of the means most conducive to the attainment of such his destination. For what shall we say are these means? Are they not all those luminous truths of GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD, which were intended to lead man to love GOD above all things, and his neighbour as himself? And how shall we say do these means operate to produce their proper effect, but by abasing man under a sense of his own nothingness and defilements, and of the all of GOD and His purity; and at the same time by rendering him a free, voluntary instrument of the exercise of heavenly love and charity in the several faculties of his life called *will*, *understanding*, and *operation*? Do they not operate, therefore, by leading man first into combat against his natural evils, and secondly into victory over them; agreeable to the Divine testimony, (Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; chap. iii. 5, 12, 21.) where it is manifest that every heavenly blessing is promised exclusively to him who *overcometh*; consequently, to him who successfully combateth, since without successful combat it is impossible that any one can acquire the high and distinguished character of one who *overcometh*?

Here, then, we may discover clearly the advantages resulting to the true Christian from a firm and enlightened belief that his life is *not* independent; but, on the contrary, that it is in perpetual connexion with its DIVINE SOURCE, or with the

ETERNAL FATHER of all life and being. For, how animating is **this** belief in all his combats against his natural evils, since it **leads** him to depend, not on his own strength, or on any power **which** he possesses of his own, but on that OMNIPOTENCE which, he **is** persuaded, is present with him continually in the deep **centre** of his being! His language, therefore, on the occasion, is **the** language of that revealed wisdom where it is written, "**They** got not the land in possession by their own sword, **neither** did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and **Thine** arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because **Thou** hadst a favour unto them." (Psalm xlv. 3.) For, in the *life* which he receives momentarily from his HEAVENLY FATHER, he recognises the right hand, and arm, and the light of **the** countenance of that DIVINE PARENT ever present, ever **operative**, and ever powerful for his defence and preservation. In **all** his spiritual combats, therefore, he looks up to this *right hand*, and *arm*, and the *light of this countenance*, and he never **looks** in vain. For, in proportion as he accustoms himself to regard **GOD** and his life in the deep centre of his being, in the **same** proportion he becomes enlightened and consoled by the **blessed** discovery that his being is a compound of two distinct **principles**, the one external, which is in connexion with this **world** and the powers of darkness; and the other internal, **which** is in connexion with the eternal world and all the powers of **light** and salvation. In the same proportion, too, he **discovers** yet further, that all the evils, disorders, and mischiefs, **which** he has to fear, have their abode in his *external* part or **principle**; whilst, on the other hand, all the goods, the sanctities, and the blessings, which are the objects of his hope, have their residence *within*; being in close connexion with *the life* imparted to his *inmost* man from the INFINITE and ETERNAL. His lesson, therefore, of Christian conduct, is at once plain, practicable, and of an efficacy the most important, viz., at all times and on all occasions, whether he be exposed to the assault of his natural evils or be pursuing his course of duty

in the fulfilment of the obligations to which he is bound as a member of society, to submit his external man, or his external principle, to be guided, governed, and protected by the Divine mercy, truth, and blessing imparted continually to his internal man, or internal principle, from the **FIRST FOUNTAIN** of life. And behold the happy result! By degrees, every unchristian inclination of the *external* man is brought into judgment, and through judgment into condemnation and subjection; whilst, at the same time, and by the same act, all the powers, virtues, graces, and blessings of **GOD** and heaven, in the *internal* man, are brought into exercise, and through exercise into extension; until finally they descend, and in their descent take entire possession of the external man, by reducing him to subordination, and thus filling him with all the fulness of their own heavenly gifts, excellencies, peace, and salvation!

You see, then, my friend, from these few considerations, of what importance it is to confirm yourself in a belief that your life is, and ever must be, merely a *derived* life; the fountain of which is the **GREAT AND HOLY GOD, THE GRAND ETERNAL SOURCE OF ALL LIFE**, whether natural or spiritual; whether bestial, human, or angelic.

Much more might be said, if necessary, on the interesting subject, but I trust that the above remarks will be sufficient to establish you in a right faith and a correspondent conduct, by leading you to exercise your life *freely*, as if it was *your own* and independent; yet in that exercise to recollect gratefully, that it is a *momentary gift*, for which you are momentarily indebted to the **DIVINE FATHER** of your being.

At some future opportunity I shall be glad to call your attention to another point of no small moment, viz., the *high value* of your immortal soul or spirit, which, as hath been shown, is a spiritual form, intended to receive life from **GOD**: but my present time will only allow me to say how truly I remain, in devout prayer for your eternal well-being,

Yours, &c. &c.

Letter CXX.

On the high worth and value of the human soul, as resulting from the consideration of its distinguished and eminent capacity to receive, and to bring into useful operation and effect, THE LIFE OF GOD.

MY DEAR SIR,

I need not remind you, because I am persuaded you have long ago reflected on the subject with a discriminating judgment and profound attention, that the value of all property amongst men, or the estimation in which it is held, is twofold, viz., *apparent* and *real*; and that natural men, or those who have not suffered their eyes to be opened by the light of Revelation, make their decision according to the former estimation; whilst spiritual men, or those who have had the advantage of that glorious light, make theirs according to the latter. It is equally needless to remind you, and for the reason above stated, that property itself, as well as its estimation, is of two kinds, viz., *temporal* and *eternal*; and that natural men, as such, always feel themselves most interested in the former kind, viz., temporal property; whilst spiritual men never fail to set the highest value on the latter, viz., eternal property.

But, what shall we say is the just and true meaning of our English term, *property*? Is it consistent either with reason or common sense, to call that property which may be taken away from us at any moment; and which, at best, is ours only during our short abode in the present world of shadows and uncertainties? Can a man's *body*, therefore, or his *estate*, or any other earthly and temporal possession, be rationally regarded as property, when it is evident, to demonstration, that its tenure

must terminate at the hour of death, or at that awful period which is to separate the soul from all the mere terrestrial objects of its affections and pursuits? I would extend the inquiry, also, to every *natural* mental excellence and endowment; thus, to those natural talents, acquirements, and perfections, whether in the way of learning, of art, of dignity, or of accomplishment, which their possessors, in many cases, estimate as the *most durable* and *valuable* of all *property*; and I would again ask, Can the term *property* be fitly applied to such things so long as they remain *merely* natural; in other words, so long as they are possessed and enjoyed in a state of separation from their DIVINE ORIGINAL, and are thus vilely prostituted to the service and nourishment of a *defiled self-love*, instead of being offered up in sacrifice to the GIVER OF ALL GOOD, by the devout and grateful acknowledgment that they are His merciful gifts?

It is evident, then, that *the soul* of man is the *only property* which can, in any correct sense, be said truly and really to belong to him; since his soul is the only property which he can carry with him beyond that grave which is so soon to swallow up and annihilate every thing else that he *calls* property. But, what shall we say is this substance to which we give the name of *soul*? It has already been shown, in a former letter, that the soul of man is a spiritual form, created to receive life from GOD, and that thus it is to be regarded in a twofold view; first, as a *recipient form*; and secondly, as to *the life which it receives*: in other words, first, as a passive subject, or as a mere form, in itself destitute of life; and secondly, as an active subject, by virtue of the life which it continually derives from a DIVINE FOUNTAIN. To gain a true idea, then, of the immense value of the human soul, we must learn to consider it according to these several views, not only as constituting the *all* of human property, but also as connected with the DIVINE SOURCE of all life; by virtue of which connexion it is at once both a *passive* and an *active* subject, and

in this its double character is gifted with the most astonishing capacities, particularly with the capacity of "inheriting all things;" (Rev. xxi. 7.) thus of extending its property beyond any given or assignable limit.

I am well aware that this estimate of the human soul will appear to the mere natural man to be extravagant and over-charged; because the mere natural man, in consequence of not suffering his intellectual eyes to be opened by the light of DIVINE REVELATION, discerns in the soul no higher capacity than what enables it to imbibe human science, to penetrate into the arcana of nature, to exercise and improve the powers of reasoning, and thus to acquire temporal distinction by an application of its faculties to mere temporal ends and purposes. But, my dear sir, I address you on the present occasion, not as a mere natural man, who has never raised his views of things above the contemplation of nature, nor his affections above the perishable gain and glory of the present life; but I address you as a spiritual man, or as one whose mental eye is opened to receive the light of truth, which is the light of heaven, and whose heart begins to be affected by the grand and everlasting objects made manifest by that light. I am persuaded, therefore, you will agree with me in the sentiment, that before we can become acquainted with the real value of any thing, we must acquire a just and true knowledge of it; and this knowledge must extend, not only to the *external aspect* or appearance of the thing, but to its *internal qualities, capacities, and powers*. Thus, in making an estimate of the value of natural things, such as a diamond, a piece of metal, or a grain of corn, we form our judgment, not from the outsides of those substances, that is to say, from the matrix of the diamond, from the ore of the metal, or from the coat or outward covering of the grain of corn, because such judgment, we are well aware, must of necessity be erroneous; but we suffer our decision to be directed by what the knowledge of experience teaches respecting the inside of each substance when divested of its outside; thus by

the brilliancy of the first when separated from its matrix ; by the use of the second when separated from its ore ; and by the nutritious juice of the third when separated from its chaff.

I am persuaded, yet further, that you will allow with me, that no just and true knowledge of the human soul can possibly be acquired except from *Revelation*; and that, consequently, no correct estimate can be made of its high and infinite value but from the same heavenly source. The natural man, therefore, who forms his judgment, in this instance, from what he discovers in regard to the natural powers and capacities of the soul, must of necessity be totally in the dark as to its higher or spiritual excellencies. He may, indeed, so far separate it from its *matrix*, its *ore*, and its *chaff*, as to be able to recognise some of its interior wonderful qualities, whilst he observes it soaring, with a Milton, into the regions of poetical imagery, or diving, with a Bacon or a Newton, into the depths of philosophical research. But here his view terminates: nor is it possible for him to extend it without the aid of revealed wisdom. The faculty, therefore, with which the soul of every individual of the human race is gifted,—of contemplating the bright light of the ETERNAL TRUTH, and submitting to its divine guidance; of acquiring thus a knowledge of its everlasting destination, and of forming its life accordingly; of exalting its affections from earthly things to heavenly, so as to give to these latter things the entire ascendancy over the former; of acquainting itself thus with its GREAT CREATOR, His will, His kingdom, His providence, and all His divine attributes; and by virtue of this acquaintance, of entering into an eternal conjunction of love and of life with Him:—this faculty, I say, of becoming a child of GOD, and of thus acquiring a blessed immortality, by securing a happy abode hereafter amongst those holy beings, who are for ever singing the heavenly song, “Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,” (Rev. v. 12.)—is a faculty of which the mere natural man can form no idea,

still less can he feel interested in the sublime objects on which it is exercised.

How, then, are we bound to respect that **DIVINE REVELATION** which alone makes us acquainted with ourselves, by separating from its matrix that *pearl of great price* which lies stored up in the inmost chambers of our being, and by thus unveiling to our delighted view all its splendid and supernatural qualities, capacities, and powers! For, let us hear, now, what this Revelation teaches concerning the human soul. In the first place, we are instructed, as was shewn in a former letter, that the soul of every human being is a form and substance receptive of life from **GOD**; for to this purpose we find it written, that **GOD**, in the beginning, "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) In the second place, we learn, that by virtue of this inspired life, every human soul is the property of its **DIVINE CREATOR**; for thus it is again written, "As I live, saith the **LORD GOD**, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." (Ezek. xviii. 3, 4.) Thirdly, we are taught, that the souls of men are objects of the tender love and regard of the **FATHER OF MERCIES**; which love and regard have been manifested in all ages of the world, by the most affectionate solicitude to instruct them in Divine wisdom; to point out to them the path which leads to eternal life; to convert them thus from the darkness of sin to the light of righteousness; and finally, to redeem them from death and destruction, by replenishing them with all the fulness of the Divine presence, power, and benediction, through a living eternal conjunction with their **CREATING, REDEEMING, and REGENERATING GOD**; which conjunction is dignified by the sacred name of *marriage*.*

And what consideration now, let me ask, can so decidedly establish the value of the human soul, as the idea here presented

* See the testimony of Revelation throughout. See also Letter viii. of this work.

to our view of the high estimation in which it is held by its GREAT CREATOR? For, doth this CREATOR humble Himself to teach, to lead, to convert, to purify, to redeem, to save, and finally, to dwell with the souls which He has made, by fixing in them His own eternal habitation of love and wisdom, of purity and peace, of power and benediction? Is this GREAT and HOLY GOD, also, most willing and eager to impart to these souls all that He hath; thus, all the riches and treasures, the graces and virtues, the blessings and securities of His own essential life, goodness, and truth? Then, what eye cannot see, (unless it be darkened by the infidelity of sin) that the soul or spirit of every human being is a wonderful *casket*, intended by the MOST HIGH to receive and contain in it a still more wonderful *jewel*; even that *pearl of great price* for which the "wise merchantman selleth all that he hath, and buyeth it" (Matt. xiii. 45, 46.) What eye, therefore, cannot further see, that on this casket is inscribed an intrinsic value, as far exceeding that of all other human property, as heaven is above earth, eternity above time, GOD above man, and an everlasting, universal possession above that which is transitory, partial, and perishable?

But, my dear sir, from this view of the incomparable value of the human soul, as estimated on the scale of Divine judgment, several interesting questions arise, which cannot be answered by the thoughtful mind without a sigh. For, it may be asked, Whence comes it to pass that, in despite of the above judgment, so many other objects have acquired, in the eyes of the great bulk of mankind, a value far superior to what is allotted to the spiritual and eternal object of which we are now speaking? Whence comes it to pass, that even a material and perishable body is, in many instances, held in higher estimation than its immaterial and everlasting inhabitant; and that even a clod of earth, and a purse full of a yellow metal called gold, exercise such a fascinating influence on the minds of human beings, that the price of an immortal soul is entirely overlooked

and annihilated when set in competition with those terrestrial vanities? Alas! we are forced to reply to these questions with tears; because no other satisfactory answer can be given to them than what has a tendency to prove the melancholy, humiliating truth, that whilst we hold the BIBLE in our *hands*, and fill our *heads* with its speculations, we suffer the *world* to take possession of our *hearts*, and from our hearts to influence our *judgments*, until at length we call nothing *truly valuable* but what tends to promote our worldly and temporal interests! Thus we put out those *spiritual eyes* of our minds which were intended to take the exact measure, and to form the just estimate, of our *true property*, as consisting in a spiritual and immaterial substance, capable of apprehending the rich and boundless love of its CREATOR, and of attaching itself to Him by reciprocal love; whilst we open more widely our *corporeal eyes* to be deceived by the baubles of corporeal goods, which a delusive world is ever presenting to our mistaken view and our fatal acceptance!

I wish, however, to be understood, in making these observations, that I do not consider them as applying universally, because I am well persuaded in my own mind, that there are many interesting exceptions to their general import; and that thus, howsoever, in general, *darkness may be upon the face of the deep*, yet, through the influence of the *Divine Spirit moving on the face of the waters, and saying, Let there be light*, (Gen. i. 2, 3.) the darkness is gradually removing; and, in consequence, the high and infinite value of the human soul or spirit is beginning to be seen in all the clearness and fulness of a noon-day light. And will you not, my dear sir, unite your devout supplications with mine, that this noon-day light may extend itself through all the regions of this lower world;—and that thus mankind may begin to know themselves, by discovering the high price of that *inestimable jewel* which they possess in the deep centre of their own being? Will you not, I say, pray earnestly with me, that the vanity of mere temporal

property may no longer deceive, by putting out the eyes and stopping the ears of deluded mortals; but the real value of the soul be universally felt, through the opening of all eyes to behold the bright light, and of all ears to hear the glad sound, of that **ETERNAL WISDOM** which is ever desirous to unveil to man all its hidden treasures, and to convince him of its willingness to make those treasures his own? Will you not, in short, present your continual intercessions at the throne of the **ALMIGHTY**, in favour of your fellow-creatures; beseeching Him, in His mercy, to disperse the darkness of sin and ignorance, by leading all mankind to see and discern clearly that their true valuables are to be found within and not out of themselves; and that thus, if they ever hope to find and possess those valuables, they must look *within* and not *without*?

I fancy that I already see you prostrate before your **HEAVENLY FATHER** in this form of blessed intercession; and that with a view to give it the fuller effect, you are determined to make your own life an exemplification of that wisdom which you supplicate for others. I fancy, therefore, that I already see you *opening all the doors of your mind to let in the King of glory*, beginning with the *first* door—the *senses*,—and proceeding thence to the doors of *reason*, *intelligence*, and *will*, until you arrive at that inmost door which opens to the **DIVINE PRESENCE**, in the **GLORIFIED** or **DIVINE HUMANITY** of the **GREAT SAVIOUR**! Nor do you even stop at this bright eminence, for lo! from this exalted station you see it right to descend, that so you may fulfil the various duties which you owe to society; yet, in this descent, I see you careful to bring down, through every region of your mind and body, all the blessed influences of heavenly love and wisdom which you experienced in your ascent; that so the *last* may be *first*, and the *first* *last*; in other words, that your *actions* may partake of the purity of your *principles*, and that the purity of your principles may be fixed and confirmed by your actions!

And here I take my leave of you for the present; because

here, I am persuaded, you will enjoy a fulness of peace which I will no longer disturb, only by the assurance how truly happy I shall be, at a future opportunity, to resume my subject, by endeavouring to point out to you the astonishing capacity with which the soul of every human being is gifted, by virtue of the life it receives from GOD, of ascending by degrees from the lowest delights of sense, through all the intermediate gratifications of science, of reason, and of intellect; until it reaches the supreme joy resulting from its reciprocal conjunction with the MOST HIGH, in the purity of His love, the brightness of His wisdom, and the power of His operation.

In the mean time, believe me to remain,

Sincerely and affectionately,

Yours, &c. &c.

Letter VIII.

On the astonishing capacity with which the soul of every human being is gifted, by virtue of the life it receives from GOD, of ascending by degrees from the lowest delights of sense, through all the intermediate gratifications of science, of reason, and of intellect; until it reaches the supreme joy, resulting from its reciprocal conjunction with the MOST HIGH, in the purity of His love, the brightness of His wisdom, and the power of His operation: and of the several distinct characters of relationship to the DIVINE BEING which it acquires in that ascent.

MY DEAR SIR,

It cannot have escaped your observation, that the human soul is the subject of a thousand varied delights, which differ from each other, not only in regard to the multitudinous objects which excite them, but also in reference to the degree of life in which they are received and tasted. Thus, the delights of *sense* manifest themselves in an endless diversity, according to the divers impressions made on the organs of sense; whilst, at the same time, they differ essentially from the delights generated in the higher regions of mind, called *reason, intellect, conscience, will, &c.* It cannot, therefore, have escaped your further notice, that the delights of sense are the lowest in the scale of human gratifications; and that above them, and within them, there is a continual creation of higher and interior joys, in proportion as the rational and intellectual mind is opened; and especially in the degree that that mind is elevated to the knowledge and love of the SUPREME GOOD and the SUPREME TRUTH.

Your own discernment, too, will enable you to discover, that in the above gradation of delights is to be seen one of the grand characteristics by which man is distinguished from all other animals; and one, also, which eminently marks, not only a difference as to the dignity of his being, but also as to its duration. For the inferior animals, it is evident, are limited in their gratifications to the delights of sense; nor have they any capacity of elevation to the superior or interior delights either of reason or of intellect; and still less of those which result from a devout regard to eternal objects. The inferior animals, therefore, in this fixed boundary of their joys, exhibit, almost to demonstration, the fixed boundary of their existence; since it is highly improbable that the existence of any being can be extended to a *spiritual* and *eternal* world, when yet his capacities are so limited, that he can neither conceive an idea of such a world, nor have any relish for its enjoyments. Man, on the contrary, from the capacity with which he is gifted of elevating his joys to an eternal world, and especially to the GOD of that world, receives the most decided evidence of his *immortality*; for how else can we account for this capacity, unless that world and its GOD were designed for his everlasting possession and enjoyment?

Allow me, then, to call your attention for a few minutes to this distinguishing feature in the character of man, by virtue of which he is enabled to raise his delights (or rather, suffer them to be raised) from their lowest sensual basis, to their highest spiritual summit; whilst he passes, at the same time, through all the intermediate gratifications of reason and of intellect, until, finally, a blessed conjunction, through the descent of the SUPREME, is effected of them all, to fill, to sanctify, and to save both the intermediate and the ultimate.

During the early period of infancy, it is manifest that the delights of sense are the *only* delights which stimulate their young and delicate subjects; and that these are contracted in their measure, in consequence of the immature state of the

organs of sense, which have not as yet attained their full growth and activity. By degrees, however, these organs are opened more and more to the reception of the impressions made on them by surrounding objects; and of course the delights of sense receive perpetual increment, both as to number and intensity. Here, then, we discover the first rude and raw materials for the formation of the future man; which materials, nevertheless, are not immediately applied to the noble purpose for which they are designed, but for a time are stored up for future use, until the rational faculty be opened, with its astonishing capacity of viewing, of analyzing, and of thus exalting them into the higher region of intellect and of intellectual enjoyment. In infancy, then, and boyhood, the *pleasures of sense* manifestly predominate; nor is it known, at the time, that any higher gratifications exist; still less that they are designed to fill up the cup of human felicity.

But mark, now, the gracious purposes of the Divine providence of the MOST HIGH, together with the accomplishment of those purposes through the operation of that *life from God* which is the blessed birthright of every human being!

When a sufficient store of the rudiments of bliss has been collected through the instrumentality of the senses, a new source of delights presently begins to be opened by the operation of the *natural affections*. Varied and distinct relationships are thus created, which manifest, each of them, their enchanting allurements under the several forms of love to parents, of friendliness towards playmates, of respect to masters and mistresses, of tenderness towards the afflicted and distressed, of regard to the laws of civil and moral life; and finally, of eagerness to acquire all that science and knowledge which is necessary to discharge the varied duties resulting from the above relationships. What human being has not felt more or less of the influence of these affections, and of the gratification which they impart? What human being, therefore, has not here a demonstrative evidence of the operation of an unseen

power in himself, raising him daily above the delights of sense, and by that elevation convincing him that he is created to be the happy subject of higher and more durable joys; and thus to approximate, by degrees, to the HIGHEST and the ETERNAL?

But the time is now arrived when our young heir of immortality, having been introduced into the several regions of *sensual, scientific, civil, and moral* life; and having also feasted on the abundant delights which each region affords, is to experience an additional proof of the love and benevolence of his HEAVENLY FATHER, and also of the boundless capacities of bliss with which, through the adorable mercy of that FATHER, he is gifted. For lo! the pages of the ETERNAL TRUTH now begin to claim his attention, and he feels himself impelled, by an almost irresistible desire, to explore that wonderful BOOK OF REVELATION in which they are contained. The first impression made by this DIVINE TESTIMONY is on his *understanding*; which now, by degrees, becomes enlightened to see the glories of a new world, the happiness and order of its celestial inhabitants, and above all,—the existence, the mercy, the wisdom, and providence of the GOD who dwells there: all which sublime objects had heretofore been concealed from his sight in impenetrable darkness! A thousand new delights thus burst on his enraptured eyes—as indefinitely exceeding all the gratifications of sense, and of human science and intelligence, as heaven is above earth, and the concerns of eternity superior to those of time! In proportion, too, as he explores the interior contents of the above DIVINE TESTIMONY, so as to discover the various orders of truth and of life which enter into its composition, in the same proportion his delights increase both in number and in interest! And, indeed, how should it be otherwise? For, does he not find, to his inexpressible joy, that in reading the WORD OF GOD he converses with GOD Himself;—He associates himself with Him *Who spake as never man spake*;—like Moses of old, he ascends the holy mount of the Divine presence and communication, and receives from the

mouth of the INFINITE and ETERNAL, that astonishing system of Divine philosophy and legislation, the distinguishing characteristics of which, as announced by GOD Himself, are,—“ that it is perfect, converting the soul ; that it is sure, making wise the simple ; that it is right, rejoicing the heart ; that it is pure, enlightening the eyes ; that it is clean, enduring for ever ; that it is true and righteous altogether ; that it is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honey comb ” ? (Psalm xix.)

But the delights resulting from the testimony of the inspired volume are not long confined to the understanding of our young student ; for lo ! they begin presently to affect his *will*, and thus to operate on his *love* and *affections*, by exalting these higher principles of his mind to the pursuit and enjoyment of the most sublime and august objects. For a time, indeed, his chief gratification in his perusal of the sacred records, is grounded in his exquisite relish of the fruit of the *tree of knowledge* ; but this gratification he quickly discovers is only preparatory to one infinitely sweeter, because more interior and more elevated, which never fails to present itself to his acceptance, in proportion as he approaches to, and tastes the fruit of, *the tree of life*. Are you surprised at the figurative names here assigned to two distinct gratifications ? Your surprise will cease when you allow yourself leisure to consider that the two figurative trees of *knowledge* and of *life* are planted by the GREAT CREATOR in the garden of every human mind, as they were originally planted in paradise, to denote that every human being is endowed with the *double* faculty both of *knowing* and of *loving* ; and that his eternal happiness depends altogether on his combined exercise of each faculty. For, until he *knows* what eternal happiness is, and in what it consists, how is it possible for him to make any advancement towards its attainment ? Yet, if this knowledge be confined merely to his *understanding*, without affecting his *will* or *love*, how plain is it to see, that it is like the light of a wintry sun,

unattended with heat, which leaves the earth at once torpid, unfruitful, and dead! It is evident, then, that the grand design of the ALMIGHTY, in dispensing to mankind the astonishing blessing of His MOST HOLY WORD, is twofold, viz., first, to elevate the human understanding to the enjoyment of celestial *light*; and, secondly, by means of that sacred light, to exalt the human will to the pure and holy relish of celestial love.

Behold, then, our young disciple at length arrived at that blissful state, when the grand objects presented to his delighted view in the pages of Revelation begin now to affect his *love*, and thus to raise his affections out of and above the *mire* and *clay* of mere temporal gratifications, to feast on the sublime joys resulting from the love and adoration of the GREAT FATHER of his being! What sight can be more delightful, and what too more rational? For, hath not that GREAT FATHER, in His unbounded mercy, called and invited all His children to this blessed feast of His own pure love, when He says, not in the way of a *commandment* only, but to express His infinite *loving-kindness* to every individual of His offspring, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"? (Deut. vi. 5,—Matt. xxii. 37,—Luke x. 27.) Is it not plain, too, that this Divine law is accommodated in the most perfect manner to the nature and constitution of the being to whom it is given, by presenting to his view and acceptance an object of regard commensurate with his boundless desires, and alone capable of satisfying them? I appeal, on this occasion, my dear sir, to your own feelings. For, do not you find something in yourself which, panting after an eternal good, refuses to admit a fulness of consolation from any other? Are not you thus made sensible that all the riches, glories, and pleasures of this lower world are inadequate to the gratification of your wishes? And do you not hence feel an inward and irresistible conviction that you were born to a more durable inheritance than the

present world can supply; and for the enjoyment of a bliss which can only be found and tasted in proportion as you suffer your love and affections to be raised from earth to heaven, from what is temporal to what is eternal, from what is human to what is Divine? You have then a sure and satisfactory testimony in your own mind, that there is implanted in the human soul a blessed power, by virtue of which it is capable of ascending from one degree of delight to another, until it reaches the highest; which highest is to be found only in the ETERNAL God and His everlasting kingdom!

Our disciple, then, we will suppose, has attained to this highest step in the ladder of Divine communication and ascent; and has already begun to feed on that celestial food of which it is written, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." (John vi. 50.) Let it not, however, be supposed, that as yet he is admitted into all the fulness of the delights prepared for his acceptance; because this fulness can only be tasted by *imparting his bread to others* with the same liberality with which it has been imparted to himself. For such is the very essential quality of the Divine love and truth, that their sweetness cannot long be enjoyed in selfish and solitary parsimony, but only in charitable and social *distribution*; and that thus, like the figurative *loaves* and *fishes* of old, they derive increase in proportion to the *multitudes* who are made partakers of their nutritive virtues. Accordingly it is written in the divine testimony, respecting these celestial blessings, "Give, and it shall be given unto you;" (Luke vi. 38.) and in another place, "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour." (Psal. cxii. 9.)

It is expedient, then, that in agreement with this quality of the DIVINE GRACE which he has received, our young disciple, after having feasted both his *eyes* and his *heart* with the blessings of celestial life and love, on the high and sacred mountain of the Divine bounty and loving-kindness, should

next descend from his elevation to *share his bread with others*; and thus at once to continue and to multiply its sweets. It is expedient, I say, that the love of GOD should become operative in works of charity amongst men, otherwise it wants its proper foundation to rest upon: in which case it may be compared with a head separate from its trunk and feet, which, it must be obvious, is totally unfit for any use or enjoyment whatsoever.

Would you behold, then, the sum and perfection of the joys and delights which the human soul, by virtue of the life which it receives continually from its DIVINE FOUNTAIN, is capable of tasting? Let me direct your eyes to a view of that favoured mortal who, having been elevated, through the DIVINE MERCY, to a taste of the sublime blessedness resulting from a participation of the Divine loving-kindness, is led to open and extend the channel of that blessedness, by bringing it down from the high mountain in which it originates, to water and enrich the valley of human concerns, interests, and occupations here below. Behold, I say, in this child of heaven, the never-failing progress and end of Christian love and life! For lo! he sees the necessity of *doing* what is good and heavenly, as well as of *loving* it; and of thus bringing down into his *external* man, all the holy and blessed influences manifested in his *internal*; that so the two men may be closely united in one common affection and operation, and society may be benefitted and improved by their *combined* energies. Is he then a priest, a judge, a soldier, a merchant, a mechanic, or engaged in any other office of public utility? He feels a weighty obligation imposed upon him to discharge faithfully, diligently, and conscientiously, the several duties to which that office binds him; recollecting that such a discharge constitutes at once the true essence and full measure of Christian charity, and is at the same time a fulfilment of the Divine precept, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John xiii. 17.) But what pen can recount the

new and varied delights resulting from this union of the love of GOD with the love of man, or from this conjunction of *heavenly affection* with its *correspondent operation*; by virtue of which the *world above* is joined with the *world below*, *angels* with *men*, and the CREATOR with His *creatures*? Suffice it, therefore to say, that when the *head*, the *heart*, and the *hands* of man are thus connected in one common purpose of universal benevolence, a *complex* and *full* gratification never fails to result from the connexion, which neither the head, the heart, or the hands can possibly produce in their single and unconnected state.

And here let me call your attention to a circumstance which possibly has already occurred to your notice,—or, at all events, deserves it. The circumstance to which I allude is this: that the capacity above adverted to, by virtue of which the human soul is enabled to ascend from one degree of delight to another, and to combine the delights of each degree in such a manner as to form the *complex* delight which may be called *happiness*, is a manifest and most convincing proof of the *perpetual connexion of the life of man with the life of GOD*; which connexion has been the subject of discussion in my former letters. For how is it possible, let me ask, for man to *raise himself* from one delight to another, or indeed, *of himself*, to command any delight? For, if he had this power *of himself*, can it be supposed that he would not be always exerting it, especially when oppressed by the burden of affliction and trouble? His very sorrows, therefore, are the most satisfactory proofs that he is utterly incapable, *of himself*, of elevating himself to a single delight; and of course his elevation, if it ever be effected, must be attributed to the operation of a power *above himself*, consequently to a DIVINE POWER!

The ascent, then, of the human soul from a lower to a higher delight is a manifest demonstration of DIVINE AGENCY; and of an agency, too, continually exerted in the inmost principles

of the life of man. But this is not all; since this agency involves in it the additional proof that man is a perpetual object of DIVINE FAVOUR; and that thus his capacity of rising in the scale of delights is the result of a strong *attractive love* on the part of the FATHER OF MERCIES, which is ever in the act of accomplishing the blessed promise of the GREAT REDEEMER where He says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto ME." (John xii. 32.) For, what can be the purpose and end of this Divine attraction, but to promote the happiness of man, by drawing him to a close and intimate conjunction with the SUPREME GOOD? And what can be a more distinguished and unequivocal proof of Divine love than the endeavour to accomplish such a purpose and end?

In every ascent, then, of human delights, and especially of those which are derived from the WORD OF GOD, we behold the effect and manifestation of the adorable mercy and tenderness of that HEAVENLY FATHER, whose principal joy it is to draw all His children within the golden girdle of His own infinite love, protection, and blessing; that so He may impart to them as large a share of His own happiness as they are capable of receiving. Consequently, in every ascent of human delight we discover some new and distinct *relationship* with that HEAVENLY FATHER; which relationship is perpetually changing, in proportion as the delight is nearer to, or more remote from, its DIVINE SOURCE. This relationship, we find, is frequently adverted to in the volume of Revelation, where mention is made of its several classes under the several titles of *stranger, servant, companion, friend, child, bride, and of wife*.* Every human being, therefore, whether he be aware

* It is much to be lamented that the distinction between *companion* and *friend* has not been attended to in the common English version of the New Testament, where we find, in two instances, the latter term substituted in place of the former. Thus, in the parable of the *labourers in the vineyard*, (Matt. xx. 13.) it is rendered, "Friend, I do thee no wrong," when yet, in the original Greek, the term rendered friend is *Etairoi*, which properly means *companion*. The same confusion of terms occurs again at chap. xxii. 12, where, in the parable of the *marriage of the king's son*,

of it or not, must of necessity be enrolled in one of these classes: and thus, according to the quality of his delights, must be either a *stranger*, a *servant*, a *companion*, a *friend*, a *child*, a *bride*, or a *wife* of the INFINITE and the ETERNAL.

It would require a volume to say all that might be said on the subject of the above relationships; and after all, perhaps, much would remain unsaid, and more unthought of. Leaving it, therefore, to your future consideration, and at the same time recommending it as a subject of all others the most interesting to every intelligent mind, I shall beg leave at present only to suggest, that so long as man remains in the enjoyment of mere natural and sensual delights, separated from all regard to the ETERNAL WORD of the MOST HIGH, his relationship to his HEAVENLY FATHER, in such case, is merely that of a *stranger*. Again, supposing him to have received some degree of information respecting the requirements of the ETERNAL TRUTH, and that he, accordingly, begins to submit to those requirements,—his submission, if grounded only in what *others have taught him* to be right and good, and not in *his own intelligence* of what is so, still less in his *delight* in that intelligence, stamps upon him only the character of a *servant*. Again, whensoever he acquires from the word of God the knowledge of his duty, but as yet *feels no delight* in acting according to that knowledge, in this case he falls under the description of those who, in the language of Revelation, are called *companions*. Again, if to the knowledge of his duty be superadded *a degree of delight in doing it*, the name of *companion* is then changed into the more honourable and affectionate title of *friend*. In proportion, again, as this combined knowledge and delight begin to *operate upon*, and *produce their blessed effects on*, *his life*, in the same proportion the relationship is again changed from that of companion and friend to the more endearing one of *child*. Lastly, whensoever, of ^{all} man who has not on a wedding garment is called *friend*, when yet, in the original he has no higher a title than that of *companion*.

through combined knowledge and love, the purified soul of man is in the progress of exaltation to the high honour and happiness of conjunction with the DIVINE SOURCE of its life, it is then styled a *bride* : and when the conjunction is effected, and it is thus admitted to all the sanctities, blessings, and privileges of the *heavenly marriage*, it then acquires a name which is above every name of distinction attainable by man, and is called the bride the LAMB'S *wife*!

You see, then, my dear friend, the astonishing elevation of delight, and at the same time, of dignity and security, to which both yourself and your fellow-creatures are called ; and how this elevation is confirmed to you by the high and holy titles of BRIDEGROOM and HUSBAND, which the ALMIGHTY has been pleased to assume, as significative of the eternal and sacred conjunction of life into which He is disposed to enter with all His intelligent creatures. For, when this ALMIGHTY BEING saith to His church or people, "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken ; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate : but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah : for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee : and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy GOD rejoice over thee ;"—(Isaiah lxii. 4, 5.) when He again declares to His people, "Thou shalt call me MY HUSBAND ;" (Hosea ii. 16.) and again, "Turn, O children, for I am MARRIED to you ;" (Jer. iii. 14.) and again, "Thy MAKER is thy HUSBAND ; the LORD OF HOSTS is His name ; and thy REDEEMER the HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL ;"—(Isa. liv. 5.) when, too, we find it written of this same ALMIGHTY BEING, under His manifestation in the flesh, "He that hath the bride is the BRIDEGROOM ; but the friend of the BRIDEGROOM, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the BRIDEGROOM'S voice ;" (John iii. 29.) and again, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him ; for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB is come, and His wife hath made herself ready ;"—

(Rev. xix. 7.)— what are we to conclude from all this sacred testimony; or what is the plain language which it speaks? Does it not assure us, beyond all contradiction, that such is the mercy and loving-kindness of our HEAVENLY FATHER, that He is willing to enter into the holy relationship of *marriage* with all his intelligent creatures; and thus to confer upon them all the eternal honour, happiness, privilege, and security, involved in that most dignified of all titles ever conferred on human beings, THE BRIDE THE LAMB'S WIFE?

What then remains, but that we keep constantly in view this high point of elevation to which we are called, so as not only never to lose sight of it, but to be making continually nearer approaches towards it? What remains, I say, but that we compel all our delights to acknowledge their DIVINE PARENT, and to bow down before him continually in the humiliation of affectionate gratitude? And seeing that that PARENT has been pleased to gift us with various orders and degrees of delight, as the means of drawing us nearer to Himself; and that in the highest order and degree He Himself resides, ever waiting and willing to receive us there, that He may conjoin us in an eternal bond of holy marriage with Himself; what remains but that we press forward to the possession of this *golden wedding-ring*; accounting all other things, comparatively, but as *dung* and *dross*, which would detain us from the inheritance of this our highest privilege and only proper happiness?

In the devout prayer that both you and I, and every other human being, may have the wisdom to discern, the courage to pursue, and the patience and perseverance to secure, this great end of our creation and redemption,—I remain, dear sir,

Sincerely and affectionately,

Yours, &c. &c.

FINIS.