

imagination, and would render the whole subject a hopeless and utterly intractable mystery.

4. A specimen of the weakness which attaches to the system of Natural Theology, when the infinite benevolence of the Deity is the only element which it will admit into its explanations and its reasonings, is the manner in which its advocates labour to dispose of the numerous ills, wherewith the world is infested. They have recourse to arithmetic—balancing the phenomena on each side of the question, as they would the columns of a ledger. They institute respective summations of the good and the evil; and by the preponderance of the former over the latter, hold the difficulty to be resolved. The computation is neither a sure nor an easy one; but even under the admission of its justness, it remains an impracticable puzzle—why under a Being of infinite power and infinite benevolence, there should be suffering at all. This is an enigma which the single attribute of benevolence cannot unriddle, or rather the very enigma which it has created—nor shall we even approximate to the solution of it, without the aid of other attributes to help the explanation.

5. It is under the pressure of these difficulties that refuge is taken in the imagination of a future state—where it is assumed that all the disorders of the present scene are to be repaired, and full compensation made for the sufferings of our earthly existence. It is affirmed, that, although the body dies, the soul is unperishable; and, after it hath burst its unfettered way from the prison-house of its earthly tabernacle, that it will expatiate for ever