

trable veil prevents our obtaining this knowledge ; but yet that, if there be mind, I can find no ground for believing in its annihilation. The great naturalist of Geneva, Charles Bonnet, distinguished also by his piety as a Christian, maintained the reality of a future life for all sentient natures. No man who thinks seriously upon the infinite perfections of God, can imagine that difficulty can lie in his path, whether of purpose or of action ; or that there is not space in the universe to contain such assemblages of beings, and to furnish them with the fullest scope for useful and happy existence. If an expression in one of the Psalms be held to imply the annihilation of inferior animals, such interpretation will carry with it also that the souls of wicked men are annihilated : “Man that is in honour and abideth not, is like the brutes that perish.”—Where our Maker has not given us the means of knowledge, our duty is to be humbly and thankfully ignorant.* The declaration in Scripture, that “the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and no more place be found for them,” is undoubtedly figurative, and denotes the most momentous changes in the scenes of the divine government. If it be the purpose of God that the earth shall be subjected to a total conflagration, we perfectly well know that the instruments of such an event lie close at hand, and wait only the divine volition to burst out in

* *Quærent arguti sed parum sobrii homines, an immortale futurum sit omne animalium genus. His speculationibus si frænum laxetur, quorsum tandem nos abripiant ? Hac ergo simplici doctrina contenti simus, tale fore temperamentum et tam concinnum ordinem, ut nihil sit vel deforme vel fluxum appareat. “Some persons more curious than wise, ask whether the inferior animal creation will be endowed with immortality in the future state. If we give unlimited indulgence to such speculations, to what lengths will they hurry us ? Let us be satisfied with the plain doctrine, that the adjustment and disposition of the universe will be so beautifully adapted as to leave no room for disorder or decay.” Calvin, on Rom. viii. 21.*