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ON

THE NATURE

OF

TRUE RELIGION.

SECOND EDITION.

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NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

To have just and definite ideas concerning religion, is of infinite importance to man. He is born that he may become an heir of everlasting life, and should have a right knowledge of the means by which he may realize the end of his being. In the present Tract we shall consider this momentous subject,—setting forth therein, what that worship and those duties are which every human being should render to his God.

Religion is a general term, involving in it an indefinite variety of interesting ideas. It is a term expressive of all that worship, adoration, and service, which man pays to the DIVINE AUTHOR of his being; consequently, it is a term which implies, *first*, a *belief* in such a Divine Author, since without this belief, it is impossible to suppose that man can apply himself to worship, adore, or serve Him. "*He that cometh to God must believe that* HE IS, *and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*" (Heb. xi. 6.) Religion, therefore, *secondly*, implies a *knowledge* of such a Divine Author, together with a right *apprehension* of *His essential qualities*, and of the *kind of adoration* which He requires; for without the knowledge of God, it is alike impossible to conceive how there can be any real belief in Him; and without a right apprehension of His essential qualities, and of the kind of adoration which He requires, it is equally inconceivable how He can be properly worshiped. "*This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. No man knoweth the Son, but*

*the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save
the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal
Him.*" (John xvii. 3; Matt. xi. 27.)   And, *thirdly*,
it implies an *end*, a *purpose*, an *intention* on the part of
man; since it is impossible to conceive how a rational
being can engage in any act, especially in an act of such
importance as the worship, adoration, and service, of the
Creator of the universe, unless with a *design* either to
secure some immediate advantage resulting from such
an act, or to guard against some mischief, to which he
may be exposed by neglecting it. "*Come unto Me,*
(says the Divine Saviour,) *all ye that labour and are
heavy laden, and I will give you rest.   The Father
judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto
the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as
they honour the Father.   If ye know these things,
happy are ye if ye do them.*" (Matt. xi. 28; John v.
22, 23, xiii. 17.)

How plain, then, is it to see, that religion is a general
term, and that the ideas which it involves are innu-
merable.   For, in regard to our *knowledge* of God,
without which we are incapable of performing aright any
one act of religion, what thought can conceive, or tongue
enumerate, all the *particular notices* which enter into its
composition? If we think of God in the character of
Creator only, what a vast assemblage of ideas are neces-
sary to constitute such a thought!   But how indefinitely
is that assemblage multiplied and increased, when we
extend our views, and contemplate the Supreme Being
under His additional and adorable characters of Preserver,
Redeemer, and Regenerator! In regard also to the *essen-
tial qualities* of God, and to the *kind of adoration*
which he requires, we are again lost in the calculation of
all the component parts which are necessary to form a
right apprehension of those august and edifying subjects.
And so, likewise, in respect to the *end*, the *purpose*, and
the *intention* of man, which are necessary to constitute
him a *religious* being, what eye cannot see, that each of