

in them by punishment, that man, simply by the exercise of his rational faculties, and reasoning from cause to effect, as is his nature, can determine them for himself. And the great Edinburgh fires had come under neither category. God did not reveal that he had punished the tradesmen and mechanics of the High Street for the musical sins of the lawyers and land-owners of Abercrombie Place and Charlotte Square; nor could any natural relation be established between the oratorios in the Parliament House or the concerts in the Theatre Royal, and the conflagrations opposite the Cross or at the top of the Tron Church steeple. All that could be proven in the case were the facts of the festival and of the fires; and the farther fact, that, so far as could be ascertained, there was no visible connection between them, and that it was not the people who had joined in the one that had suffered from the others. And the Doctor's argument seemed to be the perilously loose one, that as God had sometimes of old visited cities and nations with judgments which had no apparent connection with the sins punished, and which could not be recognized as judgments had not He himself told that such they were, the Edinburgh fires, of which he had told nothing, might be properly regarded—seeing that they had in the same way no connection with the oratorios, and had wrought no mischief to the people who had patronized the oratorios—as special judgments on the oratorios. The good old Papist had said, “I believe because it is impossible.” What the Doctor in this instance seemed to say was, “I believe because it is not in the least likely.” If, I argued, Dr. Colquhoun's own house and library had been burnt, he would no doubt very properly have deemed the infliction a great trial to himself; but on what principal could he have further held that it was not only a trial to himself, but also a judgment on his neighbor? If we must not believe that the falling of the tower of Siloam was a special visitation on the sins of the poor men whom it crushed, how, or on what grounds, are we to believe that it was a special visitation on the sins of the men whom it did not in the least injure? I fear I remembered Dr. Colquhoun's remarks