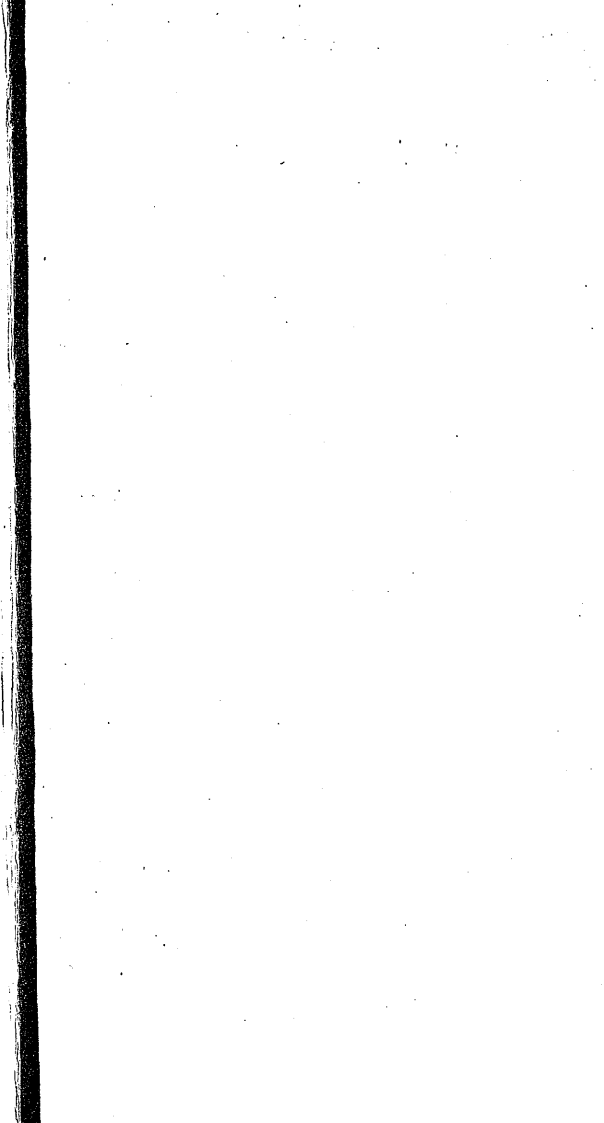
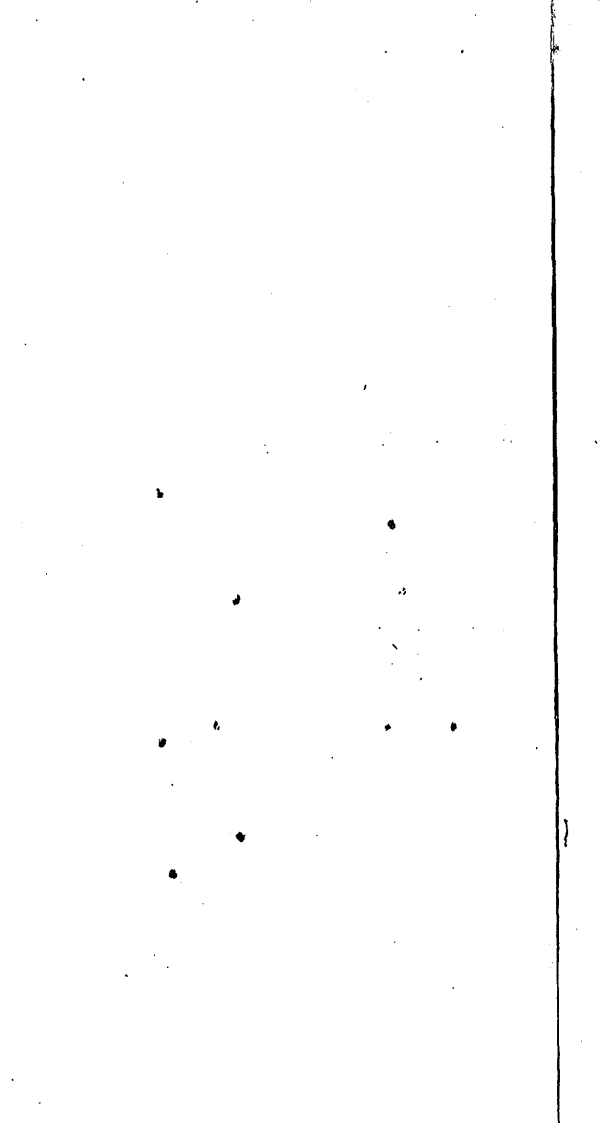


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Beauties of Dwight

by

Timothy Dwight

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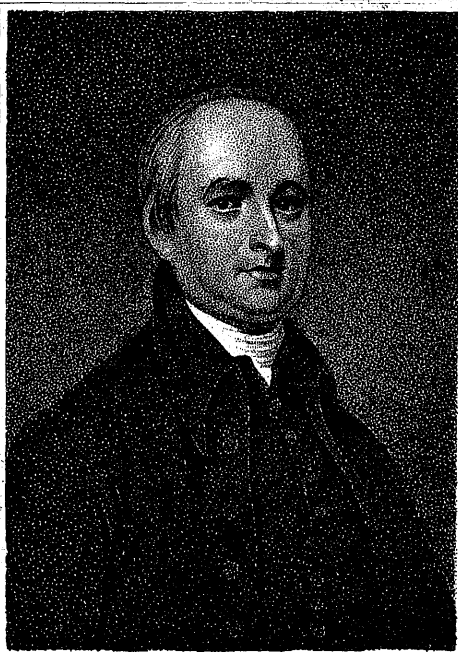
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Freeman sc.

*Rev. Timothy Dwight, D.D.
late President of Yale University,
Connecticut, America.*

Pub'd by E. Wesley: Stationers Court, June 21st 1821.

REPUBLIC OF DWIGHT

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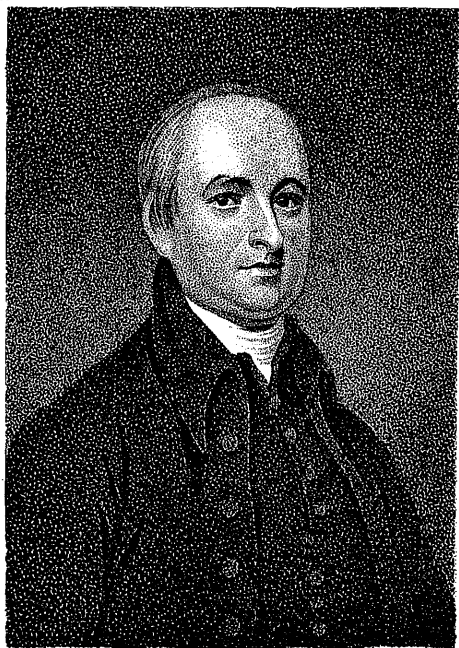
VOL. I.

LONDON

FRANCIS WESTLEY, 10, STATYERS COURT

RODGATE STREET,

1823



Proctor, sc.

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Engraved by F. W. Schiller, sc. G. Wet. Jan. 1851.

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BEAUTIES OF DWIGHT;

OR,

**DR. DWIGHT'S
SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY,**

ABRIDGED:

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE:

A PORTRAIT

AN ORIGINAL ESSAY ON HIS WRITINGS;

IN WHICH HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS ARE COMPARED WITH
THOSE OF OTHER DISTINGUISHED DIVINES OF
THE TRANS-ATLANTIC EMPIRE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

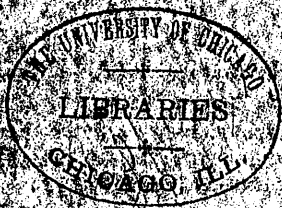
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MEMOIR, &c.

“THERE is something,” observes an anonymous writer, “so commanding in superior talents, especially when devoted to the cause of piety and virtue, as to render every tribute of respect that is paid to the march of intellect deeply interesting to the public. Men, who have distinguished themselves in the field, in the senate, at the bar, in the walks of science, and in the republic of letters, hold a conspicuous rank among the members of mortality; and whatever may be the dictate of their retiring diffidence, their names will always find a place in the records of honourable fame.

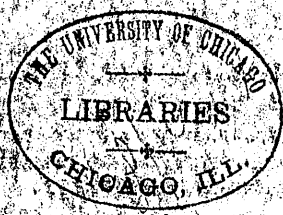
“In perusing the biography of celebrated individuals, every reader feels a peculiar satisfaction, and in all ages prescription has sanctioned the indulgence of this amiable propensity.

“The memorial operates as a stimulus to men of genius, who are urging their way through “the palpable obscure,” and tends to keep alive that spirit of emulation, to which learning and science are indebted for many of their most brilliant discoveries.”

Sometimes the good man, observes another writer, by the uncommon powers of his mind, by peculiar incidents in his life, by having exerted a commanding influence on the interests of the public, or by having acquired an unusual share in their affections,

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presents the most attractive subject of biography. Contemporaries indulge a strong desire to view more minutely the life and character of the man, whose living excellence they have often felt and acknowledged; and posterity receive with admiration the history of one, who so widely blessed a preceding generation.

That the subject of the following Memoir claims a high rank among men of this class, was fully evinced, in the testimonies, far and wide, given by the public to his excellence; in the heart-felt sorrow so extensively occasioned by his death; and in the honours so profusely poured upon his memory.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, was born at Northampton, in the county of Hampshire, in the State of Massachusetts, on the 14th day of May, A. D. 1752. His parents were Timothy and Mary Dwight. The first ancestors of his father's family, in this country, John Dwight, came from Dedham, in England, and settled at Dedham, in Massachusetts, in 1637. From him, the subject of this Memoir was descended in the oldest male line; and he was able to look back on each individual in that line, including five generations, and reflect, that he was a member of the Church of Christ, and had a fair reputation for piety. His father received his education at Yale College, where he entered on his bachelor's degree, in 1744. He was by profession a merchant; and owned a handsome landed estate in the town in which he lived. He was a man of sound understanding, of fervent piety, and of great purity of life. His mother was the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards, for many years the minister of Northampton; and afterwards president of Nassau Hall;—well known in this country, and in Europe, as one of the ablest divines of the last century. She

possessed uncommon powers of mind, and for the extent and variety of her knowledge, has rarely been exceeded, in this country, by any of her sex. The extensive mercantile, and agricultural engagements of the father, did not afford him the requisite leisure to superintend the education of his children. This task devolved upon their maternal parent, who was eminently qualified to appreciate learning and to impart it; She devoted herself to the instruction of this son, with the most assiduous attention, without neglecting the several claims, which her numerous rising family had upon her care. Perhaps, few instances can be found, in which this great duty has been performed with more scrupulous fidelity. She began to instruct him, almost as soon as he was able to speak; and such was his eagerness, as well as his capacity for improvement, that he learned the alphabet at a single lesson; and before he was four years old, was able to read the Bible with ease and correctness. He continued the pupil of his mother, till he arrived at the age of six years. From her maternal hand, he received the first rudiments of his knowledge, who also carefully instilled into his opening understanding, those principles of piety and virtue, which, combined with the influence of his father's example, under the blessing of Providence, laid the foundation of his future eminence.

At the age of six, he was sent to the grammar school, where he began the study of the Latin, and which he pursued with such alacrity, that at the age of eight, he would have been prepared for admission into college, had not the discontinuance of the school interrupted his progress, and placed him again under the faithful tuition of his affectionate mother. Geography, and history, sacred and profane, now engrossed

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his principal attention. Often has he been heard to say, that almost all his knowledge of these, was acquired at this period; and it is believed, that few persons have possessed a more extensive, or accurate acquaintance with either of these sciences. This domestic education rendered him fond of home and of the company of his parents; and led him to feel a livelier interest than is usual with boys of the same age, in the conversation of those who were older than himself. It also saved him from the school-boy coarseness and affrontery; often thought in this rough world a necessary, but by no means an ornamental appendage of the youthful character. His father was particularly fond of the society of men of education and intelligence; and his hospitable house, was the well-known resort of gentlemen of this character. To no one of the family were they more welcome than to his son. Even at this very early period of life, while listening to their conversation on the character of the great men of the age, both in the colonies, and in Europe, a deep and lasting impression was made upon his mind; and he then formed a settled resolution, that he would make every effort in his power to equal those, whose talents and character he heard so highly extolled.

In his twelfth year, he went to Middletown, for the purpose of pursuing his studies under the late Rev. Enoch Huntington, a gentleman of high classical attainments. He boarded in the family, and devoted himself to his books with unusual assiduity and success. Not content with the time regularly allotted to study in the school, he spent most of his leisure hours at home in intense application. So entirely was his mind absorbed by his books, that it was no uncommon thing for the members of his family to pass

through his room, and even to call him by name, without being perceived by him. During his residence at Middletown, his conduct was marked with the strictest propriety, his manners were amiable and affectionate, his attention to his studies was intense and unremitted, and his progress in them rapid and honourable.

In September, 1765, when he had just passed his thirteenth year, he was admitted as a member of Yale College. During the winter he had the misfortune to break his arm, and for several months in the spring and summer, he was prevented by sickness from pursuing his studies. This circumstance, together with the laxity of discipline, and the irregularity of conduct which at that time unhappily prevailed in the college, tended much to impede his advancement in knowledge, and the two first years of his collegiate life must have been in a considerable measure lost to him as a student. Under all these disadvantages, young Dwight gained considerable reputation for genius and acquirements. His information and address rendered his society generally pleasing. It was courted, even by members of the higher classes, from the pernicious influence of whose habits and amusements he was in a good measure preserved, by the principles of virtue his parents had early impressed upon his mind.

He was now fifteen. In addition to his ordinary pursuits, he devoted a considerable portion of his time to the improvement of his hand-writing, and by dint of his own exertions attained a degree of excellence in penmanship that has rarely been equalled. So elegant, indeed, was his writing, that it was with difficulty distinguished from the handsomest engravings.

This is the earliest period in which he is known to have paid any attention to poetry and music. His attachment to the latter, particularly sacred music, was ardent. His voice was at once melodious and powerful, and his ear exquisitely discriminating.

This may with propriety be considered as the era of his excessive devotion to study, and the acquisition of knowledge. At the commencement of the year he formed a resolution to which he faithfully adhered during the remainder of his collegiate life, to employ fourteen hours each day in close application to his studies. At that time college prayers were attended at half-past five o'clock in the morning in the winter, and at half-past four in the summer. He began the year by qualifying himself, every morning, to construe and parse an hundred lines in Homer before prayers. This lesson, which formed no part of the regular college exercises, was, of course, acquired by candle-light; and his object in attending to it was, to render himself more thoroughly master of the Greek language, than he could expect to become in the common round of studies pursued by his class. The lesson, as he advanced, was gradually increased to a much larger quantity.

By this incessant application to study at such unreasonable hours, his eyes became seriously affected, and it is not improbable that the foundation was thus early laid of that weakness in them, which caused him so much distress during the remainder of his life.

Such intense and unwearied diligence, however, with the aid of his natural genius, soon established his reputation as a scholar, and placed him amongst the first of his class.

He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the

year 1769, when he was a little past seventeen years of age.

A short time after leaving College, he was employed to take charge of a grammar school at New Haven. In this situation he continued two years, highly esteemed as an instructor, both by his pupils and their parents. This was the commencement of that course of life, which, with very little interruption, he pursued for nearly fifty years; a course of life in which Providence had peculiarly qualified him to excel. Probably few men have lived, who, in the same mode, have rendered more eminent services to mankind.

During these two years he made great advancement in literature and science. His time was regularly divided, and occupied:—six hours in each day in school; eight hours in close and severe study; and the remaining ten hours in exercise and sleep.

In September, 1771, when he was past nineteen, he was chosen a tutor in Yale College. In this situation he remained for six succeeding years, performing its duties with distinguished success and reputation. His associates were men of eminent talents; and by their united efforts, the institution soon acquired a new and most important character. The period, from 1771 to 1777, will ever be considered as forming an era in the history of the College.

It was in the first year of his tutorship, at the age of nineteen, that the subject of this Memoir commenced writing the CONQUEST OF CANAAN, a regular epic poem, founded upon the portion of sacred history to which its title refers, and which was finished in 1774, when he was twenty-two years of age.

While a tutor he was inoculated for the small-pox. The disease affected him mildly; but, upon his reco-

very, he too soon resumed his former habits of severe application to study. Long before this his eyes had been greatly weakened, and probably for that reason were more sensibly affected by the small-pox. On being subject to such vigorous exercise before they had recovered their natural energy, they were so far injured, as to cause him through life, a great degree of pain and embarrassment.

In the year 1772, he received the degree of Master of Arts. On that occasion he delivered, as an exercise at the public commencement, "A dissertation on the history, eloquence, and poetry of the Bible." This production, composed and delivered by a youth of twenty, on a subject then so new and of such high interest, was received by the audience with the strongest marks of approbation. A copy was immediately requested for the Press; and it was afterwards re-published, both in this country and in Europe. We have seen it mentioned, in several instances, with very high respect on the other side of the Atlantic. It is now rarely to be met with. Those, who have read it, need not be informed that it was an effort of no common character. It unfolded, at that early age, the bolder features of the Author's mind; and evinced uncommon maturity of judgment and taste. The field of thought was new in this country. The style is dignified and manly, and formed by a standard truly classical. The knowledge of criticism displayed in it is profound; the conceptions are bold and original; the images are beautiful and distinct; and the very spirit which breathes in the Sacred Writers, appears to animate his own mind. This was his only effort in public, which his father ever witnessed.

At a subsequent period, during his residence in College as a tutor, he engaged deeply in the study

of the higher branches of the Mathematics. Among the treatises on this science, to which his attention was directed, was Newton's Principia, which he studied with the utmost care and attention, and demonstrated, in course, all but two of the propositions, in that profound and elaborate work. This difficult but delightful science, in which the mind is always guided by *certainty* in its discovery of truth, so fully engrossed his attention, and his thoughts, that, for a time, he lost even his relish for poetry; and it was not without difficulty that his fondness for it was recovered.

During the second year of his tutorship, he attempted, by restricting his diet, to remove the necessity for bodily exercise, and yet to secure himself from the dulness incident to a full habit and inactive life. He began by lessening the quantity of his food, at dinner; and gradually reduced it, until he confined himself to twelve mouthfuls. After a six months' experiment of this regimen, being still somewhat dissatisfied with its effects, and feeling less clearness of apprehension than was desirable, he confined himself for a considerable period to a vegetable diet, without, however, increasing the quantity. His other meals were proportionally light and abstemious.

After this system of study and diet had been pursued about a twelvemonth, his health began insensibly to decline, and his constitution, naturally vigorous, to give way. During the summer of 1774, he first perceived the reality of this change, but had no suspicion of the cause. Though he had suffered several distressing attacks of the bilious cholic before the College Commencement, yet after the vacation he renewed the same course of regimen and of appli-

cation to study. But a short time had elapsed before these attacks were repeated with increased violence; and his friends becoming seriously apprehensive of the consequences, informed his connections of his situation. His father, on his arrival at New Haven, found that his disorder had indeed made dreadful ravages in his constitution. His frame was emaciated; and his strength so far reduced, that it was with extreme difficulty he could be conveyed to Northampton. When he left New Haven, his friends and his pupils took leave of him as they supposed for the last time; and he himself relinquished all hope of recovery. In the course of two months he had nineteen severe attacks of the disease. An eminent physician, whom he now consulted, after successfully administering to his immediate relief; recommended to him, among other things, a daily course of vigorous bodily exercise, as the only means of restoring his constitution to its primitive vigour. He followed his advice; and, within a twelvemonth, walked upwards of two thousand miles, and rode on horseback upwards of three thousand. To his perseverance in this system, he was probably indebted for his recovery; as well as for the uninterrupted health and vigour of constitution, which he enjoyed for the ensuing forty years.

In the year 1774, Mr. Dwight united himself to the College church. At this time, it was his expectation to pursue the practice of law; and, towards the close of his residence in college as a tutor, his studies were directed towards that object.

The first class which he instructed, entered on the degree of Bachelors in September, 1775; the year before the Declaration of Independence. At that time, he delivered them a "Valedictory Address," every

where sparkling indeed with brilliant imagery; but every where also fraught with strong thoughts and noble conceptions. In two points of view it deserves notice. It unfolds to his pupils the duty of fixing on a very high standard of character, as intelligent and as moral beings; in a manner which proves at once that this was literally the rule which governed his own conduct; and that he was admirably qualified to influence others to adopt it. It also communicates to them views of the growth and ultimate importance of their country, which were at once new, noble, and prophetic.

In March, 1777, he was married to Miss Mary Woolsey, the daughter of Benjamin Woolsey, Esquire, of Long-Island, the class-mate, room-mate, and intimate friend of his father. They had eight sons; of whom six survived their father. Mrs. Dwight is still living.

In May of the same year, College was broken up. The students left New Haven at the commencement of the vacation; and pursued their studies during the summer, under their respective tutors, in places less exposed to the sudden incursions of the enemy. Mr. Dwight retired with his class to Weathersfield, and remained with them till September. Early in June he was licensed as a preacher, by a Committee of the Northern Association, in his own native county of Hampshire, in the State of Massachusetts. Besides instructing his class during the summer, he preached on the Sabbath at Kensington, a parish in Weathersfield.

The following fact is a striking proof of the respect and affection with which he was regarded by the students. It being well ascertained that the existing head of the College would relinquish his connection

with it; the students as a body, drew up and signed a petition to the Corporation, that he might be elected to the presidency. It was owing to his own interference, that the application was not formerly made.

Mr. Dwight left College early in September; and soon after was appointed chaplain to General Parsons' Brigade, which was part of the Division of General Putnam, in the army of the United States.

He joined the army at West Point, in October, 1777. Although the scene was entirely new to him, he was not idle, nor inattentive to the business which now devolved upon him. He performed the appropriate duties of his office with strict punctuality, and with uncommon reputation. The troops, who composed the brigade, were principally Connecticut farmers; men who had been soberly educated, and who were willing to listen to the truths of the Gospel, even in a camp. On the Sabbath, they heard him with profound attention. During the week, they beheld him exerting himself, as far as lay in his power, to instruct them in morals and religion. Several of his discourses delivered to the whole army, owing partly to their intrinsic merit, and partly to the feelings of the times, gained him high reputation with the American public. He also wrote several patriotic songs, which were universally popular. They were favourite songs with the soldiers, and contributed not a little to kindle their enthusiasm in the cause of freedom. One of them, his "Columbia," will not soon be forgotten. It opened the eyes of his countrymen, on a prospect, new, brilliant and delightful; and exhibited in distinct vision the rising glories of our infant empire. His connection with the army enabled him to form an extensive acquaintance with many officers of distinction; and among them he had the satisfac-

tion to rank the Commander in Chief. That great man honoured him with flattering attentions. Mr. Dwight ever remembered his kindness with lively gratitude; and entertained for his character and services, military and civil, the highest respect and veneration. He remained in the army a little more than a year; when the news of his father's death, which reached him near the close of October, 1778, rendered it necessary for him to resign his office, in order to console his mother under that severe affliction, and to assist her in the support and education of her numerous family. On leaving the army, he received from his brother officers, particularly from Generals Putnam and Parsons, as well as from the soldiers of the Brigade, the most grateful testimonies of respect and kindness.

Mr. Dwight left a widow and thirteen children; ten of whom were under twenty-one years of age. The subject of this memoir was the eldest, and on him devolved the care of the family, at a period when the situation and circumstances of the country rendered the task peculiarly difficult and laborious. Upon receiving the information of his father's death, he, with as little delay as possible, removed his own family to Northampton, and undertook the performance of the new duties, which providentially had devolved upon him, with the greatest promptitude and cheerfulness. In this situation he passed five years of the most interesting period of his life; performing in an exemplary manner the offices of a son and a brother, and of a guardian to the younger children. Here he was emphatically the staff and stay of the family. The government and education of the children, as well as the daily provision for their wants, depended almost exclusively upon his exertions. The elder as well as

the younger were committed to his care, and loved and obeyed him as their father. The filial affection, and dutiful respect and obedience, which he exhibited towards his mother, and the more than fraternal kindness with which he watched over the well-being of his brothers and sisters, deserve the most honourable remembrance. To accomplish this object, he postponed his own establishment for life, and a provision for his family. To accomplish it, though destitute of property, he relinquished in their favour his own proportion of the family estate; laboured constantly for five years, with a diligence and alacrity rarely exemplified; and continued his paternal care, and exertions, and liberality long after his removal from Northampton. Often have we heard his mother, who died only ten years since, acknowledge, in language of eloquent affection and gratitude, his kindness, and faithfulness, and honourable generosity to her and to her children. The respect which she felt and manifested towards him, though perhaps not his inferior in native powers of mind, resembled the affection of a dutiful child towards her father, rather than the feelings of a mother for her son.

During this period, he laboured through the week upon the farm, and preached on the Sabbath to different vacant congregations in the neighbouring towns. He also established a school at Northampton, for the instruction of youth of both sexes; which was almost immediately resorted to by such a number of pupils, that he was under the necessity of employing two assistants. At the same time, owing to the dispersed condition of the College at New Haven, and to his established character as an instructor, a part of one of the classes in that seminary repaired to Northampton, and placed themselves under his care as their preceptor. To them he devoted his own immediate

attention, until they had completed their regular course of collegiate studies. The school was continued during his residence there, and uniformly maintained an extensive and distinguished reputation. At the same time, he preached almost without intermission upon the Sabbath with increasing popularity. The compensation which he received for preaching, as well as the profits of his school, were all expended in the support of the common family.

A strong disposition was manifested from time to time, by the inhabitants of Northampton, to employ him in civil life. In the county conventions of Hampshire, he repeatedly represented the town; and, in connection with a few individuals, met and resisted that spirit of disorganization and licentiousness which was then unhappily prevalent in many parts of the county, and which had too visible an influence in an assembly often fluctuating and tumultuous. It was owing eminently to his exertions and those of his colleague, the Hon. Joseph Hawley, in opposition to the current of popular feeling, and to no small weight of talents and influence, that the new constitution of Massachusetts was adopted by the convention of the most important county in the state.

Twice he consented to serve the town as their representative in the State Legislature. This was in the years 1781 and 1782, just before the close of the war of Independence; when subjects of an interesting and perplexing nature, growing out of the great controversy in which the country had so long been engaged, extensively agitated the public mind, and engrossed legislative attention. Every thing was then, in a sense, unsettled. That war had sundered not only the cords which fastened the colonies to the mother country, but those also which bound them to each

other. The old foundations were, in a sense, destroyed; and new ones were to be established. Many of the old laws and regulations were to be altered; and others accommodated to the state of freedom and independence, were to be devised and instituted. A sense of subordination and obedience to law was also to be cherished, instead of a spirit of licentiousness then widely prevalent. In this situation, inexperienced as he was in the business of a politician, or a legislature, he at once became one of the most industrious and influential members of that body, and was greatly admired and distinguished for his talents and eloquence. All his exertions were on the side of good order and good morals; and indicated a steady attachment to the principles of rational liberty, and decided hostility to licentiousness. On one occasion he was enabled to prove his devotion to the interests of learning. A petition for a grant in favour of Harvard College was before the Legislature. At that time such grants were unpopular. That spirit of honourable liberality, which now happily characterises the legislature and people of that commonwealth, was then far from being universally operative. During his occasional absence from the house, the petition had been called up; and, after finding but few, and those not very warm advocates, had been generally negatived. On taking his seat, Mr. Dwight learning what had occurred, moved a re-consideration of the vote. In a speech of about one hour in length, fraught with wit, with argument, and with eloquence, and received with marked applause on the spot, from the members and the spectators, he effectually changed the feelings of the house, and procured a nearly unanimous vote in favour of the grant. It gave him high pleasure thus to confer an obligation on that re-

spectable seminary: an obligation which was gratefully acknowledged by its principal officers, as well as by many others of its friends.

At this period, he was earnestly solicited by his friends to quit the profession in which he was engaged, and devote himself to public life. In the winter of 1782-83, a committee from the delegation of Hampshire waited upon him, with assurances from the delegation, that, if he would consent, their influence should be exerted to secure his election to the Continental Congress: a place in the gift of the Legislature. The late Governor Phillips of Andover, who was his friend and fellow-lodger, though a man of distinguished piety, gave it as his unqualified opinion that he ought to listen to these proposals, and remain in civil life; assuring him, also, with several of the most influential of both houses, of their cordial support. But he had become so thoroughly weaned from his first intention of practising the law, and was so much attached to the clerical profession, and so convinced of its superior usefulness, that nothing could change his resolution to devote his life to the latter. Having preached occasionally, while attending the Legislature, in Boston and the neighbourhood, he received invitations, accompanied with flattering offers as it regarded compensation, to settle as a minister at Beverly and Charlestown; both of which, however, he declined.

In the month of May, 1783, he was invited by an unanimous vote of the church, and congregation of Greenfield, a parish in the town of Fairfield, in Connecticut, to settle as their minister. This invitation he accepted on the 20th of July in the same year. On the 5th of November following, he was regularly ordained over that people; and for the succeeding

twelve years remained their pastor. The annual compensation which he received at Greenfield was a salary of five hundred dollars, the use of six acres of parochial land, and twenty cords of wood. They also gave him a settlement of one thousand dollars. From his extensive acquaintance with men of consideration in literature and politics throughout the country, and a native propensity to hospitality, it was very apparent that he could not expect to support a growing family, and the expences incident to his standing in the community, upon such an income. To supply the deficiency, he immediately established an Academy at Greenfield, which he superintended himself; devoting six hours regularly every day to the instruction of his pupils. In a short time, youths in great numbers, and of both sexes, not only from various parts of New England, but from the Middle and Southern States, as well as from abroad, resorted to his school.

This institution was commenced and carried on absolutely without funds, and depended solely on his own character and exertions. He supported it during the whole period of his residence there, with unexampled reputation. We know of no similar institution in this country, thus dependent, which has flourished so long, or to such a degree. During the twelve years of his residence there, he instructed upwards of one thousand pupils. Numbers of them were carried through the whole course of education customary at College. In his school, he adopted, to a considerable degree, one part of the Lancasterian mode of instruction; making it extensively the duty of the older scholars, who were competent, to hear the recitations of the younger. Many of his pupils were regularly boarded in his family; so that its usual collective number was from twenty to twenty-five. It ought to

be mentioned, that his female pupils were instructed in many of the higher branches of literature, which had not, here, previously been taught to their sex; and that under his auspices, on the delightful spot where he resided, began that superior system of female education which is founded on the principle, that women are intelligent beings, capable of mental improvement, and which is at present extensively prevalent. Probably to the exertions and influence of no one individual are the ladies of our country so extensively indebted. No man thought more highly of the sex; no man loved better the company of women of refinement and intelligence; and no man did more to exalt the female character.

Besides the instruction of his school, he preached steadily twice every Sabbath; and regularly visited his people. He also cultivated with his own hands a large kitchen, fruit, and flower garden. Living but a few rods from the public road, in a most delightful village, and having numerous family connections, and very many friends and acquaintance, he saw and entertained an almost uninterrupted succession of company; greater, we are led to believe, than any individual whom we have known in the State. Greenfield was the resort of learning, of talents, of refinement, and of piety; and his own hospitable doors were ever open to welcome the stranger, as well as the friend. We believe the instances to be rare, in which a single individual has been the centre of such extensive attraction to men of superior character, or so entirely altered the aspect of society in the regions around him. Previous to his settlement at Greenfield, his character as a preacher stood high in the public estimation. During his residence there, he gained a reputation not often equalled in this country.

Being unable from the weakness of his eyes to write, he very early discovered that he must perform his stated duties as a preacher, without notes, or abandon his profession. A very few experiments convinced him that he was able to adopt the former course; and he pursued it for many years almost exclusively. Under all the disadvantages which he experienced from the weakness of his eyes, and, notwithstanding the variety of his avocations and duties, he composed and preached, while at Greenfield, about one thousand sermons; which, deducting the time he was absent during that period, will differ very little from two each week.

In the year 1785, he published "The Conquest of Canaan." This work was begun, as has been remarked, when he was nineteen years of age, and finished in his twenty-third year. The war of Independence, just then commencing, which lasted till 1783, postponed its publication. A few additions were made to the poem between that time and its appearance in 1785; but the great body of it was published as it was written in 1773.

In 1787, Mr. Dwight received the degree of *Doctor of Divinity*, from the college at Princeton, New Jersey. He was then thirty-five years of age.

In 1791, he was appointed by the Governor of the State to preach the Election Sermon, before the Legislature at Hartford.

In the year 1793, he published a sermon on the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New Testament; and in the following year a poem of several parts, called, after the place of his residence, "GREENFIELD HILL." The Conquest of Canaan, and Greenfield Hill, were both re-published in England.

Among other subjects, which engaged his attention,

during his residence at Greenfield, was that of a more intimate union of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches throughout the United States. On this subject he entered into an extensive correspondence with the more influential clergy both in Connecticut and New York. A proposition for this object was made by him early in the year 1790, in the particular Association of which he was a member. It was carried from that body to the General Association of Connecticut, which in June of that year met at his house. That venerable body proposed it in form to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the General Convention of Massachusetts. The two former bodies appointed each a committee of three, to form and establish articles of union. This committee, of whom Dr. Dwight was one, met at New Haven in September, 1791, and most harmoniously and happily executed their commission. To the union then agreed on, the associated churches of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont have since acceded. An event that has been attended with very beneficial consequences to religion and the church.

In the year 1794, he was invited by the Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church, in the city of Albany, to remove to that place, and settle as their minister. The application was unanimous, and the compensation which they offered was considered, at the time, as liberal; but it was not accepted, for reasons which were deemed by him satisfactory.

In May, 1795, the Presidency of Yale College became vacant, by the death of the Rev. Dr. Stiles. In fixing on a successor, it may with propriety be said, that towards Dr. Dwight the attention of the community was universally directed. The high reputation, as an instructor, which he had gained whilst a tutor,

and which he had maintained and enlarged since he left the College, was so universally known and acknowledged, that there was no difficulty in determining the question, which now devolved upon the Corporation. They had nothing to do but to pursue the course pointed out by public opinion, which in this case was clearly and distinctly marked. Accordingly, he was, with great unanimity, appointed to fill that important and respectable station; was inaugurated in September of that year, and presided at the public Commencement; and, in December following, removed his family to New Haven. The people of his parish, with whom he had lived for twelve years, in uninterrupted harmony, heard of his appointment with extreme regret. They loved their pastor; and they were proud of him; and they could not consent to give him up. Never have we known a parish part with their minister with more reluctance.

We are now entering upon a very interesting period in the life of Dr. Dwight. Owing to a variety of causes, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, the state of Yale College, at the time of his accession to the office of President, was in many respects unhappy. One of the greatest evils under which it suffered, was an extensive prevalence of infidelity, among the students. This pernicious spirit had been derived from the circumstances of the country, at the close of the preceding war. As was natural, it found easy access to the minds of a collection of youths, who were fascinated with the ideas of mental as well as political independence, and who were easily induced to shake off what they considered the shackles of habit and superstition. The degree to which it prevailed may be conjectured from the following fact.—A considerable portion of the class,

which he first taught, had assumed the names of the principal English and French Infidels; and were more familiarly known by them than by their own.

To extirpate a spirit so pernicious and fatal, he availed himself of an early and decisive opportunity. Forensic disputation was an important exercise of the senior class. For this purpose they were formed into a convenient number of divisions; two of which disputed before him every week, in the presence of the other members of the class, and of the resident graduates. It was the practice for each division to agree upon several questions, and then refer them to the President to select which he thought proper. Until this time, through a mistaken policy, the students had not been allowed to discuss any question which involved the Inspiration of the Scriptures; from an apprehension that the examination of these points would expose them to the contagion of scepticism. As infidelity was extensively prevalent in the State, and in the Country, the effect of this course upon the minds of the students had been unhappy. It had led them to believe, that their instructors were afraid to meet the question fairly; and that Christianity was supported by authority and not by argument.

One of the questions presented by the first division was this. "*Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the word of God?*" To their surprise the President selected it for discussion; told them to write on which side they pleased, as he should not impute to them any sentiments which they advanced as their own; and requested those, who should write on the negative side of the question, to collect and bring forward all the facts and arguments which they could produce; enjoining it upon them, however, to treat the subject with becoming respect and reverence. Most,

if not all of the members of the division, came forward as the champions of infidelity. When they had finished the discussion, he first examined the ground they had taken; triumphantly refuted their arguments; proved to them, that their statement of facts was mistaken, or irrelevant; and, to their astonishment, convinced them, that their acquaintance with the subject was wholly superficial. After this he entered into a direct defence of the divine origin of Christianity, in a strain of powerful argument, and animated eloquence, which nothing could resist. The effect upon the students was electrical. From that moment Infidelity was not only without a strong hold, but without a lurking place. To espouse her cause was now as unpopular, as before it had been to profess a belief in Christianity. Unable to endure the exposure of argument, she fled from the retreats of learning ashamed and disgraced.

Dr. Dwight's system of discipline was peculiarly his own; and has, from its success, commanded universal approbation. His mode of instructing was also equally excellent. His long experience in this employment had made him thoroughly acquainted with the youthful character, and enabled him to teach, as well as to govern young men, with extraordinary success.

In the year 1795, when President Dwight entered upon the duties of his office in the College, the whole number of students was one hundred and ten. Almost immediately after his accession, they began to increase and in the course of his presidency amounted to three hundred and thirteen; an increase unexampled in any similar institution in this country.

It was never any part of his plan merely to discharge his duty, he did it with his whole mind and

heart; and thought nothing adequately done, till all was done that the case admitted of.

“The public,” says Professor Silliman, “have been little aware of the extent and diversity of the labours of President Dwight, in this institution. He has, in fact, discharged the duties of four offices, either of which is, ordinarily, considered as sufficient, to engross the time and talents of one man. He has been charged with the general superintendence and responsibility constituting the appropriate duties of the Presidency; like his predecessors, he instructed the senior class in their peculiar studies, but on a much more enlarged plan; he voluntarily discharged to a great extent, the duties of a professor of Belles-Lettres, and Oratory; and he has been charged also with those of a professor of Theology.”

“His object was not only to instruct the young men under his care, in the particular sciences which came before them, but to fit them, by repeated counsels, and by information pressed upon them with parental solicitude, for the various scenes into which they were to pass in life.” For this he was eminently qualified; for few men have ever observed more carefully and extensively; few have conversed more largely, and been more in contact with the world, in all its innocently accessible points.

He encouraged the students, especially those of the senior class, in all their difficulties and troubles to come to him for advice and assistance. In every such case, the instructor was forgotten in the friend and the father. He entered into their interests and feelings just as if they were his own; and while he yielded the necessary relief, he endeared himself to them permanently by his kindness. The members of the Senior Class, who wished to engage for a season

after leaving College, in the business of instruction applied to him regularly to procure them eligible situations. So lively was the interest which he took in their welfare, and so willing and active his exertions in their behalf, that few such applications failed of being successful. He remembered the feelings of a young man, just leaving College, without a profession, without property, and with no means of support but the blessing of God and his own exertions. Nothing gave him higher pleasure than to encourage the heart of every youth so situated, to save him from despondence, and to open to him the road to property, to usefulness, and to honour. The number of his students, whom he thus essentially befriended, if stated, would almost exceed belief. With others, who were in more affluent circumstances, he would enter into a free and confidential conversation on their plan of life; explain to them their peculiar dangers; and lead them to aim at eminence in their professions, and to form for themselves a high standard of moral excellence. The respect and affection manifested towards him by his pupils after leaving College, whenever they visited New Haven, as well as when they met him abroad, was a sufficient reward for all his efforts to serve them, if he had not found a still higher reward in doing good. We will only add, that his pupils familiarly spoke of him, with reference to this subject, by the most honourable appellation, "THE YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND."

At the commencement of his Presidency the Professorship of Theology was vacant. The Corporation proposed to appoint him in form to the office. For the first ten years he would consent to none but an annual appointment. In 1805 it was made permanent.

No one not personally acquainted with the facts, ca

realize how great, at this period, were his sufferings from weakness of sight. For years it was with extreme difficulty that he could read or write even a sentence. He was greatly alarmed, for a long period, with the symptoms of an approaching *gutta serena*. Repeatedly the pressure on the brain was so great as to produce momentary blindness, and obviously to threaten apoplexy. Occasionally, for weeks together, the anguish of his eyes was so intense, that it required powerful exertion to draw off his mind to any other object, and often, after attempting in vain to sleep, he has risen from his bed; and to promote a free perspiration, has walked for miles in the middle of the night.

In the prosecution of his duties as Professor of Divinity, he early began to deliver his Lectures on Theology. His practice was to preach one on the morning of each Sabbath in term time. By this arrangement, he finished the course once in four years. Thus, each student, who completed his regular Collegiate period, had an opportunity to hear the whole series. He first conceived the plan of the work at Greenfield. While there, he completed it, in short notes, in about one hundred sermons; and delivered them twice to his people, before his removal. At New Haven, he twice went through with them in the same state; frequently, however, adding to their number, and altering their arrangement.

In 1805, when he was permanently appointed Professor of Theology, the Corporation allowed him fifty pounds per annum, to employ an amanuensis. Though the compensation was trifling, yet the place was coveted, and regularly applied for, a length of time before it became vacant. - He began immediately to write out these Lectures; and wrote one a week during

term time, or forty a year, until they were completed. If not prevented, he commenced his task on Monday morning. His progress depended, with the exception of casual interruptions, on the rapidity of the amanuensis; which always fell short of the rapidity with which he dictated. Sometimes, though rarely, the sermon was finished in a single day; usually, in the course of the second day. The remainder of the week was employed in writing his Travels, and occasional Sermons. When interrupted by company, if propriety did not forbid, he would proceed with two trains of thoughts by the hour together; conversing with the company, and also, dictating to his amanuensis.

In the year 1797, he was applied to by the General Association of Connecticut, to revise Dr. Watts's Version of the Psalms; to versify such as he had omitted; and to make a selection of Hymns suited to the general purposes of public worship. The work was completed in 1800, and laid before a joint committee of that body, and of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church; by whom it was approved, and recommended to the use of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches throughout the United States. In the performance of this difficult task, he made alterations, of more or less consequence, in a considerable number of Dr. Watts's Psalms; and composed thirty-three entire psalms, containing about twelve hundred and fifty lines.

From the time he recovered his health, after the severe attack of cholic already mentioned, he habituated himself to a steady course of vigorous bodily exercise. While at Greenfield, notwithstanding the multitude of his avocations, he walked, and rode on horseback, extensively; and constantly cultivated a large fruit and kitchen garden with his own hands. For this particular species of labour, he had a high relish. His

garden was distinguished for its beauty and its productiveness; for the excellence of its vegetables, the abundance and delicacy of its fruits, and the choice variety of its flowers.

Nor did the habit cease with him after his removal to New Haven. Through the whole season for gardening, he worked at least an hour every morning before breakfast. In other parts of the year, he walked much, and daily; rode frequently; and often in the winter, when no other mode of exercise was convenient, he would cut his firewood. With reference, in a considerable degree, to the same object, in the year 1796, he commenced journeying on horseback, or in a sulky, during the College vacations, particularly in May and September. This practice he continued through the remainder of his life, except the last year, when he was severely attacked by the disease by which it was terminated. In these various journeys, it is computed, that he rode about twenty thousand miles.

His excursions were chiefly confined to the New England States, and the State of New York. He experienced the highest gratification from the beauties of scenery; and scarcely a spot can be named within those limits, where those beauties are to be found in high perfection, which he did not visit and describe. For his own amusement, he took notes of the most material occurrences of his several journeys; and afterwards wrote them out for the gratification of his family. This suggested to him the idea of collecting materials from time to time, for one or more volumes of travels; in which, should be comprised, not only an account of the climate, soil, mountains, rivers, scenery, curiosities, and general face of the country, over which he passed; but of the state of society, of manners, morals, literature, and religion; the institutions, civil

literary, and religious; and the character of the governments and laws of the above-mentioned States.

On these journeys, he visited great numbers of the most intelligent and respectable inhabitants of those tracts of country, over which he travelled; and derived from his conversation with them, a great collection of facts relative to the general state of morals, manners, and religion.

The information thus gained, was arranged, reduced to writing, and prepared for publication: the whole forming materials for three octavo volumes. It is believed, by those who have had opportunity to examine the manuscripts, that no work has appeared, which contains so much correct information, concerning the subject of which it treats, as this. It is also believed, that, should it ever be published, it will have the effect of redeeming our national character from the abuse and calumnies which have been heaped upon it by foreign travellers.*

To enumerate the various literary, charitable, and pious institutions, which he was active in founding or promoting, would be a laborious employment. "THE CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES;" the Missionary Society of Connecticut, to whose funds he was a liberal contributor, having devoted to their increase the profits of his edition of the psalms and hymns, which realized to the Society upwards of one thousand dollars; the Society for Foreign Missions, established in the year 1809, at Boston, Massachussets; the Theological Seminary at Andover, in that State; and above all, from the time of the establishment of the most illustrious and sublime charity that has ever engaged the

* This work has since been published in England.

attention, or drawn forth the exertions and the wealth of the pious and benevolent—THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, it was the ardent wish of President Dwight to see a similar institution established in the United States. Although he was prevented by sickness from being present at the establishment of “THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY,” during the last year of his life; yet it was a consoling consideration to him, that he lived to see it accomplished, and making rapid progress towards extensive usefulness and respectability. It had the benefit of his warmest encouragement and his earnest prayers.

In addition to the foregoing institutions, a long list of more confined, but active and operative societies, formed for the purposes of piety and charity, had the benefit of his exertions, and the weight of his influence and patronage. According to his resources he contributed largely and cheerfully; his services he rendered to an extent rarely equalled in this country; and in his endeavours to promote their usefulness and success, he was never weary.

By such long-continued and unremitted application to literary and scientific pursuits, it would be natural to expect, that at the age of sixty-three, his constitution would have begun to experience some marks of decay and infirmity. Such, however, was not the fact. The regularity of his habits, his temperate manner of living, and the uniform course of exercise which he pursued, all united to invigorate his constitution, and render him, at that age, more active and energetic than most men of forty. No apparent declension was discernible in the powers either of his body or his mind. His understanding was as vigorous, his imagination as lively, and his industry and exertions as uniform and efficient, as they had been at any former period. This, however, was not long the

case. In September, 1815, he undertook a journey into the western parts of the State of New York. This was the last journey that he ever made. On the following February he was seized with the first threatening attack of the disease to which he finally became a victim. That attack was severe and painful to a degree, of which those who did not witness it can have no conception. It made rapid and fearful ravages in a constitution which had increased in strength and firmness for more than sixty years, and which promised, to human expectation, to last to "a good old age." His patience, as well as his faith, were now brought to a most severe and heart-searching test. The pain which he endured, and endured with unyielding fortitude, was beyond the powers of description. For several weeks during the month of April, scarcely any hopes were entertained, either by himself, his friends, or his physicians, of his recovery. Amidst all his sufferings, not a murmur, not a repining expression escaped from his lips. His mind was perfectly clear, and his reason unclouded. Patience under suffering, and resignation to the will of God, were exhibited by him in the most striking and exemplary manner from day to day. His conversation was the conversation of a Christian, not only free from complaint, but at times cheerful and animated; his prayers were fervent, but full of humility, submission, and hope.

At the end of twelve weeks, his disease assumed a more favourable appearance. By surgical aid, he gained a partial relief from his distress; and his constitutional energy, still unbroken, raised the hopes of his friends, that he might recover. He was unable to preach in the chapel till after the May vacation. On the 2nd of June, he delivered to his pupils, a sermon composed for the occasion, during his sickness, from Psalm xciv. 17, 18, 19. The scene was peculiarly

impressive and affecting. In no instance, during his Presidency, until then, had he been kept from his pulpit, by sickness or any other cause. The change in his countenance and general appearance was great and alarming. The mind can scarcely imagine a case in which an audience, comprised of youths full of feeling, and ardent in the pursuit of reputation and happiness, would be more deeply affected than this must have been.*

Although the disease with which President Dwight was afflicted, and by which his life had been so severely threatened, was not removed; yet the severity of it was so far relaxed, that he was able, through the summer, to preach steadily in the chapel, to hear the recitations of the senior class, and to attend to a class of theological students, who were pursuing their studies under his direction. Still, he was not in a situation to pass a day without resorting repeatedly to the surgical operation, by the aid of which he had in the first instance gained relief from his excruciating distress. But his mind was not idle during the intervals of his professional and official labours. In addition to the sermon which has been mentioned, he wrote, during this season, several Essays on the evidences of Divine Revelation, derived from the writings of St. Paul, and on other subjects; the whole forming matter for a considerable volume. The last of these Essays was finished three days before his death. He also wrote the latter half of a Poem of about fifteen hundred lines; a work of the imagination, the subject of which is,—a Contest between Genius and Common Sense, on their comparative merits; the

* Some passages of this interesting sermon the reader will find introduced towards the close of the annexed Essay.

question referred to and decided by Truth. Other works were begun or projected; but he was now drawing fast towards the close of his earthly labours.

On the 3d of November, the second Sabbath in the term, he preached in the morning, and administered the Sacrament. Those who heard him will long recollect that his text was Matt. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in Heaven.* It was his last sermon, and the administration of the Lord's Supper, which followed it, his last public act as a Minister of Christ.

He met the senior class, for the last time, on Wednesday, Nov. 27th. He caught cold, was worse from the exertion, and did not go out again.

He still continued to hear the theological class at his house. Their last recitation was only a week before his death; his sufferings were extreme, his debility scarcely permitted him to utter himself at all; but again his mind abstracted itself from its sympathy with an agonized frame; and in a discourse for one hour and a half on the doctrine of the Trinity, he reasoned and illustrated in the most cogent and interesting manner, and left an indelible impression on the minds of his pupils. It was his last effort in his delightful employment of instruction. He continued in this state of labour and suffering, until Tuesday the 7th of January. The symptoms of his disease appeared more favorable than they had done at any time previous, and his family and physicians were led to entertain very strong hopes that it had passed its crisis, and was experiencing a happy change. On the following morning, however, as he got out of bed, he was seized with a strong nervous affection, which

shook his whole frame, and gave rise, in a short time, to the most alarming apprehensions. This paroxysm was succeeded by a high fever, and a constant propensity to drowsiness. When the physicians visited him at ten o'clock in the forenoon, they found it necessary to bleed him. He continued strongly affected by these various symptoms through the day. His pulse was quick, his face in some measure flushed, his brain in a considerable degree affected, and he felt a continued drowsiness, and, at times, severe turns of pain from his local disease. In the evening he became more wakeful, and the severity of his distress increased. In order to relieve him from the pain, a moderate quantity of laudanum was administered. He did not converse much on Wednesday; his excess of suffering, with the affection of the brain, put it out of his power.

He was restless a considerable part of the night, but gained an hour or two of sleep; owing probably to the opiate which he had taken. On Thursday morning he got out of his bed, was dressed, and sat in his chair till evening. He was not so much inclined to drowsiness as on Wednesday; but frequently groaned from extreme pain and distress, and did not enter much into conversation through the day. At the same time, he answered all questions put to him, with clearness and promptitude; inquired particularly of his friends and neighbours, as they called to see him, concerning their health and that of their families; and showed the same affectionate interest in their welfare, that he had uniformly manifested through life. At evening he attempted to make his usual family prayer, and proceeded for a few minutes with clearness and propriety, but a paroxysm of pain rendered him incapable of utterance, and he

desisted. This was the last attempt he made to pray in the family.

Through Thursday night, he became more disturbed and distressed, resting but little; and in the morning it was apparent, from his symptoms generally, and the change of his countenance and voice, that his end was rapidly approaching. From the great strength of his constitution, and the peculiar excitement of his nervous system, caused by his disease, and perhaps, from the effect which it had produced upon his mind, it was apprehended by his family, that he was not aware of his approaching dissolution. The fact was, therefore, announced to him, accompanied with a suggestion, that if he had any wishes to express, or directions to give, with regard to his worldly concerns, it was to be feared that it was necessary to attend to the subject without delay. He received the intelligence with great calmness; and as soon as his situation would permit, proceeded to express his wishes on the subject. Under the paroxysms of pain, his mind was more prone to wander, than it had been the two former days. It recurred, however, to a clear and unclouded state, when the paroxysm ceased. At short intervals through the day, when he was the most nearly free from pain, he conversed on various subjects in his usual manner. Subjects connected with the great objects of his labours, his desires, and his prayers, through life; the outpouring of the Spirit of God, revivals of religion, the propagation of Christianity, and the dissemination of the Scriptures; were not only near his heart, but, when mentioned, kindled his feelings and awakened his devotion. A day or two previous to his being taken so unwell, he had received from the Rev. Dr. Marshman, at Serampore, a very elegant printed specimen of a Chinese translation of

the Scriptures. On this subject, he was peculiarly interested, and expressed himself feelingly and with force, on the progress of Evangelical Truth among the heathen.

In the course of Friday evening, at his request, the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans was read to him. He listened to it with great attention, remarked upon a mistranslation in one or two places; spoke with much fervour of pious emotion on the subject of the chapter; and at the close of it exclaimed,—“O what a glorious Apostrophe!” He also made a number of remarks on the opinions and sentiments of some of the English Divines, particularly Clark and Waterland, on the doctrine of the Trinity.

The subject of his approaching dissolution was again introduced in the afternoon of that day. He said he was not aware that it was very near; that he had yet a great deal of strength; but still it might be so; as strong constitutions did sometimes suddenly give way. Upon being reminded that his religious friends would be gratified to learn his views and feelings at the prospect of death, he began to make some remarks upon the great and precious promises of the Gospel, when he was seized with a paroxysm of distress, which prevented him from proceeding. A few hours before his death, the subject was, for the last time, mentioned. He appeared to comprehend the object in view, and, though he spoke with difficulty, he answered with entire clearness; that in the extreme sickness with which he was visited in the spring, during some weeks of which he had no expectation of recovering, he had experienced more support and comfort from religion, and the promises of the Gospel, than he had ever realized at any former

period of his life. "Had I died then," he said, "that fact would doubtless have been considered as affording strong evidence of the sincerity and reality of my faith; but, as I recovered, it probably made but little impression." It was a sentiment often inculcated by him, that it was more safe to rely upon the tenor of a person's life, as evidence of the true state of his religious character, than upon declarations made upon a death-bed. In the above-mentioned remark, there is little reason to doubt that he alluded to that subject, and intended that it should apply to his former sentiments.

After this, he requested his brother to read to him the 17th of John. While listening to the latter verses of the chapter, he exclaimed, "O! what triumphant truths!" Afterwards the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters were read to him. He listened attentively and spoke with lively interest on various passages. His mind evidently wandered while the last chapter was reading, and it was not completed.

A few hours before his death, one of his friends observed to him, that he hoped he was able, in his present situation, to adopt the language of the Psalmist, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me—Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* He immediately replied, "I hope so." For several of his last hours, his organs of speech were so much affected, that it was with difficulty he could articulate distinctly. Many of his words could not be understood. There is, however, no doubt, that, during that period, his mind was unclouded, and his thoughts were fixed on death and heaven. He was occupied a great part of the time in speaking, sometimes in an audible voice, and sometimes in a whisper. Repeated instances oc-

curred in which his expressions were clearly understood. In all of them, his language was that of prayer and adoration. The belief that he was engaged in that delightful Christian duty was confirmed by the peculiarly solemn and devotional expression of his countenance. His eyes appeared to be fixed on that celestial world, whose gates, it is humbly trusted, were just opening to receive his departing spirit into the mansions of everlasting rest. That he enjoyed the use of his reason, until a short time before his death, was satisfactorily manifested by his answer to one of his friends, who was sitting by him, and who asked him if he knew him? Upon which he immediately turned his eyes towards him, looked him full in the face, and said, "Yes," with so much distinctness, as to satisfy those who were present, that he perfectly understood the question, and the answer.

He did not appear, for several hours previous to his death, to suffer much pain; but continued to breathe shorter and shorter, until a few minutes before three o'clock, on Saturday morning, the 11th of January, when he expired without a struggle or a groan.

The death of President Dwight, spread a deep and general sorrow, not only through the State, but through New England, and extensively through the Union. Beloved by relatives, esteemed by his friends, revered by his pupils, and highly honoured by his countrymen: his loss was universally considered as a great public, as well as private calamity. In the city where he had so long resided, and where his worth was universally acknowledged, he was sincerely and feelingly lamented. His funeral was attended on Tuesday the 14th of January, by a large concourse of people, from New Haven and the neighbouring towns, and a respectable number of the clergy from different

parts of the State. As a mark of respect, the stores and shops in the city were shut, and business suspended. The scene was solemn and impressive. A deep gloom pervaded the whole assembly, and every one present felt himself a mourner. The various religious services exhibited the fullest evidence of the affection and respect which the reverend gentlemen, who officiated, entertained for his private virtues, as well as their deep sense of the loss which the church, the college, and the community had sustained in his death. In many places, in different parts of the country, sermons were delivered on the occasion. In New York, and Albany, meetings were held by the alumni of the college, resident in those cities, where various public manifestations of their sense of his virtues, their regret for his death, and their respect for his character, were exhibited. Indeed, we know of but one instance that has occurred in this country, in which such extensive public expressions of sorrow for the death of any individual, or respect for his memory, have appeared.

A brief outline of the life of this great and excellent man, is now before the reader: a sketch of his theological character will be attempted in the annexed Essay.

For native powers of mind, President Dwight will doubtless be ranked among the first men in the history of our country. The proofs in support of this remark, need not be sought from any individual source, or from his attainments in any single walk of literature or science. They may be found in every pursuit in which he was engaged, and be gathered in every stage of his progress from the cradle to the grave. In the acquisition of knowledge, we have seen that the earliest efforts of his mind, even in infancy,

were singular and extraordinary. At every school, in which he was placed, though commonly the youngest member, he was at the head of his class. In College, notwithstanding his extreme youth, and the many other embarrassments through which he had to struggle, he was surpassed by none of his companions. His acquisitions, during the eight succeeding years after he left College, although he was constantly occupied in the business of instruction, and a considerable part of the time was afflicted with disease and debility, and in a great measure deprived of the use of his eyes, were extensive and profound, not confined to a single science, or to one branch of literature; but comprehending the mathematics and logic, the languages and philology, as well as rhetoric and poetry.

The loss of the use of his eyes, at the early age of twenty-three, is not to be regarded merely as a calamity by which he was deprived of the capacity for reading and study; but in connection with the fact, that it constantly subjected him to severe and almost uninterrupted suffering. With this insurmountable embarrassment he was obliged to struggle through life. During the great part of forty years he was not able to read fifteen minutes in the twenty-four hours; and often, for days and weeks together, the pain which he endured in that part of the head immediately behind the eyes, amounted to anguish. His life, it will be remembered, was devoted to a learned and laborious profession, and to literary and scientific pursuits. The knowledge which he gained from books, after the period above-mentioned, was almost exclusively at second hand, by the aid of others: a process slow, tedious, and discouraging. Yet he has ever been

esteemed one of the best informed men this country has produced. Industry was, indeed, one of his most striking characteristics; but it was the industry of a mind conscious of its powers, and delighting in their exercise. His perception was clear and rapid; his discernment acute; his invention rich; his taste correct and delicate; his imagination brilliant; his wit genuine; his judgment solid; his views comprehensive; and his reasoning faculties powerful and commanding.

In one particular he excelled most men of any age; in the entire command of his thoughts. His mind always rose with the occasion, and was always equal to it. No emergency, however sudden or pressing, appeared to surprize him or to find him unprepared. In repeated instances on the Sabbath, when his notes were by accident left at home, and he did not discover it until a few moments before he was to use them; he has, in the instant, taken a new subject of discourse, and formed his plan so happily, and executed it so well, that none of the audience conjectured the fact, or suspected the want of preparation. Having been driven by necessity to pursue his many avocations without the use of his eyes, his memory, naturally strong, acquired a power of retention unusual and surprising. It was not the power of recollecting words, or dates, or numbers of any kind. It was the power of remembering facts and thoughts; especially his own thoughts. When a subject became once familiar to his mind, he rarely, if ever, lost its impression. In this respect his mind resembled a well-arranged volume; in which every subject forms a separate section, and each view of that subject a separate page. He perfectly knew the order of the sub-

jects; could turn to any page at will; and always found each impression as distinct and perfect as when first formed.

When engaged in the composition of sermons or any other literary performance, not only did the conversation of those around him not interrupt his course of thinking; but, while waiting for his amanuensis to finish the sentence, which he had last dictated, he would spend the interval in conversing with his family or his friends, without the least embarrassment, delay, or confusion of thought. His mind took such firm hold of the subject which principally occupied it, that no ordinary force could separate it from his grasp. He was always conscious of the exact progress which he had made in every subject. When company, or any other occurrence, compelled him to break off suddenly, it would sometimes happen that he did not return to his employment until after the expiration of several days. On resuming his labours, all he required of his amanuensis was to read the last word, or clause, that had been written; and he instantly would proceed to dictate, as if no interruption had occurred. In several instances, he was compelled to dictate a letter, at the same time that he was dictating a sermon. In one, a pressing necessity obliged him to dictate three letters at the same time. He did so. Each amanuensis was fully occupied; and the letters needed no correction but pointing.

To conceive, to invent, to reason, was in such a sense instinctive, that neither employment appeared to fatigue or exhaust him. After severe and steady labour, his mind was as prepared for any species of exertion, as if he had done nothing; for the activity and sprightliness of conversation, for the closer con-

finement of investigation, or for the excursive range of poetry. Almost all his poetry, written subsequently to the age of twenty-three, was dictated to an amanuensis, after the unintermitted application of the day.

In addition to his attainments in classical learning, and the sciences in general, President Dwight had acquired a vast fund of information on almost all the concerns of human life. His acquaintance with books was extensive; comprising not only those appropriate to his profession as a minister, and his office as President of the College, but on all important and interesting subjects. He was thoroughly read in ancient and modern history, geography, biography, and travels. Few works of this description, especially those of the two last classes, escaped his attention. With the pursuits of agriculture, he was practically as well as theoretically conversant. In the cultivation of his garden he took peculiar pleasure and displayed an uncommon degree of skill and science. Of his extensive knowledge on these subjects, his poem called "Greenfield Hill," will convince the reader. "The Conquest of Canaan," notwithstanding the early age at which it was written contains abundant evidence of rich invention, of harmonious versification, of a brilliant fancy, of strong powers of description, of a sublime imagination, of vigorous thought, and of the most pure and virtuous sentiment.

As a Minister and Preacher of the Gospel, it is not easy to convey an adequate idea of his characteristic excellence. Having been compelled, from the weakness of his eyes, to adopt the plan of preaching without notes; his sermons, except those designed for ex-

traordinary occasions, were for the first twenty years chiefly unwritten. Usually, he barely noted the general divisions, and some of the most important and leading ideas. There is no doubt, that this mode had its peculiar advantages ; not that his style and manner as an extemporaneous preacher were more popular and captivating, than at a later period when his discourses were written at length. When unconfined by notes, the whole field of thought was before him. Into that field he entered ; conscious where his subject lay, and by what metes and bounds it was limited ; and enjoying also that calm self-possession and confidence of success, which *trial*, alone can give, and which every successive effort had only served to increase. Within these limits his powers had full scope, his imagination was left to range at will, his feelings were kindled, and his mind became in the highest degree *creative*. Its conceptions were instantaneous ; its thoughts were new and striking ; its deductions clear and irresistible ; and its images exact representations of what his eye saw, living, speaking, and acting. When we add, that these were accompanied by the utmost fluency and force of language, a piercing eye, a countenance deeply marked with intellect, a strong emphasis, a voice singular for its compass and melody, an enunciation remarkably clear and distinct, a person dignified and commanding, and gestures graceful and happy ; we need not inform the reader that his pulpit efforts possessed every characteristic of animated and powerful eloquence. Many instances of its effects upon large audiences are remembered, and might easily be mentioned, which were most striking proofs of its power over the feelings and the conscience.

His own views of the duty of a minister of Christ

are happily conveyed in several of his discourses, and still more fully in some of his occasional sermons. He considered him bound to forget himself, and remember nothing but the purpose for which he is sent; the salvation of his hearers. Every attempt at display, every effort to exhibit his own talents, or taste, or fancy, or learning, in a preacher, was in his view an obvious prostitution of his office to private and unhallowed purposes. His rules and his conduct were in this respect harmonious.

His application of Scripture doctrines and texts to the ever-varying aspect of human life; his insight into the ground-work of character, and the motives to action; his admirable sketches, as it were, with the very pencil, and in the very colouring of the inspired writers, distinguished him from the mere commentator on texts, and the sentimental moralist. Of his eloquence, as with great orators, few can judge correctly, but those who have heard him. They will never forget him, either in this world or the next. To simplicity in manner and matter, he added dignity; to ease he added energy; to fervour he added humility. Preaching too often seems, with ministers, the work of a day or an hour; but with him it was the work of Eternity. He preached as a sinner and dying man himself; he preached as in the presence of God, and of the spirits of just men made perfect; he preached as though he saw his crown of glory ever before him.

Of his miscellaneous sermons at large, our limits forbid us to attempt a delineation. We will mention one of them, which appears to have been conceived in a peculiarly auspicious moment; and has been eminently followed with the blessing of God. His students will realize that we intend the discourse on

Jeremiah viii. 20. *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.* In two instances, the delivery of it was obviously the commencement of a revival of religion among his pupils; in the first of which nearly half of them were united to the College church. Similar consequences have been ascribed to its delivery on two other occasions, in different places. Never have we witnessed effects on mixed audiences equally solemn and powerful, from any sermon, as in several instances, from this. Many besides his pupils ascribed to it their first impressions on religious subjects.

A characteristic of his preaching was a constant regard to practical effect. It was impossible for him to enter the desk but as the herald of reconciliation. He could not fail to discover his affecting sense of the greatness of the Being who sent him, or of the infinite importance of the message which he brought. And his most obvious purpose was to accomplish the salvation of those to whom it was delivered.

It is believed, on the best evidence, that this purpose was to an unusual extent accomplished by his preaching. Immediately before the commencement of his Presidency, the College Church among the students was almost extinct; it came at last to consist of only two members, and soon after his accession, it dwindled to a single person. During the greatest part of his continuance in office, it embraced at least one fourth, in various instances one third, and in one upwards of half, of the students. Perhaps no object of contemplation afforded him higher pleasure, towards the close of life, than the number of his pupils, who had become, or were intending to become, preachers; especially when he remembered how frequently the labours of the former had been crowned with success.

In the performance of the other exercises of public worship he greatly excelled. His manner of reading the Scriptures, and sacred poetry, was peculiarly happy and impressive. In the appropriateness, variety, fluency, copiousness, fervency, and elevation of prayer, as it regarded subjects, sentiment, and language, he was nearly without a rival. Entirely free from form, from tiresome repetition, and from lukewarmness; and under the influence of the deepest abasement and prostration of soul; his heart appeared to be melted, and *his lips to be touched as with a live coal from off the altar*, when he was engaged in this sublime and delightful duty.

But his usefulness as a Minister, was not confined to his labours in the pulpit. He was emphatically the friend, the counsellor, and the guide of his younger brethren in the sacred profession. As a peace-maker, he was eminently blessed; for his advice was asked and given in the spirit of Christian humility and justice. The churches of his own persuasion, and the clergy, many of whom had first or last been his pupils, felt the most implicit confidence in his disposition, and his capacity, to assist them in their embarrassments and difficulties. For this purpose they resorted to him with perfect freedom, and were received by him with the utmost kindness and respect. In the hour of trial, they found support in his firmness, assistance in his wisdom, and encouragement in his prayers. He entered at once into their interests and feelings; and the services which he rendered them, were numerous and important.

In the language of one of his pupils, "He was, indeed, a father to New England—her moral legislator. His life is an era in her history."

Few individuals, in any country, can be named, who have contributed so largely to the promotion of its best interests. In addition to his important labours as a preacher and as a writer, five and forty years of his valuable life were devoted to the instruction of the rising generation; during which period he assisted in the education of between three and four thousand persons. When it is considered the influence he acquired over their minds, arising from their high veneration for his character; and the readiness with which he availed himself of this influence, to enrich them with the best principles;—benefits the most extensive and permanent may be anticipated as the result of his labours. To ascertain their amount we must wait for the revelations of the last day.

All who have attempted to draw his character, have mentioned him as eminently *disinterested*. Few men have originated more numerous, or more important institutions or measures. Yet it is believed, that in no instance, whatever, was he even suspected to connect a private selfish end, his own personal benefit, or the advancement of any member of his family, with that which was avowed and ostensible. The purposes which he professed, were the only purposes he had in view. To accomplish them, he could not stoop to management and finesse. They were honourable purposes. He declared them with the sincerity of truth, and pursued them with the dignity of virtue. So perfectly known was his character in this respect, that the instance probably cannot be named, in which any man ventured to approach him for his assistance, in a manner which was not direct and honourable.

His charities were unceasing, and, in proportion to his resources, rarely surpassed. The beggar at the door never went empty away. Those who suffered in

silence, he continually sought out, and sent them unsolicited relief. Those whom the providence of God had suddenly impoverished, never applied to him for help in vain. The only privilege of the affluent, which he coveted, was the good which they might do with their wealth, and the pleasure which they might enjoy in doing it.

Amidst all his avocations and labours he was ever ready to attend to the calls of hospitality, of civility, and of friendship; calls which were multiplied upon him to an unprecedented degree, but which were never suffered to pass by unheeded. His manners were those of the polished gentleman: characterized by ease, grace, and dignity. There was no distance, no reserve, no visible consciousness of superior intellect. His politeness was not a mere exterior. It was the great law of kindness, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, exemplified in his daily intercourse with those around him. It was thus universal; appearing in his countenance, his conversation, and his conduct; exhibited equally towards persons of every condition; and delicately regarding the characters, the circumstances, the feelings, and the prejudices of those who were present. All men were easy and happy in his company.

No man ever loved his friends with more sincerity, or constancy, or with a warmer affection. His house, his heart, and his hand, were always open to welcome them. He never deserted them in distress; or because they were the objects of reproach and calumny. Instead of this, he chose rather to withdraw from those who attacked them, however numerous, or wealthy, or powerful. In his intercourse with his friends, and with others, all his purposes were kind, and generous, and honourable. He would not condescend to wear

disguise, nor to associate with those before whom it was necessary.

In the nearest relations of private life, President Dwight was an example of almost all that is excellent and praiseworthy. His highest earthly enjoyment was found at the fire-side, in the bosom of his family. Their happiness was his own; and to promote it no exertions were too great.

As a friend and neighbour, let the united testimony of the various communities in which at different periods of his life he resided, give his character. Rarely indeed does an instance occur, in which the influence of individual example has been more beneficially experienced. It was not merely that he was kind to his neighbours, polite and hospitable to strangers, and charitable to the poor; and that, as far as in him lay, he followed peace with all men; there was a moral charm that uniformly surrounded him, which was felt in every circle, and spread its benign influence through the region in which he dwelt. "It is rare," says Professor Silliman, who had been long and intimately acquainted with him, in private as well as in public life, "that a man, so great and splendid in the public eye, is in private life so desirable: for, to his particular friends, his society was delightful, and the only effect of long and intimate acquaintance with him was to exact towards him every sentiment of respect, admiration, and affection." "In the domestic and social circle," says another of his pupils, "Dr. Dwight will ever be remembered with the tenderest affection, and the most sincere regret." "In private society," says a third, "Dr. D. possessed uncommon powers to please and to instruct. With an inexhaustible stock of knowledge on almost every subject, and an ease of communication, to which a

parallel can hardly be found, he readily accommodated his remarks to the character and means of improvement of those with whom he conversed; and seldom failed to excite the highest respect and admiration. He ever considered the diversified conversation of a social circle, as affording the most rational, and, at the same time, the most entertaining of all amusements." "A disappointment," says a fourth, "is often felt on our introduction to men, who have attained eminence for talents and piety. By habits of seclusion and abstraction, they have, perhaps, lost the ability to mingle with interest, in the concerns of the passing day. It was not so with President Dwight. In his manners he was, in the highest degree dignified, affable and polite. Like Johnson, he shone in no place, with more distinguished splendour, than in the circle of the friends he loved; when the glow of animation lighted up his countenance, and a perpetual stream of knowledge and wisdom flowed from his lips. As his had been a life of observation and reflection rather than of secluded study, his acquisitions were all practical, they were all at hand, ready to enrich and adorn his conversation. In Theology and Ethics, in Natural Philosophy and Geography, in History and Statistics, in Poetry and Philology, in Husbandry and Domestic Economy, his treasures were equally inexhaustible. Interesting narration, vivid description, and sallies of humour; anecdotes of the just, the good, the generous, the brave, the eccentric; these all were blended, in fine proportions, to form the bright and varied tissue of his discourse. Alive to all the sympathies of friendship, faithful to its claims, and sedulous in performing its duties, he was beloved by many from early life, with whom he entered on the stage, and whom, as Shakespeare says, he "grappled

to his soul with hooks of steel." It is no small proof of his amiableness, that all who gained the most intimate access to him, whether associates, or pupils, or amanuensis, admired, revered, and loved him most." These various testimonies, written by so many different persons, all having the best means of judging, while they evince his excellence in private life, also show how impossible it must be, in a sketch like the present, to give an adequate view of the character of a man, so greatly distinguished in every public station which he was called to occupy, so justly admired in the circle of his friends, and so tenderly beloved in the bosom of his own family.

His views of his own attainments as a Christian were unaffectedly humble. His humility in this respect was striking in his sermons and his prayers; when speaking of the Christians present, never including himself among them. His declarations on this subject, in health and sickness always were, that he did not *know* that he had any personal interest in the mediation of Christ; that the promises of the Gospel were great and glorious; that he was usually free from distressing doubts and apprehensions; and that his hopes were often bright and supporting.

His life was a steady course of cheerfulness, as well as of submission; and this under trials well calculated to determine the character. Probably no man, without actual experience, can realize how great a trial of patience it is, to endure pain in the eyes every day for more than forty years, uninterrupted except by the hours of sleep, and often intense and agonizing; to be deprived by it for weeks together of a great part of his necessary sleep; to be cut off absolutely from the pleasure of reading; and to be continually threatened by it with blindness, and occasionally with apoplexy.

Not only, however, did he not murmur nor repine; he was resigned. He was more—he was universally cheerful and happy; and always ready to contribute to the happiness of those around him.

Death often invaded his peace. He lost a father in the prime of life and usefulness, whom he ever mentioned with the highest reverence; three brothers at the age of manhood, whom he tenderly lamented; a mother, endeared to him by every consideration which could affect the heart of filial piety; two sisters for whom he felt no ordinary warmth of attachment; and a son, a youth of fine promise, at the age of nineteen, just after he had completed his education. The effect of these repeated strokes was obviously such as a Christian should desire. Their evident tendency was to soften the heart, to subdue the will, to loosen the attachment to terrestrial good, to enliven the conscience, and to assist the soul in its assumption of the heavenly character.

Those who witnessed his sufferings during the two last years of his life, were not more struck with their severity, nor with the fortitude which he discovered under them, than with the marked effect of them upon his mind. Often, for months together, the pain which he endured, was not only unintermitted, but, in its severest forms, spasmodical. During the continuance of these convulsions, which recurred frequently during the day, so intense was the anguish, that the sweat would roll down his forehead for many minutes together in continued streams. Yet, such was his fortitude, that though compelled at times to groan from severity of distress, he never once forgot himself so far as to murmur or complain. But, while these sufferings thus ravaged the body, and prepared it for dissolution, their effect upon the mind was obviously

salutary. Accustomed for many years, to the daily contemplation of death, he now witnessed its gradual approach with serenity and peace. In the midst of his sorrows he found consolations, *that were neither few nor small*. He grew continually more and more humble, gentle, meek, and resigned; more and more disposed to give up every trust but in his Saviour. Though his intellect retained all its vigour, yet his temper became in an eminent degree, that of a lowly child. His affections were exquisitely tender. Their native character seemed entirely gone, and they resembled the affections of heaven. His views, his hopes, his purposes, and his joys, were heavenly; and nothing terrestrial seemed to remain, except his earthly tabernacle, which was just ready to be laid in the grave, there to rest in hope. When called to pass through the dark valley, his Shepherd appeared to be with him; his rod and his staff they comforted him. Though frequently bewildered through excess of pain, yet no distressing fear assailed him. He saw the presence of the grim destroyer with tranquillity and hope; yielded up his soul without a struggle, and as we trust, with undoubting confidence, found a glorious welcome into the *House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*.

Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**

* Rev. xiv. 12, and 13.

Over the grave of President Dwight, the Corporation of the College have erected a neat marble monument, on which is the following inscription:—

HIC SEPULTUS JACET
 VIR ILLE ADMODUM REVERENDUS
 TIMOTHEUS DWIGHT, S. T. D. L. L. D.
 COLLEGII VALENIS PRÆSES,
 ET EJUSDEM
 SACROSANCTÆ THEOLOGIÆ PROFESSOR:
 QUI
 DE LITERIS, DE RELIGIONE DE PATRIA
 OPTIME MERITUS;
 MAXIMO SUORUM ET BONORUM OMNIUM
 DESIDERIO.

MORTEM OBIT,
 DIE XI. JANUAR ANNO DOMINI
 MDCCCXVII
 ÆTATIS SUÆ.

LXV.

On the opposite side.
 ECCLESIAE GREENFIELDIENSIS PASTOR
 ANNOS XII.

COLLEGII VALENSIS TUTOR
 VI.

PRÆSES
 XXII.

SENATUS
 COLLEGII VALLENSIS
 HOC SAXUM PONENDUM
 CURAVIT.

AN ESSAY, &c.

THERE is no necessary connection between mental energy and moral worth. The former may exist without the latter; and in this apostate world it often does so to a lamentable degree. In such cases, high intellectual endowments only qualify the agent for diffusing more widely, the corruptions of a vicious and depraved nature. The writings of such men, often voluminous and brilliant, like the tremendous eruptions of a burning mountain, secure by their fearful energies a wider extent of devastation and ruin.

Happily, however, for mankind, the most powerful spirits are not all arranged on the side of evil. Intellectuals of the highest order have been consecrated to the cause of benevolence and piety. Men endowed with the largest understandings, enlightened by science, comprehending the most extensive range of thought, and capable of the deepest mental abstraction, have employed their noblest energies to sustain virtue and disseminate truth, especially truths the most sublime and important,—*that* which connects the mind immediately with God, whence it emanates, and to whom it conducts us.

Among this class of moral benefactors, the writer of these volumes holds an honourable pre-eminence. The President of Yale College exhibited the rare combination of great intellectual and moral excellence,—adorning, in his life, the doctrines he so ably defends in his writings. By the uncommon powers of his mind, the piety and benevolence of his disposition, the urbanity of his manners, and the peculiar inci-

dents of his life, Dr. D. acquired a commanding influence on the minds and affections of the public. He was elevated to a most honourable station in the American churches, and may justly be esteemed a star of the first magnitude in the western hemisphere.

His biographer remarks,—“ In a fair claim to originality of thought, of method, and of illustration, it is confidently believed, that the sermons of President Dwight need not shrink from a comparison with those of any other writer.” Clear and profound thinking,—careful deliberation, and intellectual energy, unquestionably characterize his sermons. As was said of the writings of Lord Bacon, they are full of thought, “ *full of the seeds of things.*” Few men have brought to the investigation of abstruse questions, a mind more eminently qualified for the undertaking. In the fathomless abyss of research he seems perfectly at home. His understanding never labours under the weight of its subject. Doctrines the most recondite seem familiar in his hands. His thoughts rise in an order the most natural and easy, and are conveyed in language definite, nervous, and transparent.

In his mode of discussing topics of most frequent recurrence, there is nothing superficial or commonplace. He penetrates into the interior of divine truth, and out of the sacred treasury *brings forth things new* as well as *old*. Some preachers are perpetually aiming after novelty; and in trying to be original, they become ridiculous. Dr. D. was original, without trying to be so.

It may be stated as a peculiar excellence of this writer, that he adapts his style to the nature of his subject. His principal object in these Lectures is to explain and demonstrate the great truths of Theology; and to facilitate this object, he aims at simplicity, conciseness,

and perspicuity. His imagination, naturally ardent and active, is placed under interdict. Figurative language is sparingly introduced; seldom when stating his argument, and never in the leading divisions of his subject. His style is neither enfeebled by expletives, nor encumbered by ornaments. Every thing is avoided that would obscure his meaning, or displace a link in the chain of logical induction by which his ideas are connected.

But when he proceeds to shew the influence of these doctrines on the heart and life, to enforce them on the conscience, and to claim for them a place in the affections, he pours forth strains of manly and impassioned eloquence. From the ample stores of his rich and well-ordered mind, he is readily supplied with appropriate materials to illustrate his subject, and to invest it with dignity, energy, and grace. In his most powerful appeals to the passions, there is nothing forced or artificial. His imagination is still tributary to his understanding. All is natural and easy,—the expression of strong and genuine feeling; he rises with his theme, and is borne on by a deep sense of its importance.

“His sermons,” observes his biographer, “were not adorned with as many decorations of taste, and ornaments of imagination, as some other distinguished pulpit orators. But in the primary qualities of real eloquence, his sermons were eminently rich; in powerful appeals to the heart, in vivid pictures of vice and virtue sketched from the life; in awful denunciations; in solemn remonstrance; in fervent intercession.”

Dr. D.'s views of the several articles of natural and revealed religion, which successively pass under his inspection, are clearly defined, and harmoniously connected; forming a complete series, and comprehend-

ing all the important doctrines and duties included in the wide circle of theological science. "As a body of divinity, and as a code of Christian morals, it forms an invaluable accession to the Theological Bibliotheca."

By this general encomium, it is not intended to express an unqualified approbation of every position advanced, and of every mode of expression which occurs in Dr. D.'s voluminous works. Perfection is not the attribute of man. To the correctness of the leading sentiments maintained in these volumes, it is conceived that no valid exceptions can be taken; while the devotional strain, and practical tendency of the whole, will be sure of a response from every kindred spirit, from every pious and philanthropic bosom.

Some of the American writers have plunged deeply into metaphysical abstraction; and we are indebted to them for the light they have shed on the first principles of moral science. Yet it must be confessed, that the process of their ratiocination is dull and heavy; embarrassed by a tedious multiplication of divisions, and encumbered by an unnecessary weight of words; and that the labour of their research, is not always repaid by the value of their discoveries.

The writings of President Dwight are not chargeable with either of these drawbacks. Clearness and conciseness are the qualities of his style. His logical powers were of a high order. He was capable of sustaining a close concatenation of thought, and of pursuing a question through an unbroken series of induction, without the dullness usually attendant on metaphysical disquisition. The chain of his argument is luminous and beautiful, while his conclusions are irresistible. His conceptions are his own; and the most vigorous efforts of his understanding are enlivened by a heart of the finest sensibility. It has been well re-

marked by one of his reviewers, that "The connection between his intellectual powers and his moral sensibilities, seems never to be suspended, but a wholesome circulation is going forward, which communicates warmth to his most abstract speculations. The consequent effect is, that these lectures are admirably adapted to make the reader not merely a rational believer, but a devout Christian." *

Few men have pursued the investigation of truth with minds less under the influence of sectarian bias, or more free from the restraints and trammels of human system, than the present writer. Dr. D. possessed a masculine and independent mind, and on all subjects he thought for himself. It would be easy to select passages from his sermons, in which he appears to be verging on the confines of opposite systems;—a presumptive proof, at least, that he made the Scriptures themselves, and not any human interpretation of them, the standard of his faith, and the rule of his ministerial labours.

He observes, "An attempt has been made, in the progress of these discourses, to exhibit the most important of these things in a regular scheme, to the view of this audience. It has been my design to exhibit them as they are actually contained in the Scriptures; and to let the sacred volume speak its own language. This design I have watchfully pursued; and I hope faithfully. There was a period in my life, at which I regarded human systems with more reverence than I can now justify, and much more than I am willing should be rendered to my own. *Let God be true, but every man who wilfully contradicts his declarations, a liar.*"

* Eclectic Review, Aug. 1821, p. 110.

It is probably on this account, when reading these sermons, that the simple current of our thoughts and feelings is not impeded, by the mystic technicalities and scholastic subtleties which we meet with in works of a systematic, or, more correctly speaking, of a sectarian character. Here we have scriptural doctrine, and evangelical sentiment, without those muddy refinements, if we may connect such opposite expressions, which are generated by a narrow and sophisticated theology.

The writer of this essay is not aware, that the doctrines maintained by the learned Professor are less Calvinistic than those advocated by other distinguished divines of his own country; or that his religious views are essentially different from theirs. But they are conveyed in terms less obnoxious to party prejudice, and less offensive to modern taste; without losing any thing of their substance, they are filtered and refined of those grosser forms of expression, in which they appear in other American publications.

He is not exposed to the charge which has been urged against some Calvinistic writers,—that of concealing his meaning behind the ambiguity of his terms. His language on all subjects is precise and explicit. He uses no vague or equivocal expressions. He flies to no cloudy regions to escape the point of an argument. When he feels a difficulty, he candidly acknowledges it. But he does not, as some systematic writers have done, unnecessarily magnify and multiply difficulties, by extending his theory wider than is required by the simple language, and harmonious testimony of the volume, whence he derives it. Where Dr. D. has felt a difficulty which he was unable to resolve, he has often relieved himself from the pressure of it, by rolling it back on his opponent; shew-

ing that it arises out of an indisputable fact, and has no peculiar bearing on the doctrine in question.

Not satisfied merely to support the sentiment of his text; he has been also desirous to fortify it against the several objections by which it is assailed. In performing this task he excelled most other preachers. His style of reasoning has the advantage of disembarassing the question of verbal criticism, and bringing it within the province of common sense. Possessed of an acute discernment; a sound and discriminating judgment, he was eminently qualified to distinguish truth from error, and to disentangle the former from the numerous involutions with which the latter has crippled its energies, and obscured its lustre.

The worthy president was also liberal in his spirit, while he was firm in his principles. The subject proposed for discussion, he submits to the severest investigation, fearless of the issue. Yet his style may be considered rather didactic, than polemic. He aims more to enlighten his opponent, than to refute his arguments. He was well able to *give a reason for the hope that was in him*, and he does so *with meekness and fear*.

With the full exercise of candour towards those who differed from him, he was not insensible to the importance of truth, nor disposed to compromise its claims. There was no uncertainty or indecision in his convictions; no languor in the tone of his belief. He knew nothing of that latitudinarian indifference which often passes under the name of liberality. If he was no dogmatist, he was no sceptic. He held no fluctuating opinions on points of importance. His sentiments were principles deeply wrought into the texture of his religious character. Religion with him was an affair of serious moment. It is impos-

sible to read his discourses without perceiving that they were written under this conviction. He deemed it not enough to gaze on truth with the eye of speculation; he grasped it with the firmness of one who felt that his safety depended upon retaining it. *Let her not go, for she is thy life.*

In drawing the characters of men, and developing the latent principles of their actions, he proves himself to be a close student of human nature; and a faithful inspector of the deep recesses of his own bosom.

Superstition has her votaries in every country. Dr. D. informs us of a numerous class in his own, who pretended to inspiration. "Who professed to believe that their preachers *are supplied directly from heaven with supernatural light and power*; so as to enable them clearly to *understand* and profitably to *expound* the word of God." The folly and fallacy of such pretensions he ably exposes in his sermon "on the various duties of ministers;" and, what is more to our purpose to observe, he possessed a spirit utterly at variance with such a profession.

In the sermon alluded to, he lays it down as a cardinal principle, that *the prime object of study to a minister is the Bible*; and in his mode of discussing theological questions he discovers an intimate acquaintance with that Sacred Volume, and a spirit disposed to be guided by its light, and willing to bow to its authority. But he does not discard the office of reason in matters of revelation. "Reason," he observes, "has been often and justly styled 'The light of the mind.' Mr. Locke, with great force and beauty, styles it 'The candle of the Lord shining within man.' It is our ultimate directress. Even the doctrines and precepts of Revelation can be nothing to us, until reason has first discerned it to be a revelation, and determined the real import of its precepts and doctrines."

But if Dr. D. knew the value of reason in matters of revelation, he knew also its limits. Possessed of the strongest powers of mind for the investigation of abstruse questions, he discovers a sobriety and diffidence, when exercising them on the great things of God, worthy of imitation. To ascertain the boundaries of lawful enquiry relative to things spiritual and divine, is an important discovery. Many an ardent spirit has become the dupe of its own inquisitiveness,

“ And wander'd forth in endless mazes lost.”

“ The bounds of the human mind,” as he justly observes, “ as well as of the human race, are fixed, and beyond them it cannot pass.” In the science of theology, as in every other, there are themes too vast for the human intellect to grasp; too subtle for its acutest perceptions to discern. *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing. He maketh darkness his pavilion: His way is in the sea, and his footsteps are not known.* It is no wonder then, as Dr. Watts remarks, that “ we finite limited beings soon lose ourselves among infinities, whether great or small, till we retreat within our own bounds, and reason upon things which are made for our grasp of thought.”*

In the permission of moral evil, and in the grand scheme devised by infinite wisdom to countervail its damages, *there are heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, which passeth knowledge.* Into the dark profound of this sacred science, our author does not attempt to penetrate further than the interests of truth require; and wherever Reason advances, it is with the torch of Revelation in her hand. Many an error has its origin in the perplexed metaphysics by which theology has been so much obscured and perverted. With his usual

* Phil. Essay, p. 284.

modesty and good sense, Dr. D. remarks,—“ So far as I may be permitted to judge, divines have insisted on the metaphysical nature of this subject (moral agency) and several others, in such a manner as to perplex, rather than to instruct.”

All that it is important for man to know, is happily placed within the reach of the plainest understanding. It is not necessary to ascertain the elementary principles of divine truth, in order to believe and obey its dictates. The simple peasant, who never heard of the prismatic colours of the light of heaven, not less than the philosopher who first discovered them, is warmed, and cheered, and guided by its beams.

IN maintaining the doctrine of DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, a doctrine, which lies at the foundation of the Calvinistic system, our author prefers an appeal to *facts*, as affording the most satisfactory evidence, rather than submitting the question to a course of abstract reasoning, which is more difficult to be followed, and more dubious in its results.

He observes, “ The mode which I shall pursue, to illustrate the truth of this doctrine, will probably be thought singular: I hope it will be useful. [Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing] this, and several other [doctrines of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large, than the authors of them appear to believe.”]

The facts, to which the worthy professor refers in evidence of this doctrine, are the following:

I. The birth and education of all men, depend not upon themselves.

II. The course of life, which men usually pursue, is very different from that which they have intended. And,

III. The continuance of life does not depend upon man.

Each of these facts, Dr. D. illustrates with his usual force and felicity of style.

By adopting this mode of argumentation, he compasses his object by the shortest route; and he secures a passage to the plainest understanding, without encountering its prejudices, having no necessity to implicate the question with the peculiarities of any theological system.

“I have not,” he observes, “called up this doctrine at the present time, for the purpose of entering into any of those metaphysical disquisitions, which restless curiosity, rather than sound wisdom, have commonly founded upon it; but on the one hand, to give it its proper place in this system of Discourses; and on the other, to derive from it several practical observations, which there is reason to hope may, by the blessing of God, be useful to those who hear me, especially to those who are students in this Seminary.”

That the Supreme Being acts *independently*, and *irresistibly*, in all he does, is unquestionably a doctrine of Revelation. *He leadeth counsellors away spoiled. He accepteth not the person of Princes. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only,* He openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth, and no man openeth.† Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.‡ For he giveth not account of any of his matters.§ And he doeth according to his will in the*

* Job xii. 17: xxxiv. 19, 29. † Rev. iii. 7. ‡ Rom. ix. 18.

§ Job xxxiii. 13.

*army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?**

But while we are clearly taught by these passages, that the Almighty acts *independently* of all other beings, and *uncontroulably* by any; we must be careful of the inference, that *therefore* he acts *arbitrarily*, and *capriciously* also. This doctrine is not involved in the former; though from the injudicious manner, in which the subject has frequently been handled, it appears to be so.

It is by no means safe to conclude that the INFINITE JEHOVAH *has no reasons* for his conduct, because our feeble and contracted minds, cannot perceive them; or that they are less worthy of himself, with respect to those parts of his procedure where he conceals them from us, than where he has condescended to make them known. It must not be inferred, that God acts without *counsel*, because he acts without *counsellors*. *He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

The Divine Sovereignty, is not more intimately connected with the attribute of Power, than with the attribute of Wisdom, though its connection with the latter, may not be equally apparent. The Will of God, of which his sovereignty is but a modification and expression, ought not to be represented as in alliance with one attribute, and detached from the rest, or as in closer alliance with one, than with another. Rather than placed by the side of any single attribute, (if we may use such accommodating language,) it ought to be regarded as occupying the centre of all the natural and moral perfections of the Deity.

In accordance with these views, Dr. D. remarks,

* Dan. iv. 35.

“That God wills nothing without the best reason, whether that reason be disclosed to his creatures or not; that real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, are universally the object, to which his pleasure is directed, whether it respects the existence and motions of an insect, or the salvation of a man.”

THE doctrine of DIVINE DECREES, is another of those profound subjects, which have occupied this writer's attention, and which he has treated with his usual fidelity and circumspection. To pursue into detail, his views of this doctrine, in comparison with those of other American writers, would extend the present observations wider than is compatible with the prescribed limits of this Essay. The following passages will introduce the reader to an acquaintance with the learned Professor's sentiments on this sublime, and mysterious subject.

“If I mistake not,” he observes “both its friends and enemies have perplexed it not a little, by the manner, in which they have represented the doctrine, and each others' opinions.”

In several particulars, Dr. D. then proceeds to point out the view, which some divines have entertained on this subject, and to qualify his own.

I. In the first place, he objects to whatever implies the idea of succession in the Divine Mind.

“It has been frequently said, *that the Decrees of God are the consequence of his knowledge, and that his fore-knowledge is in consequence of his decrees*: and it is asked,—*how is it possible, that God should fore-know the existence of any thing until he has decreed that it should exist?* This phraseology, if applied to

men or other finite beings, might be correct. But when applied to God, it is necessarily erroneous. Whatever is intended by knowledge, fore-knowledge, or decrees, all is simultaneous, or absolutely co-existent."

II. The distinction between the *general* and the *special* Decrees of God, Dr. D. conceives to be an unmeaning distinction, and of dangerous tendency.

"The decrees of God are often said to be *general* and *special*; the *special* decrees, being those which respect the acceptance or rejection of mankind; and the *general* decrees, those which respect other things. This language is also in my view erroneous, and leads those who adopt it into mischievous consequences. There is no metaphysical, or real distinction in the nature of the several decrees of God. Nor are they distinguishable from each other, except either numerically, or by means of the objects which they respect. Nor is there any more *speciality* pertaining to one of them, than to another. God wills, or chooses the existence, conversion, or salvation of a man, the fall of a sparrow, or the descent of rain, with a volition, in every sense metaphysically, or in its own nature, the same. The strict truth is, that one indivisible act, perhaps it might be as properly called *state* of the Divine Mind, gave birth to the existence of all things."

III. Dr. D. believes, "*that in the nature and operations of things, there is inherent a foundation for preference or choice,*" hence he objects to those views of the Sovereignty of the Divine Decrees, which refer them to his will, independently of his wisdom. "Which represent God, as *willing because he wills*," which means nothing," or "as choosing, or decreeing without any reason, and to no end."

Such a notion of the decrees of God, is amenable to the charge, which has sometimes been urged—"o

introducing into the Christian system, the stoical doctrine of Fate, and making an iron-handed Necessity, or blind Destiny, the ultimate and irresistible disposer of all things."

"It is observable," he adds, "that the Scriptures rarely speak of this subject, under the name *Decree*. This word, and others derived from it, are used in the Old Testament, *twelve times with a reference to God*. In each of these instances, a *particular determination or sentence concerning a particular thing*, is spoken of; and in no instance, that general determination, or system of determinations usually denoted by this term in theological discussions. In the New Testament, the word, as referring to God, is not used at all. Whenever the subject of this doctrine is mentioned in the Scriptures, the words, *counsel, purpose, choice, pleasure, will*, or some other equivalent words, are employed to express it. These words are, in my view, more adapted, in the exact metaphysical sense, to the subject, than the word *decrees*; and naturally lead the mind to more just conceptions of its nature. In accordance with this fact, I shall express my own views of it in this manner. *What is commonly intended by the decrees of God is, that choice, or pleasure, of the Divine Mind, eternally and unchangeably inherent in it, by which all things are brought into being.*"

The human mind is ever prone to extremes. Eager to escape the embarrassments felt to be attendant on one system of belief, men often take refuge in another, as remote from the truth, and encompassed with equal difficulties.

The contingency of moral actions, is considered by some to be essential to the liberty of responsible agents. And divines of this class, in their strenuous endeavours to present entire the free-agency of man,

have relinquished the doctrines of the decrees and fore-knowledge of God; or have held them in so partial and qualified a sense, as to leave nothing in those doctrines worth retaining. "The voluntary actions of mankind," says Dr. Gregory, "are foreknown as *mere contingencies*;" and Dr. D. informs us, that "he is declared by a writer of respectability, to have merited the thanks of the learned world for this discovery."

There are other writers, on the contrary, holding the absolute certainty of the Knowledge of God; and the Eternity and Sovereignty of his Decrees, who have carried out their system to an extent, and adopted a mode of expressing themselves on these subjects, not more consonant with the simple statements of Revelation; and certainly, not less mischievous and demoralizing in their direct influence upon human conduct.

Errors, the most palpable and pernicious, sometimes lean upon truths the most obvious and important.

The entire dependence of every being upon God, and of every intelligent being, for the possession of his faculties, and the power to exercise them, has induced some, not only to give up the free-agency of man, but to merge all distinct, and individual agency, into that of the infinite and eternal Mind; thus making God the only Agent in the universe, and of necessity, the great Agent and Author of all moral evil.

That a portion of the American divinity, has tended in this direction, we have on the authority of the present respectable writer, whose candid manner of stating the fact, will be a sufficient security for its correctness.

"That God, by an immediate agency of his own, creates the sinful volitions of mankind, is a doctrine

not warranted, in my view, either by Reason or Revelation. There are, I know, many respectable men in modern times, and particularly in our own country, as there have been at other times, and in other countries, who have thought this the easiest way of arriving at satisfaction concerning this abstruse subject. I cannot, as some persons have thought it proper to do, attribute to these men evil desigus. In many instances at least they appear to give as unquestionable proofs of piety and virtue as are given by any others, and to devote their labours as cheerfully and faithfully to the promotion of truth and righteousness in the world. Still, I cannot accord with this doctrine, nor hesitate to believe, that they have in several instances '*darkened counsel by words without knowledge.*' "

"The Theology of a part of this country appears to me to be verging, insensibly perhaps to those who are chiefly concerned, but with no very gradual step, towards a Pantheism, differing materially in one particular only from that of Spinosa. He held 'that the universe,' which he supposed to be matter, and which he divided into cogitative, or intelligent, and incogitative, was God; and that the several parts of it were no other than separate parts of the same great and universal Being. Thus he excluded the existence of all creatures, and of any work of creation, as well as all that which is usually meant by the providence and government of the Creator. The Theology to which I have referred, teaches, that God is immaterial, intelligent, and infinite; but denies with Spinosa, the existence of finite intelligent beings, as well as of those which we call bodies; declaring that what men usually call minds or spirits, are no other than continued chains, or successions of ideas and exercises, created immediately and successively by the Infinite Mind! The same

reason is alleged by this system for the exclusion of finite agents from existence; which was alleged by Spinoza for excluding the existence of such agents, as well as an Infinite, Immaterial One, from his system; viz, that mankind cannot conceive of such things, nor comprehend their nature: a reason which, if admitted, will indeed exclude from our belief and reception almost every doctrine. Particularly on this ground we ought certainly to deny the existence of the Infinite Agent."

Nothing can be so offensive to the sanctity of the Divine nature, or so embarrassing and distressing to a pious mind, as the belief that God is the *efficient cause* and *immediate source of all moral evil*. That he who cannot bear the sight of sin, should have *produced it*; that he should *create* the sinful volitions, which he everywhere condemns; and that he will eternally punish in his creatures, the very crimes of which he is himself the author—are suppositions, not only counter to the whole tenour of Revelation, but which do violence to every rational estimate we can take of the Divine character, and every feeling and affection we are bound to cherish towards the beneficence, rectitude, and purity of his moral government.

*Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.**

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when

* Job xxxiv. 10, 11, 12.

he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

“It will be sufficient for the present purpose to observe,” says Dr. D., “that the Scriptures directly inform us, that God is the Author of holiness, and this in many forms, and with great emphasis; that they nowhere assert that he is the Author of sin, in the sense now under consideration; and that they every where attribute blame to man, as the guilty, and in my view, the efficient cause of his own sins. A plain man reading the Scriptures, never, I presume, derived from them the doctrine, *that God creates the sins of men*. Nor can he, without great pains-taking, and previous perplexity, be induced to admit it as a part of his creed. And let it be remembered, as a very just, and very important remark of Doddridge, that the plain sense of the Scriptures, or that which naturally strikes the minds of plain men as the real meaning, is almost of course the true sense.”

Between the opposite extremes of system, the middle line of truth is commonly situated. The doctrine that makes God the author of sin, and the one that makes him the author of a universe, in which he foresaw that sin would exist, are essentially different.

Dr. D. “unites with those who assert, *that God permitted the existence of sin*, or in the Scripture language, that he has in times past *suffered all men to walk in their own ways*.”

The permission of moral evil is a doctrine involved

* James i. xiii.—xvii.

in the fact of its existence. Sin is in the world. Unless all distinction between right and wrong be denied, the reality of its being cannot be doubted. If we admit the omniscience and omnipotence of God; that he foresaw its occurrence, and for reasons known only to himself, did not choose to interpose his power in order to prevent it; his *permission* of moral evil becomes a *doctrine* as unquestionably established as is the *fact* of its existence. Or, should it be said, that the interference of Almighty power to prevent the intrusion of sin into the universe, is incompatible with the liberty of moral agents, and destructive of their character as probationary beings; this objection, (which however is founded in error,) is easily avoided, by introducing the Goodness of God into the argument instead of his Power. The infinite benevolence of the Divine Mind, associated with his omniscience, will conduct our thoughts to the same conclusion.

If Infinite Intelligence foresaw the existence of sinful actions, with the interminable train of direful consequences which would ensue, he could easily have prevented them, by preventing the existence of the beings, whose actions they would otherwise be. This supposes no act of divine power, but merely the refusal of divine power to act, in obedience to the dictate of infinite benevolence. The omniscience, and the benevolence of Deity are eternal attributes. But the operations of his power are not eternal. "*In the beginning God created, &c.*" The apostacy of man, which was subsequent to his creation, and consequent upon it, must have been previously ascertained; and, if the attributes referred to are eternal, it must have been eternally present to the Mind of the great Author of his being. The divine permission of moral evil is, therefore, a doctrine, to the belief of which we are irresistibly impelled, unless we are prepared to give

up the perfection of the knowledge, the power, or the benevolence of the Deity. Admitting the infinitude of these attributes, we cannot escape the conclusion; whatever difficulties it may involve, that for ends, worthy of God, though inscrutable to us, moral evil was *permitted* to exist; that its existence was anticipated, and has been provided for in the system of the divine economy; or, in the language of our author, “*that all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or what is commonly called the Decrees of God.*” Beyond this line, it is humbly conceived, there is no necessity to extend our belief, and it is unsafe to carry our speculations. To account for the introduction of sin into the world, and to assign the reasons *why* the Almighty permitted its existence, is not within the province or the power of man. But let it be remembered, that whatever difficulties may attend the belief of *the divine permission of moral evil*, they pertain to it not as a *doctrine*, but as a *fact*; a fact which cannot be disposed of, let our religious system be what it may, while the evidences of its being are daily pressed upon us from a thousand sources.

The difficulty which attends the doctrine of *the divine permission of moral evil*, in reference to the disobedience of our first parents, is applicable to every subsequent act of transgression, in their degenerate offspring. This apostate world is still under the moral government of God: and the crimes continually perpetrated upon it, are equally foreseen, and equally permitted to be. We need not turn our speculations backward to the *creation* of the world; its *preservation* is a fact equally mysterious. The Power that was originally necessary to form it, is still requisite to uphold it in being. On the same Divine Hand its existence is

suspended. The withdrawal of that power for a single moment, would annihilate the material universe with all its inhabitants, and thus put an effectual stop to that torrent of wickedness, which is not only spreading in every direction, but rolling onward to desolate future ages, and to involve in guilt and misery the unborn generations of mankind. Instead therefore of asking, Why did a Being, possessed of infinite knowledge, power, and goodness, create a world, so soon to transgress his laws, and become offensive in his eye? we may as well ask, Why does he uphold it in existence? Why does Omnipotence still put forth his hand to sustain its revolutions, and to keep it from falling back into its primitive nothingness; knowing as he does, the full amount of its present, and the multiplication of its future enormities and crimes?

An answer to the question under either of these forms would be an answer to it under both; and with this answer God has himself supplied us.—“*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*” “**BECAUSE I am God and not man, THEREFORE the sons of men are not consumed.**” That no other system of things, upon the whole, would have been so well as the present, may be safely inferred from the fact, that Infinite Wisdom has devised and adopted no other. “*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*” Beyond this we have no data, and it is vain to pursue our enquiries. Whatever circuit our speculations may take, they must at last subside into the sentiment of the poet—

“In spite of man, of erring reason spite,

“One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.”

Mr. Bellamy's four discourses on “the wisdom of

God in the permission of moral evil," it is conceived, are but very partially satisfactory. The analogy between divine and human governments is faint, as an *illustration* of acknowledged principles; but as an *argument* by which disputed principles are to be supported, it is much too feeble and slender. Dr. D. has adopted a wiser method. While he acknowledges the impossibility of affording a complete solution of the difficulty, he has taken care to intrench himself on the negative side of the question, and cast the *onus probandi* back on his opponent.

"It cannot be proved," he says, "that the existence of sin will in the end be a detriment to the universe. Until we know what will be both the progress and the end, we certainly can never prove this proposition, because the means of proof lie beyond our reach. All moral beings are governed by motives only. What motives will, upon the whole, produce the greatest good, united with the least evil to the intelligent kingdom; and how far the fall and punishment of some moral beings may, in the nature of the case, be indispensably necessary to the persevering obedience of the great body, cannot be determined by *us*. But until this is done, and indeed many other things of great moment to the question, it can never be proved that the existence of moral evil is injurious to the universe, or the permission of it inconsistent with the most perfect good-will on the part of God."

"At the same time I acknowledge myself utterly unable, and my complete conviction that all other men are unable to explain this subject, so as to give to an enquirer clear and satisfactory views, by the light of reason of the propriety of permitting the introduction of moral evil into the intelligent system."

In answer to the question, "*How can a holy being become sinful? Or how can a holy being trans-*

gress the law of God?" Dr. D. justly remarks, "This question, to which perhaps no philosophical answer can be given, has been unnecessarily embarrassed by the modes in which answers to it have been attempted. The language often adopted, has been in a great measure abstract; and being supposed to have meaning when it had none, and to convey ideas which it did not contain, has served only to bewilder, where it was intended to instruct."

"The metaphysical nature of Moral Agency, both in God and his creatures, is a subject perhaps as *tenuous* as difficult to be fastened upon, and as easily evanescent from the mind, as any which we attempt to examine."

"To unfold, or to limit exactly, the agency of moral beings, seems to be a task imperfectly suited to such minds as ours. What the Scriptures have said concerning this subject we know, so far as we understand their meaning. We also know whatever is clearly taught us by experience. Beyond this our investigations seem not to have proceeded very far; and almost all the conclusions derived from reasonings *a priori*, have failed of satisfying minds not originally biassed in their favour."

In discoursing on the nature and import of LOVE TO GOD, Dr. D. occupies ground not usually taken by American divines, when treating on this subject.

His sermon is founded on the first commandment, contained in Mark xii. 28, 30, introduced by our Saviour in his answer to the Scribe,—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c.*

Dr. D. considers this command to love God, as denoting love in its *most comprehensive sense*; as including several exercises of the mind, easily and cus-

tomarily distinguished from each other. And he proceeds to contemplate this heaven-born virtue under three distinct modifications.

That of *Benevolence*, or a delight in the happiness of God. That of *Complacency*, or a delight in his excellence. That of *Gratitude*, or love to God “for the particular manifestation of his glorious character in his various kindnesses to us and to ours; or, love excited by kindness communicated, or believed to be communicated, with *virtuous and good designs, and from good motives.*”

In placing *Benevolence*, or a delight in happiness, amongst the exercises of our love to God, the worthy President is not following in the track of those American writers who represent love to God as consisting first, and chiefly, if not exclusively, in the exercise of *Complacency*, a delight in the supreme glory, and excellency of the Divine Nature. It is universally allowed, that *we* are the objects of *divine benevolence*; but God is considered as too independent and exalted a Being to be the object of *ours*. How can our benevolence, it is asked, extend to God, who is infinitely blessed, and who is so far from needing any thing, *that he giveth unto all, life, and breath, and all things?* “Not a small number of divines have supposed,” observes the Doctor, “that love, in this sense, is neither required nor exercised towards the Creator.”

The objections to placing benevolence amongst the exercises of love to God, our author acknowledges to be specious; but he considers them unsound, and endeavours to shew that they are founded in error. He argues, that to delight in happiness *possessed*, is no less an act of good-will than to delight in happiness *desired*. “Benevolence,” he remarks, “depends not, either for its obligation or exercise, on the supposition that the person towards whom it may be directed

needs either our benevolence or its effects." "The happiness, or blessedness of God, as it is more commonly termed, is no other than his enjoyment of his own perfect attributes, and of the effects produced by them, in that glorious system of good which is begun in the work of creation, and will be completed in the work of Providence: or, in other words, his sufficiency for accomplishing, the certainty that he will accomplish, and the actual accomplishment of a perfect system of good."

"To this it will be objected," he observes "as it often has been, that this doctrine makes God dependant for his happiness upon his creatures. The objection is a mistake. The doctrine involves no such dependence. The independence of God consists not at all in the fact that he will be happy, whether his designs be accomplished or not; but in his sufficiency for the absolute accomplishment of them all, and in the absolute certainty that they will be thus accomplished. His power, wisdom, and goodness, are this sufficiency; and yield him intuitive certainty of this accomplishment. These things constitute the most perfect possible independence.

"Were God without desires, had he no choice, no pleasure, he could enjoy no happiness. Were he unable to fulfil his pleasure, or uncertain whether it would be fulfilled, he would be dependent. But, according to this statement, his happiness and his independence are both absolute. The happiness which God enjoys in the exercise of his perfections, and in the accomplishment of his divine end, is a happiness not only infinitely desirable and delightful to himself, but desirable in the same manner to all intelligent creatures. All intelligent creatures possessed of real benevolence cannot fail to rejoice that God is, and ever will be, thus infinitely happy, that these glorious

designs will certainly be accomplished, that he will ever thus act, and that he will ever find infinite enjoyment in thus acting. It is as truly desirable that God should be thus happy, as it is that any of his intelligent creatures should be happy; and as much more desirable, as he is happier than they."

Dr. D. does not insist on the exercise of the love of benevolence with a view to disparage that of complacency, but in order to give what he apprehends to be a correct idea of the subject, and to guard against the error into which some have fallen, by turning their attention almost exclusively to the latter modification of pious affection.

He remarks "I know not, that, to love God in this sense," (i. e. for his own excellence) "has ever been denied or doubted to be a Christian duty, by such as have believed in the Scriptures. On the contrary, it has been commonly supposed, that complacency and gratitude were the only love to God required in his law. The happiness of God has usually been considered as so secure, so independent, and so perfect, as that, while he needs nothing from the hands of his creatures to increase or insure it, he also may be justly regarded as claiming nothing from *them*, with respect to this subject. His perfections, at the same time, are so manifest, and so absolute, as to fill the mind with reverence and amazement, and engross all its attention and thoughts. In this manner, probably, the regard of mankind, and even of wise and good men, has been so effectually drawn away from the consideration of the happiness of God, to the consideration of his excellence, that they seem chiefly to have forgotten the former of these objects, and have been almost wholly occupied by the latter." The former, Dr. D. allows, is a duty more *obvious*, but he insists that it is

not a duty more *indispensable* than the latter. "It is plainly," he adds, "not our original duty. It is plainly not virtue, or moral excellence, in the *original* sense. This is unquestionably the *love of happiness*. Complacency is the *love* of this *virtue*, or *moral excellence*. But that excellence must exist, before it can be loved. The contrary supposition is a palpable absurdity; to which all those reduce themselves, who insist that *complacency is original virtue*."

President Edwards, in his "Treatise on the Affections," and other divines of the same school, maintain, on the contrary, that the love of *complacency*, or a love to God for his own excellence, is the foundation of genuine affection. A passage or two from the writings of the former, will show the point of discrepancy between the learned professors upon this subject.

"It is unreasonable to think otherwise," observes President Edwards, "than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be *true love* of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of *its true loveliness*? How can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness' sake? How can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? This infinite excellency of the divine

nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God, in any respect; but how can a man truly love God, without loving him for that excellency which is the foundation of all that is good or desirable in him?"*

"The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfections; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, in his own beauty."†

"Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the moral excellency of divine things; or, a love to divine things, for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the spring of all holy affections."‡

In these passages, it is true that President Edwards is not opposing complacency to benevolence; but to gratitude: a view of the subject that will come under our notice in a subsequent part of this Essay. The purpose for which they are at present introduced, is to show, that these illustrious writers are at issue as to what really is the *foundation* of genuine love to God, or in other words—that they have fixed upon different kinds of love as constituting the *primary quality* of this christian virtue. Complacency;—or a delight in moral beauty, according to President Edwards, is the *first foundation*; the *spring* of all holy affections; Dr. D. represents Benevolence, or the love of happiness as entitled to *precedency*.

["There is no ultimate good,"] says our author, ["but happiness; and no disposition originally good, but that which rejoices in it, and voluntarily promotes it."] *Benevolence* is therefore the only original excellence of mind: and is the foundation of all the

* Vol. iv. p. 141. † Page 148. ‡ Page 151.

real excellence of complacency and gratitude, which are only subordinate forms or exercises of the same character."

The principle of love, whether it be exercised towards God, towards our fellow-creatures, or towards ourselves, Dr. D. contends is identically the same, deriving its peculiar modification from the character of the object towards whom it is directed.

"This principle," he says, "is one. The difference in its exercise springs only from the difference of its objects. *Love is the fulfilling of the law*; that is, one affection, exercised towards God and towards man, is alternately the fulfilling both of the first and second commands. He who is the subject of one of these exercises, is of course a subject of the other also. There are not two affections of the mind, in the strict and metaphysical sense, one of which is called love to God, or *piety*, and the other love to mankind, or *benevolence*: but there is one love now exercised toward God, and now toward mankind."

"Evangelical love is a *delight in happiness*; or, in other words, *good-will towards percipient beings, as capable of happiness*."

This excellent writer's definition of evangelical love, is exposed to two diametrically opposite objections. It may be regarded both as too *comprehensive* and as too *contracted* to be philosophically correct. Some of his critical readers will deem it too *comprehensive*. They will perhaps urge, that he has identified with the principle of love what ought rather to be classed amongst the *fruits* and *evidences* of its existence, a delight in, or a desire of the happiness of its object.

In proportion as we love any being, it will be readily admitted, that we shall delight in, or long for his happiness. But here a critical question arises. Is this love? Or is it the *effect* of loving? Are these

emotions involved in the sacred principle, or do they flow from it as a natural and necessary consequence?

If an affirmative be taken to the former question, as Dr. D's definition requires, then it is incorrect to say, that love *leads* or *induces* us to delight in the happiness of another, or to desire it, for this delight and desire are supposed to be involved in the *essence* of love, and to constitute a component part of the principle itself. But if these emotions arise *out of* love and spring *from it*, then they ought to be reckoned amongst its *fruits* and *effects*, and the definition which involves them in the principle is too comprehensive. In this way president Edwards has reckoned them; for he observes: "The truth plainly is, that our love to the person is the *cause* of our delighting, or being happy in his happiness. How comes our happiness to consist in the happiness of such as we love, but *by* our hearts *being first* united to them in affection?"*

In proportion as any one appears lovely to us, we shall be solicitous to secure his favour and esteem; we shall love those whom he loves, and we shall delight in his service and society. Are not these feelings as essentially connected with love, as those which Dr. D. has identified with the principle? If they are, then his definition, which does not include them, is too *contracted* to comprehend all that is essential to this christian virtue. The above definition of love also fails to embrace the *moral qualities* of its object, and therefore makes no provision for the exercise of complacency: and the gratuitous bestowment of benefits and blessings, and therefore makes no provision for the exercise of gratitude; i. e.

it makes no provision for two thirds of what Dr. D. himself enumerates among the component parts of pious affection, and on which, under separate heads, he descants with much propriety and beauty. So difficult and dangerous are *definitions*, when introduced into morals by the most cautious and acute writers.

“ In attempting to be metaphysically accurate,” observes an anonymous writer, “ an author often does no more than substitute a simple idea for a complex one, and he is apt to think that he has resolved the word into its true and primary import, when he has only narrowed its application.”*

President Edwards’s definition of virtue, as consisting in “ benevolence to being in general,” is liable to a similar objection. It has no pretensions to the character of an analytical explanation. And what is singular, this definition seems to bring the worthy presidents again in contact, and to place them on the same theological platform by the side of each other, after all their apparent logical aberrations.

An attempt to identify the principles of love to God and love to man has probably led to the definition which reduces it to a simple exercise of benevolence. Complacency and gratitude, if not the *foundation*, are essential elements of pious affection; and indispensable to the discharge of this christian duty. The command to “ love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength,” is not obeyed where either of these emotions is wanting. But can this be affirmed of the second command, in which we are required to “ Love our neighbour as ourselves ?”

Is not benevolence the primary, if not the only modification of love required by this law ? The command is binding upon mankind as fallen and degenerate creatures, who have lost the moral image of their

Creator, that spiritual beauty which is the object of complacency in the divine perfections. The love which is required to be extended to the whole human race must be irrespective of character; and therefore cannot include in it the love of approbation. And the love which is required to embrace our worst enemies, cannot include in it the emotions of gratitude. Instead of *gratitude* we may be called to the exercise of *forgiveness*: and for *complacency*, be compelled to substitute our *pity* and our *prayers*: but benevolence, or goodwill, may be exercised towards all men, whatever be their character; and whatever their conduct towards us.

The love required towards our neighbour, is to be of the same *kind* as that due to ourselves. But the love due to ourselves consists of neither *gratitude* nor *complacency*. The former is precluded by the nature of the case; and the latter by our obligation to opposite duties: repentance towards God, and the abhorrence of ourselves as evil and unworthy in his sight.

It may be safely affirmed that no duties are binding upon us, which are so opposite to each other, that there is a physical impossibility, or an impossibility in the nature of things to a simultaneous discharge of both. *Gratitude* for favours; and the *forgiveness* of injuries: an *approbation* of moral qualities; and an *abhorrence* of them, cannot possibly occupy our bosom at the same moment towards the same object. The exercise of one of these feelings, implies, the cessation or suspension of the other. It is therefore inferred, that the love enjoined upon us towards our neighbour, being universal in its extent, and of incessant obligation, is of a nature which no other duty can supersede: and no possible circumstance can require us to suspend. But benevolence is the only modification of love, in reference to man as its object, of which this can be affirmed. The impediments to the exercise

of complacency or gratitude, here referred to, are not *subjective*, this it is acknowledged would not limit the requisitions of the law: but they are *objective*, they relate to the person on whom our love is to terminate.

Towards mankind the Deity himself does not exercise *complacency*, but *benevolence*. *He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and the good; and his rain to descend both on the just and on the unjust.* And in proportion as we cherish similar feelings of benevolence, we exhibit the lineaments of the divine character, and become *perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.** *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*† The love here spoken of is not that of *complacency*, but of *compassion*: not the delight of *approbation*, it is *benevolence* melting into pity.

These observations point out an essential difference between the infinitely blessed *God*; and his degenerate creature *man*; considered as the objects of love: and present an impediment in the way of our author's theory—"that *one affection*, exercised towards God and towards man, is alternately the fulfilling both of the first and second command."

In confirmation of this statement it might be added,—that the love we are required to exercise towards our neighbour, is in Scripture distinguished from that we are called to exercise towards good men. The latter arises out of a new state of things introduced by the gospel dispensation. *A new commandment*, said our Saviour to his disciples, *I give unto you, that ye love one another.* The duty enjoined by the original law, is a delight in the happiness of others; the duty prescribed in the new commandment is a delight in the virtue, or moral excellence seen in

* Matt. v. 45.

† John iii. 16.

them. The one is benevolence; the other is complacency. The former is to be extended to all mankind, sinners as well as saints: the objects of the latter are exclusively those *who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and made partakers of the divine image.* In a word, the one is charity: the other is brotherly kindness. These different modes of affection are clearly marked in Scripture. St. Peter, in his second Epistle, exhorts believers to *add to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.* And as Dr. D. well observes, “were brotherly love the same with benevolence, St. Peter would certainly not have directed Christians to add benevolence to itself.”

The distinction expressed by these exercises of affection, benevolence and complacency, in reference to our fellow-creatures, the worthy President fully recognizes, when he comes to treat on brotherly love as an attendant on regeneration. He there explicitly states his belief, that brotherly love is not included in the original law of love to man.

“The command given to the apostles, and by consequence to all the followers of Christ ‘to love one another,’ was not in my view published by Moses, nor by any of the succeeding prophets. Certainly it was not published in form.” “This love was, I think, never given in form, before Christ gave it in the text; and was therefore *new* in the proper sense at that time.”

In this discourse our author distinguishes with his usual perspicuity and precision between the love required by the *original law*; and that which is enjoined in the *new commandment*. In both cases our fellow-man is the object: but still Dr. D. apprehends the difference to be so material, that he has thought it right to contrast the benevolence required by the first, which respects mankind generally, with the complacency enjoined in the last, which is restricted to the

virtuous part of them. Now it is not easy to see, why the Doctor should *contrast* these modes of affection, benevolence and complacency, when *man* is the object of both; and *identify* them, when man is the object of the former, and the latter is carried up to God, and terminates in the centre and source of all moral excellence.

These observations are not directed against the principle advanced by Dr. D., that love to God, and love to man, in the *metaphysical sense* of the term, denote but one affection of the mind. Doubtless in proportion as mankind resemble God, by becoming the subjects of benevolence, by possessing themselves of amiable and generous qualities, they are entitled to that complacency and gratitude of which He is the supreme object. In this sense every *mode* of affection may be virtually included in the *principle*. But admitting that in the *metaphysical sense* love towards all objects is but a diversified operation of this principle; in the *evangelical import* of the term, in which its practical, not its abstract meaning is to be taken—love to God, and love to man, denote such different exercises of the affection, as to make it questionable whether in this sense they ought to be identified, and whether it is correct to say, “that *one affection* exercised towards God, and towards man, is alternately the fulfilling both of the first and second command:” or, that “evangelical love is a delight in happiness; or in other words, good-will towards percipient beings as capable of happiness.”

The writer, however, submits these observations with extreme diffidence and self-distrust, as he would every other which bears the character of an exception to the sentiment or language of one so eminently profound and pious. It is both easier and safer to *describe* a thing than to *define* it; to delineate it, by pointing out

its properties and effects, than to attempt to encircle its essence, and mark its boundaries by the best selected forms of expression. The fruits and evidences of love may develop its nature, but it is difficult and hazardous to attempt to define a principle of such wide and multiform operation: definitions rarely afford sufficient scope for the development of moral and intellectual phenomena.

There is another point on the nature of evangelical love, in which the President of Yale College differs from some of his transatlantic brethren. Between the love of *complacency* and the love of *gratitude*, in reference to God, our author draws a line of *distinction*, by descanting on each under separate heads; but he does not introduce between them a line of *separation*, or imply, by the course of his argument, that the former may exist independently of the latter. Those who are acquainted with the American writers, are aware, that some of them have gone far in their speculations on this subject. They insist, that it is the duty of man to love God for what he is in *himself*, independently of what he is to *us* considered as our *Benefactor*. Where this is not asserted in direct terms, such is often the tone and tenure of their reasoning. The ineffable glories and excellence of the Deity, they contend, apart from the belief of any personal interest we have in them, constitutes the ground of our obligation to love him.

“The divine excellency of God, and of Jesus Christ,” observes President Edwards in his Treatise on Religious Affections,—“the word of God, his works, ways, &c. is the primary reason, why a true saint loves these things; and not any supposed *interest* that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received or shall receive from them.”

“The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a *profitable good* to me, what greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as *bonum formosum*, a *beautiful good* in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God.”

The reason why divines of this class labour to keep the love of *gratitude* as a Christian virtue in the back ground, in comparison of the love of *complacency*, arises from the suspicion that the former is less disinterested than the latter. That it is often no more than the re-action of self-love, instead of being a genuine regard to God, who is its professed object. “A natural principle of self-love,” says the writer just quoted, “may be the foundation of great affections towards God, and Christ, without seeing anything of the beauty and glory of the divine nature.” *

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does arise in men, from an opinion of the favour and love of God to *them*, as the first foundation of their love to him; then, upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such persons are asked whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself, they would perhaps readily answer, yes; when indeed, if the matter be strictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased and paid for, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagine they received from God.” †

Mr. Bellamy, in his “Dialogues between Theron, Paulinus and Aspasio,” adopts a similar strain of rea-

* Vol. IV. p. 139, 159.

† Page 141, 143.

soning, and refers to President Edwards in confirmation of its correctness. "If God is really a Being infinitely amiable in himself," argues Mr. B. in the character of Paulinus,—“and if it is fit and reasonable we should love him for the perfection, goodness, and excellency of his nature, then there is, yea there can be, no difficulty in the way of the practice of this duty, but what lies in the badness of our hearts; and so, what we are to blame for. And therefore were our hearts right, we should love him for his own loveliness, and feel disposed to “glorify God AS God,” as the very heathen ought to do, who never heard of his designs of mercy by Jesus Christ. Nay, all the heathen world are at this day and ever have been entirely without excuse, in not being thus affected towards the infinitely glorious God that made them: yea, they are for this, infinitely to blame; so as to deserve eternal wrath. And this is St. Paul’s doctrine, (Rom. i. 18—21.) Nay, this doctrine is fundamental to St. Paul’s whole scheme of Religion. Overthrow this, and you will overthrow his whole scheme. For it is in this view, that he pronounces *Jew and Gentile, even the whole world, to stand guilty before God, with their mouths stopped, without one excuse to make for themselves, though doomed to eternal destruction for not loving God with all their hearts.*” *

That man is under infinite obligation to love God for his *own excellence*, cannot be doubted; and that he is under the same obligation to love him in the character of a *benefactor*, as the sum and source of all his happiness, is a position equally evident. Whether we contemplate man as a creature, or as a fallen creature, this double obligation every where presses itself upon

* Bellamy’s Letters and Dialogues, pp. 29, 30.

him. He can never be placed in circumstances, at least not in the present world, in which he stands clear of either of these claims, or in which motives to love God are not urged upon him from both these sources.

Our obligation to love God for the ineffable glories of his nature, supposes us to possess the faculties which are necessary to contemplate these glories. The moral duty implies the natural capacity: without the latter, the former could have no existence. The obligation to love God with the love of *complacency*, or to delight in the moral perfections of his nature, presupposes an obligation to love him with the love of *gratitude*; for it presupposes a benefit conferred, in the endowment of those very powers which render us capable of delighting in his perfections. The obligation to this exercise of pious affection, has therefore the earliest possible date. No space is left for the existence of any prior obligation; it commences with our being; and whether we regard other obligations to love God, as subsequent or simultaneous to this, they cannot supersede or lessen its claims.

The inexcusableness of the heathen world in not loving God, does not consist *solely* and *exclusively* in the fact, that Jehovah has manifested, in the works of his hands around them, evidence of his eternal power and Godhead. The same apostle, who, in the passage referred to by Mr. Bellamy, argues their guilt upon this principle, in another place, rests it on the ground of their obligation to love God, arising from the favours they are constantly receiving from his bounty. "Nevertheless," says St. Paul, "he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." *

* Acts xiv. 17.

By connecting these passages, it is evident, that the love of gratitude, as well as the love of complacency, is obligatory on heathen nations, and that enough is presented to their view, in the beauties of nature, and the bounties of Providence, to awaken the exercise of love under each of these forms. The guilt of the Heathen does not consist wholly in their insensibility to either of these separate claims on their affection, but in their indifference to these concurring obligations.

The doctrine that makes it our duty to love God for what he is in himself, apart from the consideration of any personal interest we have in his excellence, places man in an artificial position relative to his Maker, and requires us to forget the real circumstances of our moral condition. It is very possible to admire the character of a man, without intermingling with our admiration the feelings of gratitude. The virtues of the greatest philanthropist may not extend their influence to us. A parent may look with complacency on the opening virtues of his child, without any sense of personal obligation. But in the principle of love to God, gratitude is an essential element.

In whatever light we view the divine character, it is beheld through the medium of benefits and blessings, of which we are individually the recipients. As the Creator of the universe, we are indebted to him for our own existence. As its Preserver,—*In Him we live and move and have our being.* As its Redeemer,—*we are invited to partake of the waters of life freely.* There is not a man under the canopy of heaven,—no nor an angel in the divine presence, of whom it may not be asked, “*Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?*”

The great Sovereign of the universe, so to speak, has left his creatures no room for the exercise of dis-

interested affection towards *Him*. His beneficence is not only a full, but an overflowing fountain; and from the contemplation of its exuberance and freeness, why are we required to separate the conviction, that we ourselves are refreshed and nourished by its streams? The broadest view we can take of the benevolence and compassion of Jehovah, entitles him to our praise. *God is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* But will the Divine Goodness lose any thing of its moral excellence and beauty, by being viewed in relation to our individual wants and weaknesses? Will his mercy appear the less tender to those who are conscious that *they* are the objects of its sympathy? that *they* are the recipients of its blessings? The most powerful appeal to the affection, is that which touches the spring of gratitude. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. I love the Lord,* said the same pious writer, *because he hath heard the voice of my supplication; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

On this principle it is, that no symptoms of depravity and spiritual death are so awfully decisive as those which exhibit a heart unmoved by acts of generosity and kindness. It is a hopeless case, where an appeal to the principle of gratitude fails to awaken our moral sensibilities. *Or despisest thou,* says St. Paul, to those whose fears he had just addressed, *the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*

Gratitude is so far from being opposed to complacency, that it partakes of its nature, and implies its existence. What is gratitude, but that modification of complacency which recognizes the exercise of goodness to ourselves, or to those connected with us by the ties of relationship or friendship, and whose interests are, in a measure, constituted our own? A sense of personal or relative benefits, however extensive, is not enough to excite in us the emotions of gratitude. To enkindle these sensations in the heart, it is necessary that the blessings conferred be viewed in connection with the moral qualities of the person who bestows them. Purity of motive and design are essential to the character of an acknowledged benefactor. Joseph exercised forgiveness towards his brethren, but he felt no gratitude, he expressed no obligation. They meant it for evil, but God overruled it for good. Joseph's brethren were doubtless, under Providence, the means of his prosperity, as was Haman of the honours and distinctions of Mordecai; but in neither case was gratitude due to the men who promoted the happiness they intended to destroy. In both these instances gratitude was exclusively due, and was doubtless felt and expressed by these pious Jews, to the God of their fathers, who effected, through their instrumentality, a great deliverance. They would gratefully acknowledge the hand that *designed to bless them*, as well as to make them a blessing; and with thanksgiving and praise would they delight to retrace that meandering and mysterious pathway through which they were conducted to a surprizing elevation. Now, in these instances we perceive that gratitude includes complacency, for it takes cognizance of the moral qualities of its object; and if it be true that the greater includes the less, so far is it from being of a narrow and

contracted character, that it is entitled to be regarded as the noblest and most expansive feeling of the heart.

To separate the *love of gratitude* from the *love of complacency*, is to separate the glory of God from the happiness of his creatures; whereas, the angelic song which celebrates the brightest and most stupendous display of the divine perfections, has connected *glory to God in the highest with peace on earth, goodwill towards men.*

To suppose that it would have been the duty of man to love God, had he created him in wretchedness,—had he cursed instead of blessing his being, is an hypothesis bordering upon blasphemy. It is impossible in fact, and absurd in theory, and ought not to be admitted for a moment, even for the purposes of argumentation. A *benevolent* Being is incapable of a *malevolent* action. Such a style of reasoning is not less foolish than profane. It involves a supposition which destroys the principle it is intended to establish. For if it be our duty *now* to love God supremely for what he *is*; the hypothesis that reverses his character must at the same time disannul the obligation to love it, unless it can be shewn that two diametrically opposite characters, are equally entitled to our esteem and admiration.

It is no disparagement to the munificence and elevation of the *love of gratitude*, that it has a tacit reference to our own interests. Indifference to the advancement of our personal happiness is neither a natural feeling nor a moral duty. That narrow sordid principle which makes *self* the centre and circumference of all its operations, is equally opposed to benevolence towards man, and piety towards God. It constitutes the very essence of depravity. It is the crime of the individual, and the curse of society;

that in this malignant sense of the terms, *men should be lovers of their own selves.**

But there is a love to ourselves which is no more incompatible with the exercise of complacency towards God, than it is with that of benevolence towards our neighbour, of which, by the divine command, it is made the rule and measurement. To seek to promote our own happiness, regardless of that of others, and by means opposed to the divine will, is one thing; to seek it in connection with the general good, and in subservience to the will of our Creator, is another. The selfishness involved in the former principle, love to God will totally annihilate; the self-love involved in the latter, it will not extinguish, but direct, refine, and elevate. "God wills our happiness," says Dr. D. "It is therefore right—it is virtuous in us to seek and promote it, both here and hereafter. In this conduct there is no selfishness. In aiming at our own happiness there is no *necessary* selfishness. Selfishness consists in a preference of ourselves to others, and to all others,—to the universe, and to God. This is sin, and all that in the Scripture is meant by sin."

In a ready and cheerful submission to trials, when called to them by the will of God, the principle of self-love is not required to be abandoned; on the contrary, we are allowed to draw from this source motives to sustain us under our sufferings. *These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Having this hope, said the Apostle, we faint not.* The preference of suffering to enjoyment evinced by the disciples and primitive christians, is not to be ascribed to a stoical insensibility to pain, or to an indifference to their own interests. It was a due estimate of their

interests which induced their conduct. Heaven asks no sacrifices without offering an equivalent. Their election was as prudent as it was pious, for they knew who had declared *verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parent, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive many fold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.* So far were the primitive christians from losing sight of their personal happiness, amidst their *manifold temptations*, that a regard to this is the data on which faith worked her calculations. *For I reckon*, said the most distinguished amongst them, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** And this has been the natural operation of the same principle in every age, and, under every dispensation. It was this which induced Moses to relinquish the honours of Pharaoh's court, *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin which are but for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect to the recompence of the reward.* All the threatenings and the promises of Scripture are founded on the existence of a principle of self-love; otherwise, as motives, they could have no influence either on our hope or our fear. So far is the principle of self-love here pleaded for, from being condemned in Scripture, that the sacred page abounds with promises and assurances, that the brightest and the best of blessings are prepared to satisfy it. Labour is to be succeeded by rest; suffering by enjoyment; and death by immortality.

The celebrated infidel, Lord Shaftesbury, in some

* Rom. viii. 18.

part of his writings, is a strenuous advocate for the doctrine of anti-selfishness. He maintains, that disinterestedness is virtue, and the only virtue; at the same time, he denies that it could consist with any hope of reward, or any fear of punishment; these, he declared, made virtue *mercenary, mean, and selfish*. The conclusion which his Lordship drew from his principle was, that “the Scriptures, so far as they have any influence, annihilate, by threatenings and promises, all virtue.”

This was a conclusion naturally to be expected from this deistical sophist. No doubt he maintained the principle on purpose to support it. But probably the divines referred to, little suspected that in pleading for the principle of disinterested love, they were making common cause with the champions of infidelity.

To contemplate the perfections of the Deity, apart from their bearing on human happiness, and especially on our own, is an abstract view of the divine nature to which Scripture affords no countenance, and which partakes more of the character of a philosophic speculation, than of christian complacency.

It is well observed by the anonymous writer before quoted—

“That speculative complacency in the deification of ideal excellence which heathen and christian philosophers have alike discovered, is not love, because it does not partake of gratitude. We know of no better test by which to detect its spurious character. And the reason is, that it has not for its object the Goodness of God perceived in relation to ourselves; it does not recognize the actual claims of God; nor is it connected with a sense of personal demerit, and personal obligation.

“It is not abstract good, but moral goodness, and

that not as the quality of a thing, but as the attribute of personal character, the contemplation of which awakens love, and inspires a moral attachment. God himself, viewed as an abstract object of contemplation, may be habitually regarded without any holy emotion; the idea may have no more practical force on the affections than a mathematical truth, or any other abstraction.*

“The exercise of affection towards the chief source of all good, according to Plato,” Mr. Joyce remarks in his excellent treatise on love to God, “is, when fairly examined, nothing more than the admiration and love of that abstract moral beauty which we may be taught to comprehend by an easy process of investigation.” “But the great exemplar of all that is fair and lovely, is not, like the ‘true and living God,’ exhibited in intimate communion and endearing intercourse with his intelligent creatures, supplying their wants, promoting and confirming their happiness with parental vigilance and love, and by his spontaneous and conscious irradiations and communications of sacred influence to the faculties, bringing them to a nearer resemblance to his own glorious perfections.”†

“If we examine the Ode or Pœan of Aristotle,‡ composed in praise of the beauty of virtue, or in other words of moral excellence, abstractedly exhibited to the contemplation of the mind, we shall be convinced how much it was regarded by the ancient philosophers in the light of a metaphysical abstraction, or, what amounts to nearly the same, a poetical prosopopœia.”

Which of these modes of love, *complacency*, or

* Eclectic Review. † P. 225, 228, 230. ‡ Diog. Laert lib. v.

gratitude, is most acceptable to Him who has an entire right to both, and who will not dispense with either, is surely an unnecessary enquiry. It is sufficient for all the purposes of practical piety to know that both must be tendered, or neither will be accepted. Nor is it necessary to agitate the question which of these affections, in the work of regeneration, is first called into exercise; both will be found in every mind where that work is completed, and their priority in the order of time, depending, perhaps, upon local circumstances, may be different in different characters. These modes of love to God may be *distinguished*, but they cannot be *divided*. Their existence implies no opposition; no discordance. They are mingled in the devout exercises of every renewed spirit. They harmonize in the affections like the colours in the rainbow, melting into each other, and mutually contributing to enhance their separate beauties.

Whatever extravagant notions may have been broached by American or German writers on this subject, Dr. D. discovers no leaning towards such wild and romantic speculations. His definition of the love of *gratitude* is too expansive to leave it amenable to the charge of narrow selfishness. It partakes of the generosity of benevolence. And "complacency in the divine character," he observes, in a future world, and a higher state of existence, may become possessed of the whole intenseness and ardour of *gratitude*." These are views of the subject worthy of his enlarged and liberal mind; and he enforces our obligation to this sacred duty, on principles easily apprehended, and in a strain of eloquence the most energetic and persuasive. Of this he following passages will afford a specimen.

“Without love to God, there can be no virtue or moral excellence.

“God presents to us in his blessedness, in his excellence, and in his communications of good, all possible reasons, in all possible degrees, why we should exercise towards him our supreme benevolence, complacency, and gratitude. His enjoyment is the sum of all happiness; his character the sum of all perfection; and his communications of good, the amount of all the blessings found in the universe. These united constitute an object assembling in itself, comparatively speaking, all natural and moral beauty, glory, and excellence, whatever can be desired, esteemed, and loved.”

“Love is a single character; uniform in its nature, and in no way separable, even in contemplation, except merely as it is exercised towards different objects. These give it all those which are considered as its different forms. In all these forms it is exercised by the same man, in exactly the same manner. If it be found in any one of these forms in any mind, it is of course found in the same mind in every other form, whenever the object which gives it that form is presented to that mind. Thus he, who possesses *benevolence* when *happiness* is the object present to him, exercises *complacency* whenever he contemplates *moral excellence*; and *gratitude*, whenever he turns his thoughts towards a *benefactor*. In all these exercises of the mind, and all others of a virtuous nature, a single, indivisible disposition exists and operates. This disposition is the love required by the divine law; the love, which St. Paul declares to be ‘the fulfilling of the law;’ not love of various kinds; not a train of dispositions, diversified in their nature, and springing up successively as new objects are presented to the

mind; but love, of exactly the same nature, diversified only by being exercised towards different objects.

The duty of love under each of these distinct modifications of it, is required by the precepts, illustrated in the examples, and divinely encouraged by the motives, promises, and rewards, which abound in the Sacred Writings. "Particularly," Dr. D. observes, "the *good-will* of the psalmist, to the infinitely great and glorious Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of the universe, is manifested everywhere throughout his sacred songs. Everywhere he rejoices in the designs and actions of Jehovah; in the certain accomplishment of his designs; in the infinite glory, which he will derive from them all; in the prosperity of his kingdom; and in the joy, which he experiences in all the works of his hands.

"Equally does he express his *complacency*, in the perfect character of God; his wisdom, power, goodness, truth, faithfulness, and mercy, as displayed in his works and word, in his law and Gospel.

"Nor is he less abundant in his effusions of *gratitude*, for all the divine goodness to himself and his family, to the people of Israel, and the church of God. In expressing these emotions, he is ardent, intense, sublime, and rapturous; an illustrious example to all who have come after him, of the manner in which we should feel, and in which we should express our love to God."

These interesting volumes abound with ample materials for citation and discussion. The subjects which have at present occupied our attention, the writer is aware, have been very partially and very imperfectly handled: but the extent to which these have insensibly grown upon him, warn him of the necessity of

declining the introduction of others, which he proposed to himself, at the commencement of this Essay.

It would, however, be a palpable omission, not to mention, that the practical tendency of the worthy Professor's writings, is their most prominent and characteristic excellence. It is this which raises them in the scale of comparison, not only with the productions of his own country, but with those of others, and which, under the blessing of Providence, may render them extensively useful.

“Theology,” as he has beautifully defined it in one of his sermons, “is the science of the will of God, concerning the duties and the destinies of man.” And this simple definition of the science, may be taken as a clue to the manner in which he has treated it. While he traces both the duties, and the destinies of man to his Creator, as their common source, he never attempts to separate the one from the other,—or, to represent the duties of man as having no influence on his present hope, and peace, and joy; and no connection with his final and everlasting destination. *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

The terms faith, and duty, in Dr. D.'s view of them, imply no opposition. Virtue he describes as “voluntary obedience to truth;” and vice as “voluntary obedience to error.” “He held the Scriptures,” says his biographer, “to be a plain intelligible revelation of the will of God, and every man who has them to be equally responsible for his faith as for his practice.”

He remarks, “The conformity of the understanding and the heart to every doctrine of the Scriptures, is, by the authority of God, made equally a duty, with obedience to every precept.”

It is folly to question, if faith be a duty? If it had not always been the duty of man to believe God, sin

had never existed; at least, not the sin of unbelief; for if faith be not a duty, unbelief cannot be sinful.

Adam's disobedience of the prohibitory law, *Thou shalt not eat of it*, originated in his disbelief of the annexed threatening; *for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. Man's first act of rebellion, was a compound of pride and infidelity: these are involved in every transgression of the Divine law. Hence, in that stupendous plan; dictated by infinite Goodness, and devised by infinite Wisdom, to recover man from the consequences of this foul revolt, confidence in God, with self-renunciation and abasement; or, in other words, Faith and Contrition, are placed at the head of all other duties: neglecting these, the performance of every other, were it possible, would leave our services unacceptable, and our character essentially defective in the eye of an Omniscient Being; *Without faith it is impossible to please God. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*.

Union to God, and obedience to his will, are essential to the happiness of every intelligent creature. And of this union and obedience in reference to fallen creatures, evangelical faith is the only source. "Thus, if I am not deceived," Dr. D. remarks, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, are the substance of the means by which sinners are delivered from sin, reinstated in the character of children, restored to the favor of God, entitled to eternal life, and prepared for everlasting obedience and enjoyment in the heavens above."

Not to credit the Testimony which God has given of his Son, is to doubt his *verity*; not to repose implicit confidence in the provisions of his Mercy, is to distrust his *promises*: by the former, we deny the attribute of his Truth; by the latter, that of his Faithful-

ness: in either case, we offer an insult to our best Friend, in his disinterested aim to serve us; we set aside all the efforts of Omnipotence for our recovery; and by rejecting the only medium through which pardon and peace will ever flow to our apostate race, we effectually cut ourselves off from the fountain of salvation. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

The Writer cannot forego the pleasure of introducing in this connection, the sentiments of the worthy president on this momentous subject. They were delivered on an occasion peculiarly affecting. In the year 1816, he was laid aside from his ministerial labours, for several months, by a severe and alarming illness. He composed a sermon during that sickness, and when sufficiently recovered, delivered it to his pupils, who were prepared to listen to his instructions, as to one returned from the confines of the invisible world. While he faithfully admonishes them against placing confidence in any worldly object; a danger into which their youthful ardour, and inexperience were so likely to betray them; he exhorts them to trust in Christ alone, for life and salvation, and he urges this duty upon them with the tenderest pathos, and the most impressive solemnity.

*“Unless the Lord had been my Help, my Soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slip-peth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.**

“To him, who stands on the brink of the grave, and the verge of eternity, who retains the full possession of his reason, and who, at the same time, is disposed to serious contemplation, all worldly things

become mightily changed in their appearance. To the eye of such a man, their former alluring aspect vanishes, and they are seen in a new and far different light.

“ Like others of our race, I have relished several of these things with, at least, the common attachment. Particularly, I have coveted reputation and influence, to a degree, which I am unable to justify. Nor have I been insensible to other earthly gratifications; either to such, as, when enjoyed with moderation, are innocent; or such as cannot be pursued without sin.

“ But, in the circumstances to which I have referred, all these things were vanished from my sight. Had they been really valuable in any supposable degree, their value was gone. They could not relieve me from pain; they could not restore me to health; they could not prolong my life; they could promise no good in the life to come. What then were these things to me?

“ A person circumstanced in the manner, which has been specified, must necessarily regard these objects, however harmless, or even useful, they may be supposed in their nature, as having been hostile to his peace, and pernicious to his well-being. In all his attachment to them, in all his pursuit of them, it is impossible for him to fail of perceiving, that he forgot the interests of his soul, and the commands of his Maker; became regardless of his duty, and his salvation; and hazarded, for dross and dirt, the future enjoyment of a glorious immortality. It is impossible not to perceive, that in the most unlimited possession of them, the soul would have been beggared, and undone; that the gold of the world would not have made him rich; nor its esteem honourable; nor its favour happy. For this end, he will discover, that nothing will suffice but treasure laid up in Heaven; the loving kindness of God; and the blessings of life eternal.

“ Let me exhort you, my young friends now engaged in the ardent pursuit of worldly enjoyments, to believe, that you will one day see them in the very light in which they have been seen by me. The attachment to them, which you strongly feel, is unfounded, vain, full of danger, and fraught with ruin. You will one day view them from a dying bed. There, should you retain your reason, they will appear as they really are. They will then be seen to have two totally opposite faces. Of these, you have hitherto seen but one. That gay, beautiful, and alluring, as it now appears, will then be hidden from your sight; and another, which you have not seen, deformed, odious, and dreadful, will stare you in the face, and fill you with amazement and bitterness. No longer pretended friends, and real flatterers; they will unmask themselves, and appear only as tempters, deceivers, and enemies, who stood between you and Heaven; persuaded you to forsake your God; and cheated you out of eternal life.

“ But no acts of obedience will then appear to you to have merited, in any sense, acceptance with God. In this view, those acts of my life concerning which I entertained the best hopes, which I was permitted to entertain, those, which to me appeared the least exceptionable, were nothing, and less than nothing. The mercy of God, as exercised towards our lost race, through the all-sufficient and glorious righteousness of the Redeemer, yielded me the only foundation of hope for good beyond the grave. During the long continuation of my disease, as I was always, except when in paroxysms of suffering, in circumstances entirely fitted for solemn contemplation; I had ample opportunity to survey this most interesting of all subjects on every side. As the result of all my investigations, let me assure you, and that from the neighbourhood of the *Eternal World, Confidence in the Righteousness of Christ*

is the only foundation furnished by Earth or Heaven, upon which, when you are about to leave this world, you can safely, or willingly, rest the everlasting life of your souls. To trust upon any thing else, will be to *feed upon the wind, and sup up the East wind*. You will then be at the door of eternity; will be hastening to the presence of your Judge; will be just ready to give up your account of the *deeds done in the body*; will be preparing to hear the final sentence of acquittal or condemnation; and will stand at the gate of Heaven or Hell. In these amazing circumstances you will infinitely need; let me persuade you to believe, and to feel, that you will infinitely need, a firm foundation on which you may stand, and from which you will never be removed. There is no other such foundation but *the Rock of Ages*. Then you will believe, then you will feel, that there is no other. The world, stable as it now seems, will then be sliding away from under your feet. All earthly things, on which you have so confidently reposed, will recede and vanish. To what will you then betake yourselves for safety?"

Thus faithfully and pathetically did this man of God lift up his voice for the truth, and exert his declining energies to secure the best interests of those committed to his charge. His feelings were intense and ardent, indicative of the sincerity and strength of his convictions. At the same time his views of the essential doctrines of salvation were clear and harmonious.

The worthy Professor's declarations concerning the faith of the gospel afford no shelter for vice; and his enforcement of its practical duties lays no foundation for a pharisaical dependence upon them. As faith in the doctrines of Scripture is the only basis of evangelical obedience, so obedience to its precepts

is the only legitimate evidence of the genuineness of our faith.

The best of things have their counterfeits. It is of vast importance that we frequently subject our character to this scriptural test, lest at the final trial we be found reprobates. There is such a thing as a speculative belief, which resides only in the understanding;—a nominal faith, which, while it embraces the soundest doctrines, leaves a man's conduct inconsistent with his creed. But this is not the faith of the gospel. It is a *dead* faith, in opposition to a *living* one. It is the *faith of devils, who believe and tremble*, not the *faith that worketh by love, and which purifieth, the heart*.

That the belief which in Scripture is connected with salvation, includes a credence of the Divine Testimony, is undoubtedly true; but it includes more than this: and to define it thus, as some have done, is, to say the least, giving a very partial and meagre view of this saving and sanctifying principle. "Faith," according to the simple definition of the venerable Fuller, "is a falling in with the way of salvation; and unbelief is a falling out with it." It consists in a renunciation of self, and all false grounds of dependence: an entire confidence in the divine character: a cordial approval of his method of salvation: and an unreserved committal of our all into his hands. *For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

"Dr. D.'s exposition of the nature of Faith as a voluntary exercise of the mind, which consists in a confidence in the moral character of God, and particularly of the Saviour, and which is therefore entitled to be considered as a moral virtue, is clear, scriptural, and convincing; and he shows, in treating of its influence, the

propriety with which it is constituted the means of our justification." *

The Rev. J. Hawksley, a man of a sound and vigorous understanding, who had read much upon this subject, and understood it well, during his last affliction, was supremely solicitous that he might not be mistaken in the character, or deceived as to the possession of this all-important principle. He was aware that his faith must soon be submitted to the test of an awful and decisive experiment. And under this overwhelming conviction he asked,—“What is faith? How am I to know that I am a believer?” And he added,—“If, after all, I should not possess this precious, precious thing, faith, then where am I? I am shaken to atoms at the thought of the alternative! *O what* an alternative! Why, sir, in that case, I am *lost*,—I am *lost*, sir.”

“The Sandemanian notion of it,” he said, “was contradicted by the whole current of Scripture, and by common sense; the multifarious principles said to be included in it by many of the old divines, he thought exceedingly perplexing; the self-abandonment, rather than renunciation, attached to the notion of it by some of the American divines, he thought much beyond the simplicity of Scripture; and, on the whole, he acquiesced most in the statement given by the late Mr. Scott, by Dwight, and others. He thought that it was best expressed by confidence in Christ, to redeem by his blood, and sanctify by his Spirit, the soul of a poor self-condemned sinner. But above all, and better than all the definitions which have been ever given of it, he esteemed the simple expression of a hymn by Dr. Watts,—

‘The man that trusts the promise, *LIVES.*’

* Eclectic Review, p. 265.

“It is needful that we should be brought to a strong perception, something like sensation, that every refuge fails us but one, and that we have no claim upon that, except from the free presentation of it on the part of God. Of the fact, he said, he had long been aware, but till now, he never so forcibly learnt it, nor could he ever before understand to how frightful an extent the desperateness of our condition reaches. He remarked that no language could convey the knowledge of it, but that to be known, it must be felt, and so felt, as had not before entered into his conceptions, how strongly so ever he had been convinced in his understanding.” “Well,” said he, “here I am, I cannot cancel a single sin, I cannot change my heart, I cannot produce in my soul a single ray of consolation, I cannot of myself even exert the necessary confidence in the divine mercy; but all that I can do, is to ask, that, for his name’s sake, and the sake of his promise, he will take me as I am, and make me what I must become.”*

It has been objected by infidels to the Scriptures, that they lay an improper and unwarrantable stress on Faith. This objection Dr. D. proves to be groundless by showing the vital energy of the principle, and the place which it occupies in the system of salvation.

“Faith,” he declares, “it is well known, is the great condition of acceptance with God proposed in the Gospel; as unbelief is of final rejection. To this scheme Godwin objects, as unreasonable and absurd. But if the account here given of this attribute be just, the absurdity will be found to lie, not in the scriptural

* See an interesting sermon entitled “The Christian’s Defence in the Evil Day, preached at Fish-street Chapel, Hull, June 30, 1822, on the occasion of the Death of the Rev. John Hawksley, late Pastor of the Church of Christ meeting in Aldermanbury Postern, London. By the Rev. Joseph Gilbert.”

scheme, but in the objection. It has, if I mistake not, been shown in this Discourse, that without union to God, and cordial obedience to his will, we cannot enjoy rational and enduring good; and that without evangelical faith no such union, and no such obedience can exist. The faith of the gospel is therefore of all possible importance to man; of as much importance as his whole well-being, involving every thing which is desirable or useful. Had the Scriptures therefore laid less stress upon this subject, it would have been an unanswerable objection to the religious system which they contain.

“The contrary character of *distrust*, which is plainly the native character of man, is obviously a complete separation of any intelligent being from his Maker. It is impossible that such beings should exercise any of those affections with which alone they can glorify their Creator, or cordially obey him, so long as they distrust his moral character. Equally impossible is it, that they should possess the enjoyment which alone can fill the wishes, or is suited to the nature of an immortal mind. The distrust of a friend makes us unhappy *here*. The distrust of God would make us miserable *for ever!*”

“The faith of the Gospel deserves, then, all the importance which is given to it by the Scriptures. The place which it ought to hold in the estimation of all men is pre-eminent. By every preacher it ought to be insisted on, by every man it ought to be pursued, as of all possible consequence to obedience and salvation. The preacher who does not thus inculcate it, is unfaithful; the man who does not acquire it, is undone.”

Our author, while he insists that faith in the gospel is essential to the final safety of those who hear it, invariably connects the several doctrines, which in the

progress of these discourses he illustrates and confirms, with their practical use and moral efficacy.

["Truth,"] he remarks, ["is commonly divided into that which is *practical* and that which is *speculative* but moral truth cannot, in the strict sense, be justly divided in this manner. Every moral truth is of a practical nature.] Its influence, I acknowledge, is in some cases indirect; while in others it is direct. But it can never be truly denied in any case, that its influence is really of this nature."

The passage just quoted, which is only one selected from many of similar import, sufficiently shews how far this transatlantic writer was from adopting for his motto the lines of our English bard:—

"For modes of faith let zealous bigots fight:
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

To such a sentiment it is more probable he would have indignantly replied,

Shame on such antichristian, senseless song,
He can't be right whose faith is in the wrong.

The hand upon the dial-plate, which regularly marks the progress of time, and correctly points to us the present hour, would lose all its *regularity* and *correctness* if disrupted from the works by which its movements are directed; and who, knowing this, would regard the accidental position of the index?

Where is the man whose conduct, in secular concerns, is uninfluenced by his convictions? In the transactions of the commercial world, it is evident enough, that men are not insensible to the influence of faith. It quickens their hopes and their fears, and gives impulse and direction to their energies. Why, then, should this principle be represented as inoperative in religion *only*, where it has relation to objects

and interests, which in magnitude and extent infinitely transcend all comparison?

A course of piety and virtue, which in this inauspicious world requires much effort, and involves many sacrifices, can alone be sustained by motives of corresponding weight and efficiency. Now it is the direct office of faith to connect the mind with those invisible realities by which these motives are supplied. Hence, although its existence be confined to the present state,—*considered as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,*—yet it is essential to us, so long as we remain distant from that world of spiritualities to which we are hastening: so long as we continue to be surrounded and pressed upon on all sides, by sensible and seducing objects. If we would make progress heavenward, we must *walk by faith, not by sight*. It is faith that quickens and nourishes all the graces and virtues of the Christian character. Hope, and zeal, and love, and fortitude, and humility, and patience, and resignation, and whatever is amiable in the eye of Deity,—all draw their supplies through the medium of faith. In proportion as *that* is clear and scriptural, will *these* be healthful and beautiful; in proportion as it is obscure and feeble, they will decline and languish. *Faith is the victory that overcometh the world*. It unites us to the source of all spiritual strength, and purity, and knowledge. It is that principle in man by which corruptions are to be subdued, temptations resisted, enemies overthrown, and heaven and immortality finally secured.

The man, therefore, who contends earnestly *for the faith once delivered to the saints*, is not employed in *sapping* the foundations of morals, but in *laying* the

only foundations that are deep and solid, permanent and secure. St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, reminds him,—*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.**

The ministerial character of President Dwight seems to have been formed after this model. By introducing the light of divine truth, he sought to dissipate the shades of ignorance and of error; and to promote the advancement of morality and virtue amongst his hearers, by building them up in their *most holy faith*.

Those who were privileged to sit under his ministrations, were *fed with knowledge and with understanding*. He shunned not to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. It was not enough that Christ should be in them the hope of glory, he was warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He was a good and a wise steward of the mysteries of God, giving to each of his spiritual household their portion of meat in due season. An active and faithful servant of that Divine Master, whose plaudit was his recompense,—whose smile constitutes his heaven. *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

* 1 Tim. iv. 1. and 6.

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BEAUTIES.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

There is one God.—MARK xii. 32.

THE existence of GOD is the basis of religion. This truth will be evident, if we remember, that the word *Religion* always denotes *either a system of truths, of which GOD is the great subject; or a system of affections and conduct, of which HE is the supreme object.* If we can prove to ourselves the existence of a GOD; that is, of a Being, by whom we were created, and by whom the universe is governed; some such system of truths, affections, and conduct, must be also capable of being proved. To such a Being we and the universe must sustain important relations; and out of these relations must necessarily arise, to intelligent beings, a variety of duties, immediately, and alway, owed to him. Were there no such Being, there could be no such relations nor duties. Were the existence of such a Being incapable of proof, the existence of the relations and duties would be equally incapable of being proved. Happily for us, and accordantly with his own wisdom, GOD has not, in this most interesting case, *left himself without ample witness.*

The foundation of all reasoning concerning beings and events, and ultimately concerning attributes and

relations also, is a supposed, or acknowledged, connexion between cause and effect. By cause, I intend that something, be it what it may, which produces, or is supposed to produce, existence, or any change of existence; and without which the existence, or the change, would not have been. Between this something, styled cause, and the something styled effect, there is an inseparable connexion.

In the first place, we have no knowledge of any existence, or any change, which has taken place without a cause.

All beings, and all events, so far as our acquaintance with them has hitherto extended, have been produced by some agency, or influence, extraneous to themselves; and have never sprung up into existence casually, or without such agency or influence.

2dly. *All mankind have acknowledged, in the clearest manner, and in every way of which the subject was susceptible, the inseparable nature of this connexion.*

The language of every nation is formed only on this plan. Thus to think, to speak, to sit, to run, to strike, to write, to love, to hate, all denote effects, and refer to an agent, or cause of those effects; and without such reference would not contain, nor express, any meaning whatever.

In truth, language is so constructed, that it is impossible to write or speak in a different manner.

Children, so soon as they begin to speak at all, inquire more anxiously, and more universally, concerning causation and efficiency, than concerning any other subject of investigation.

3dly. *We learn this connexion from experience; in two ways: by the testimony of our senses, and by the inspection of our minds. Causes operate without us, and within us; and produce their proper effects in*

both cases. Those which operate *without us*, produce their effects *before our senses*; and so far our knowledge of the connexion between cause and effect *arises from sensitive testimony*. Those which operate *within us*, produce their effects *before the eye of the mind only*; and so far our knowledge of this connexion is *intuitive*.

4thly. *The mind cannot realize the fact, that existence or change can take place without a cause.*

5thly. *No absurdity can be greater than to argue with a man who denies this connexion.*

He himself, *in speaking*, exhibits himself as a cause of all the words uttered by him, and the opinions communicated; and, *in the act of arguing*, admits you to be a similar cause. If his body be not one cause, and your eyes another, you cannot see him. If his voice, and your ear, be not causes, you cannot hear him. If *his mind* and *yours* be not causes, you cannot understand him. In a word, without admitting the connexion between cause and effect, you can never know that *he* is arguing with *you*, or *you* with *him*.

With these observations premised, which you will see to be interwoven with this and all other subjects of discussion, I observe in the first place, *That the EXISTENCE of things, universally, proves the being of GOD.*

The argument which leads to this conclusion is, for substance, conducted by *Mr. Locke* in the following manner. Every man knows, with absolute certainty, that he himself exists. He knows also that he did not always exist, but began to be. It is clearly certain to him, that his existence was caused, and not casual; and was produced by a cause adequate to the production. By an adequate cause, is invariably intended, a cause possessing and exerting an efficacy

sufficient to bring any effect to pass. In the present case an adequate cause is one, possessing and exerting all the understanding necessary to contrive, and the power necessary to create, such a being as the man in question. This cause is what we are accustomed to call GOD. The understanding necessary to contrive, and the power necessary to create, a being compounded of the human soul and body, admit of no limits. He who can contrive and create such a being, can contrive and create anything. He who actually contrived and created man, certainly contrived and created all things.

This argument is, in my view, perfectly conclusive: nor has it been, nor will it ever be, answered, except with sophistry, or sneers.

2dly. *The STATE of existing things completely proves the being of God.*

The existence of the cause, or, in other language, of the man, we conclude from the effects which he produces. In the same manner, and with the like certainty, we discover the existence of God. In the universe without us, and in the little world within us, we perceive a great variety of effects produced by some cause adequate to the production. Thus the motions of the heart, arteries, veins, and other vessels; of the blood and other juices; of the tongue, the hands, and other members; the perception of the senses, and the actions of the mind; the storm, the lightning, the volcano, and the earthquake; the reviviscence and growth of the vegetable world; the diffusion of light, and the motions of the planetary system, are all effects; and effects of a cause adequate to the production. This cause is God; or a being possessed of intelligence and power sufficient to contrive and bring them to pass. He, with evidence from reason equally clear with the testimony of the Scriptures, *thundereth*

marvellously with his voice; holdeth the winds in his fists; sendeth lightnings with rain; looketh on the earth and it trembleth; toucheth the hills, and they smoke; melteth the mountains like wax, at his presence; causeth the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice; and maketh his sun to arise on the evil and the good. Him, also, we are bound to praise, because we are fearfully and wonderfully made by him; our substance was not hid from him, when we were made in secret, &c. Psalm cxxxix.

The properties and the exertions of matter are derived from an extrinsic cause; and that cause is possessed of intelligence and power, to which no bounds can be assigned.

This argument, conducted in a general and popular manner, may be thus exhibited. The agency of God is clearly and certainly seen in the preservation and government of all things. The existence of all the forms and states of being, which we behold in the universe, is plainly derived; because it is a change in the former state of things, commencing, continuing, and terminating; and, as it is impossible that any being should commence its own existence, derived certainly from an intrinsic and adequate cause. This cause can be no other than God.

Thus the production, existence, and structure, of vegetables and animals, their growth, perfection, and decay, their functions and operations, are all plainly effects of boundless intelligence and power. The universe, of which we are inhabitants, is plainly a system, made up of parts, fitted to each other, and arranged and proportioned so as to make one great and glorious whole. The parts also are, to say the least, in immense multitudes, subordinate, but wonderful systems.

To pass by *the mineral kingdom*, in which, however, there are innumerable proofs of design, art, and arrangement, fitting the parts of it by a happy subserviency to the accomplishment of many illustrious and valuable ends, but demanding more time than can be allotted, at present, to the consideration of them; I observe, that every *organized being, every vegetable and every animal*, is a complete system within itself. Each has all the parts and faculties which are suited to the purposes of its existence, purposes obvi-ous, useful, and wonderful; and yet regularly and completely accomplished. Thus grass is exactly fitted to adorn the earth with beauty, and to become food for the sustenance of an innumerable multitude of animals. Thus hortulane productions, fruits, grains, and various kinds of animals, are fitted to become food for mankind. Thus trees are fitted to yield their shade, and to become useful material for furniture, fencing, and building. Thus the earth, the air, the rain, and the sunshine, are suited to the production of vegetable life, of action, warmth, and comfort; together with innumerable other things, necessary to preserve and invigorate man. Thus the sun is fitted to shine; the planet to receive light from his beams; and the whole system to move on with regularity and harmony, and to accomplish all the great and glorious purposes for which it was contrived.

In every one of these things, even the least of them, there is a skill and power manifested, which, were any other skill and power employed in labouring to bring them to pass, infinitely transcend the efficiency of all beings except God. In every one of them, and in all parts of every one, *He* is seen in this efficiency, and is therefore present in all. In all, and throughout all, he acts. Every moment in every place, and with re-

spect to every being he preserves, conducts, and manages, all the parts of this stupendous machine, this vast universe, this immense kingdom, which he *hath made for himself, and not for another*. Power and skill, literally infinite, are every moment conspicuous in every being.

This mode of arguing is so natural to man, that we find it adopted by the most ignorant nations, as well as the most enlightened; by the child as well as the man of gray hairs. In every age, and in every country, it has struck the mind with a force so great, and in a manner so satisfactory, that it has probably precluded, in most minds, the apprehension of any necessity for farther investigation. Ask any plain man, whom you meet, why he believes that there is a God; ask even the *poor Indian, whose mind, in the language of the poet, is wholly "untutored,"* and he will tell you, that *he sees him in the clouds, and hears him in the wind*. All men believe the things around them to be effects or works; and all believe them to be the works of a God; of a being, whose power and understanding transcend all limits. Nor has any man ever doubted the soundness of this conclusion, but under the influence of a wish, that it might not be true, nor without a *laborious effort* to convince himself, that it was an error. So true is it, that *the fool, and the fool only, hath said in his heart, "There is no God."*

1st. *How great, awful, and glorious a being is God!*

He is plainly *self-existent*. All other beings are derived, and begin to be. He only is underived, and *without beginning of days, or end of years; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*.

Plainly, also, he is *Almighty*. The power which gave existence, is power, which can know no limits

No definite number of finite beings possess sufficient power to move a single world a hair's breadth; yet God moves the great world, which we inhabit, sixty-eight thousand miles in an hour; two hundred and sixty times faster than the swiftest motion of a cannon-ball.

He works every moment in every part of this vast whole; moves every atom; expands every leaf; finishes every blade of grass; erects every tree; conducts every particle of vapour, every drop of rain, and every flake of snow; guides every ray of light; breathes in every wind; thunders in every storm; wings the lightning; pours the streams and rivers; empties the volcano; heaves the ocean, and shakes the globe. In the universe of minds he formed, he preserves, he animates, and he directs all the mysterious and wonderful powers of knowledge, virtue, and moral action, which fill up the infinite extent of his immense and eternal empire. In his contrivance of these things, their attributes, and their operations, is seen a stupendous display of his immeasurable knowledge and wisdom. All these existed in the Immense, Eternal Mind, as in a vast storehouse of glorious ideas and designs; and existed from everlasting. In them the endlessly-diversified character of uncreated wisdom, beauty, and greatness, has begun to be manifested, and will continue to be manifested, with increasing splendour for ever.

What, we cannot but ask, must be the *knowledge* of Him, from whom all created minds have derived both their power of knowing, and the innumerable objects of their knowledge? What must be the *wisdom* of Him, from whom all beings derive their wisdom; from whom the emmet, the bee, and the stork, receive the skill to provide, without an error, their food, habitation, and safety; and the prophet and the

seraph imbibe their exalted views of the innumerable, vast, and sublime wonders of creation, and of creating glory and greatness? What must be the *excellence* of Him, who gives birth to all other excellence; and will improve, refine, and exalt that excellence in every virtuous mind, throughout ages which will begin for ever?

2dly. *How plainly are all beings absolutely dependant on God for their existence, their attributes, and their operations!*

3dly. *Of this universe God must, of necessity, be the sole and absolute Proprietor.*

No property is so perfect as that which arises from Creation. God not only made the work, but the materials.

4thly. *Of the same universe, he is, of course, the only Ruler.*

In this wonderful work how divinely great and good does God appear! How deserving of all admiration, love, homage, obedience, and praise! How amazing the wonders which he has done! How much more amazing the transcendant purpose for which they were done! Who would not fear, who would not bless, who would not adore, *that glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH OUR GOD*; the Being self-existent, eternal, and immense; and without beginning, limits, or end; united with eternal and immeasurable wisdom and power; from whom are derived all worlds, and all their inhabitants; on whom all depend; and by whom all are preserved, governed, blessed, and conducted with supreme wisdom and goodness to an end immortal and divine. *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.*

THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

PSAL. xiv. 1.

It cannot be denied that there have been Atheists, speculative as well as practical. *The fool*, says David, *hath said, There is no God.* In other words, every man who says this is a fool; and the assertion is the result of his folly only.

It is remarkable, that this assertion is declared to be made in the *heart* of the fool; that is, to flow from his wishes, and not from his understanding.

That we easily believe, what we wish to believe, is a truth so obvious, as to have passed into a proverb. He who hates the control, disrelishes the character, and dreads the inspection, judgment, and retribution, of his Maker, and intends to persevere in a course of sin, will find no refuge from anxiety and alarm, and no source of quiet in sinning, so comfortable, or in his view so safe, as the belief, that there is no God. It is not strange, therefore, that this belief has been cherished by such beings as mankind are; and particularly, by such beings as Atheists have universally been.

Still, this conduct cannot be denied to be folly of a very gross kind. As our belief can make no difference in the fact; as if God exists, he will continue to exist; as our danger from his anger against our sins, is exactly the same whether we believe it or not; as our quiet in sin will in this case only cheat us into ruin; and as the little consolation which we find in the indulgence of this belief, will only enhance our wretchedness by adding to it the anguish of disappointment;

no sober man will hesitate to pronounce this conduct foolish in the extreme. To him who walks over the edge of a precipice, what benefit can it be to shut his eyes? What greater stupidity can there be, than to shut our eyes, when this conduct will prove the certain means of conveying us to this scene of absolute destruction?

Atheists have, however, determined to encounter this hazard, and boldly resolved that there is no God. Let the Atheist view his own body, and remember that in the human frame there are probably more than a million of parts, greater and smaller; all of which we behold united in a perfect and most regular system. The relative horizontal positions only, of which these are capable, must be expressed by more than a million of arithmetical figures; their vertical and oblique positions must be expressed by several millions more; and all these combined, must be expressed by the multiplication of these immense sums with each other. The chances, therefore, against such a union of the parts of the human body, as actually exists, even after we suppose the several parts actually formed, would be such, as would be expressed by this aggregate of figures; a number, which all the human race, who have existed since the Mosaic date of the creation, would not have been able to count, had they busied themselves in no other employment during their lives. In addition to this, the number of chances against the original formation of these parts is immensely greater, than against the fact of their coming together. Nor are we yet at the end of the climax; for we perfectly well know, that, if all the parts were actually and perfectly formed, they could neither put themselves together, nor be united by any human skill or labour, however long employed. Beyond all this, if they were all

formed, and all perfectly united, so as to constitute exactly, both within and without, a human frame, it would still be a mere corpse, without life or motion. Were we to admit, still farther, that the frame, thus formed, might become possessed of life, it would yet be destitute of a soul, and, therefore, infinitely distant from the intelligent being, whom we call *man*.

All these difficulties must be surmounted a second time, in order to the existence of mankind: one of each sex being originally, and absolutely, necessary to the existence of succeeding generations. In the same manner, the same process must be repeated, in order to the production of every kind of animals; and in most cases in order to the production of the kinds of trees, shrubs, and plants.

He who can believe this system, can believe anything; and his faith must undoubtedly be the nearest approximation to casualty, which has been hitherto recorded in the history of man.

The body of man is a system made up of parts, wonderfully numerous and diversified, and still more wonderfully united and arranged. Every one of them is regularly found in the bodies of men, in its own place; and that, the best place possible. The hair of the head, which for aught that appears, might as naturally have grown on the face, grows only where it is needed to cover the *cerebrum*, and *cerebellum*, so tender and vital, from the injuries of both heat and cold; and to become, at the same time, a beautiful ornament. The eyes are placed where only they are needed, or could be materially useful, to direct the hands and the feet; the teeth, where alone they could serve their great purpose, of mastication; the throat, immediately behind and beneath them, where alone it could answer its own purpose of receiving the food,

after it has been chewed, mixed with the saliva, and thus prepared for digestion; the stomach beneath the throat, or more properly beneath the *œsophagus*, to receive through it the food, thus prepared, and render it useful to the preservation of life by digestion. In the same manner, the heart is situated in exactly that position, with respect to the lungs, and the greater arteries and veins, in which it communicates to them, and through them to the whole body, in the most advantageous manner, the blood, which is the great instrument of sustaining life. The lungs also are in the same happy manner connected with the throat by the *trachea*, so as to receive and decompose the air, on which we live, after it is admitted into the nostrils. The great bone of the neck and back, commonly called the spine, is so formed and placed, as to sustain the body in an erect posture; as to defend, in a manner indispensably necessary, the spinal marrow, so essential to life; and as, through orifices in the vertebræ, of which it is composed, to permit the nerves to pass, and give sensation to every part of the body; and as, at the same time, to enable us to bend into every useful position. The tongue is so constructed, and posited, as to answer exactly its various important purposes, particularly tasting and speaking; the hands, where alone they could be employed, in their innumerable uses; and the feet, where alone they could enable us to stand or walk.

This course of illustration might be pursued through a volume, or rather through many volumes; and the more minutely and extensively it was pursued, the more clearly would it evince, at every step, a design most wonderful in itself, originally and exactly formed, and perfectly executed; a design worthy of a God; and which could be executed by him alone.

Atheism, in all its forms, is a specimen of the most absolute credulity. The Atheist resolves to believe, in defiance of demonstration and impossibility; and thus prove that Atheism has its seat in the heart, and not in the understanding.

How greatly ought we to fear this mass of guilt, danger, and ruin! How earnestly ought we to watch, and strive, and pray, that we fall not into this train of temptations and miseries! Let us resolve to *receive the truth*, at all events, however humbling, or painful, *in the love of it*. And may God grant that it may *make us free from the bondage of corruption, and translate us into the glorious liberty of his children*. Amen.

COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE OF ATHEISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works: there is none that doeth good.—PSALM xiv. 1.

THE consequences of Atheism, generally, are declared in these words. It cannot but be a useful employment to examine this interesting subject, and to learn from such an examination, the manner in which these false principles, dictated and embraced by a bad heart, contribute, in their turn, as powerful causes, to render that heart still more corrupt; to fill the life with abominable actions; and to prevent every one, who embraces these doctrines, from assuming the character of virtue.

Before I enter upon the direct discussion of this subject, it will be proper to observe, that *Virtue is nothing but voluntary obedience to truth; and Sin, nothing but voluntary obedience to falsehood*. Or, more generally, virtue and sin consist in a disposition

or preparation of the heart, flowing out into acts of obedience, in the respective manners which I have mentioned. From these definitions, which it is presumed cannot be successfully denied, it is evident, that every false doctrine, which is relished by the heart, will of course govern its affections and volitions; and will, therefore, control the conduct. Nor is it less evident, that in the present case, the doctrines in question, being embraced only because they are loved, will eminently influence the heart which has dictated them, and eminently affect all the moral conduct.

It will also be clear, to all persons accustomed to the investigation of moral subjects, that *the character of a man must, at least in a great measure, be formed by his views of the several subjects with which he is acquainted.* As these are expanded, magnificent, and sublime; or narrow, ordinary, and grovelling; the taste, the character, and the conduct, will be refined and noble, or gross and contemptible.

The mind, by an early habit accustomed to little views, will soon learn to relish no other. Accustomed from the beginning to a connexion with grovelling objects only, it soon ceases to be pleased with any other objects. Accustomed to form diminutive and debased schemes of action, it becomes easily and finally disgusted with every thing of an enlarged and superior nature. Thus, he, the basis of whose religion was an idol, must form a system of theology and ethics dismally lean and contemptible.

All the motives to human conduct are found, either in the objects with which we converse, or in the VIEWS with which we regard them. Thus the objects with which we are conversant, and the views which we form of them, will determine both the internal and external character of man.

These things being premised, I assert, in accordance with the text, *that the proper, natural, and necessary influence of Atheism is to contract and render grovelling the views, to corrupt the character, and to deform the life of man.* The truth of this assertion I shall attempt to illustrate under the following heads :

1st. *The views, which the Atheist forms of the natural world, contrasted with the Christian's views of it.*

In this consideration I am disposed to allow the Atheist all the advantages which he can derive from endowments or acquisitions. He may, with my consent, be, what I well know he can be, a chemist, a botanist, a mineralogist, or an anatomist. He shall, if he pleases, be a mathematician, a natural philosopher, an astronomer, a metaphysician, or a poet : I mean, that he may be any or all of these, so far as one man of his opinions can be reasonably supposed to sustain the several characters specified. I will not even avail myself of the celebrated remark of *Lord Bacon*, that *'a little philosophy will make a man an Atheist, but a great deal will make him a Christian.'* although I entertain not a doubt of its truth. My business is not to dwell on minute things, but to shew the nature of those which are of higher importance.

The Atheist, then, may with enlarged understanding and skill contemplate the structure of the heavenly bodies. He may, with the eye of a naturalist, explore the organization of the vegetable kingdom : may analyse the chemical principles and combinations of plants and minerals, and may trace, to use his own language, the hidden walks of nature, in her mysterious progress through the system. Or, with the imagination of the poet, and the science of the astronomer, he may be fascinated with the beauty, splendour, and sublimity of the landscape, or delighted with the distances, magnitudes, motions, harmony, and magni-

ficence of the planetary and stellar systems; still his views of all these, and all other natural objects, although in his mind the most illustrious objects which exist, will be poor and pitiable.

All of them, in his opinion, owe their being to fate, accident, or the blind action of stupid matter. They exist for no end, and accomplish none. They spring from no wisdom, and display none. They are, therefore, what they would have been had they been made and moved by an intelligent cause, without any purpose or design in their creation: a vast apparatus of splendour and magnificence assembled together for nothing: an immense show, in which nothing was intended, and from which nothing can be gained. The mind, in surveying them, asks instinctively and irresistibly,—How came this train of wonders into being?—and is answered with nothing but perplexity and folly, but doubt and despair. In the same manner, it inquires,—Of what use will this mighty assemblage of worlds and their furniture prove?—The only reply is,—Of none. All, with all their motions, furniture, and inhabitants, are the result, and under the control, of that iron-handed necessity which exists in the blind operations of unconscious matter; that *gloomy fate of the Heathens*, to which they sullenly submitted because they deemed it inevitable; and which, while it showered calamities in abundance, cut off every hope and every effort for the attainment of deliverance. To the wretch, whose mind is effectually imbued with this scheme of things, the universe is changed into a vast prison, where himself and his companions are confined by bolts and bars, forged by the hand of blind, immovable, and irresistible destiny; where no heart is found to pity their sufferings, and no hand to lend relief; where

no eye looks with sympathy, and no ear listens with tenderness; where the walls reach to heaven, and are hung with clouds and midnight; and where every effort to escape, conducts the miserable tenants only to the sullen cavern of despair.

Should the Atheist, sick with the forlorn and hopeless contemplation, turn his eye from this scheme of things to his only alternative, the doctrine of Chance, he will find himself equally distant from refreshment and from hope. Here, himself and all other beings in earth, sea, and sky, with all their properties and operations, are mere accidents, involved and perplexed in their movements, like the particles of dust in a whirlwind. In his view, if he understand his system, and will think consistently with himself, his thoughts, volitions, and efforts, the continuance of his own being, and that of all other things, are mere casualties produced by no cause, upheld by no support, directed by no wisdom, and existing to no purpose. Mere abortions, precarious in the extreme, possessed only of a doubtful and fluctuating existence, they tremble and flutter in a dreadful state of suspense over the gloomy abyss of annihilation. All here is doubt and discouragement. Not a plan can be rationally formed, not a hope consistently indulged. Where every thing is to happen, if it exist at all; or where the result of the casualty is, with the same probability, seen to be anything or nothing; it is plain that nothing can be expected. Against every expectation, the chances are millions of millions to one; for every supposable thing is as likely to exist as any other.

The works of God are in their own nature beautiful, magnificent, sublime and wonderful; and by every eye which sees them, their *nature* must in some degree be discerned. It is readily admitted, therefore, that

the Atheist himself, if he be not a sot, must, in some degree, perceive the sublimity and splendour which are inherent in the earth and the heavens. But from these illustrious attributes he subtracts immensely, when he denies that they owe their origin to an intelligent and eternal mind, when he denies that they are moved and ruled by infinite perfection; and that by the same perfection they are conducted to a divine and glorious end, a purpose infinitely excellent and desirable. Without this consideration, all their lustre becomes feeble and fading: a dim taper, gradually declining on the sight towards a final extinction. At the same time, by attributing their existence to fate, chance, or matter, he contracts their greatness, and lowers their elevation, to a measure equally humble and painful; and covers even the bright lights of heaven with a shroud of gloom and obscurity.

When the Christian beholds the earth and the heavens, how different are his views of the same illustrious objects! To him the vast congregation of worlds is the immense and eternal empire of the Self-existent and Omnipresent JEHOVAH, contrived by his boundless wisdom, chosen by his boundless goodness, and executed by his boundless power. This single thought, like the rising of the sun upon this benighted world, imparts to the universe, in a moment, a diffusive and illimitable splendour, investing, explaining, and adorning all the beings of which it is composed. On all the sublime impression of design is instamped as a living image, glowing in living colours. The universe becomes a vast assemblage of means, directed to an immortal purpose; arranged in perfect order; adjusted with exact symmetry, and operating with complete harmony: and all, from the glory of that purpose, and the perfection of their arrangement, symmetry,

and operations, derive an elevation and grandeur of which they are otherwise utterly incapable.

God, *before whom all beings are as nothing*, is invested, by his perfections, with a greatness and sublimity, in comparison with which, all other magnificence, separately considered, becomes *less than nothing and vanity*. Eternal, omnipresent, and immutable power, wisdom, and goodness, are objects so high, so vast, that all the worlds and suns which they have created, diminish when compared with them, to *the drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the balance*. But in the view of the Christian, these worlds, and every thing which they contain, derive a glorious lustre from being an immediate exhibition of these attributes, and of the incomprehensible Being in whom they reside. Wherever the Christian casts his eyes, he sees all things full of God. The omnipresent, all-creating, and all-ruling JEHOVAH lives, and moves, and acts, in every thing which meets his view. In the spring he comes forth in his beauty and beneficence, clothes the naked world in the richest attire, and awakens universal life and joy. In the summer and the autumn *he openeth his bountiful hand, and satisfieth the wants of every living thing*. In the winter *he hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet*. The heavens recall to the mind of the Christian the day when God said, *Let there be a firmament; and there was a firmament*: in the sun still resounds that voice, which commanded, *Let there be light, and there was light*.

In the meantime, all things, borne on, in the view of the Atheist, in a blind and relentless career by irresistible necessity, or dancing in fortuitous and endless mazes, like the imaginary atoms supposed by him to

have produced them, and therefore dark, cheerless, and hopeless, are, in that of the Christian, directed by the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator; and are therefore, to him, full of expectation, hope and comfort. Wherever he is, there God is. His ear is always open to his prayers; his eye, to his dangers, sorrows, and fears; his hand extended to supply, to relieve, to comfort, and to save. An Almighty Friend is every where found by him, in the crowd and in solitude, by night and by day; never absent; never forgetful; never unkind; never encumbered by any concerns, which will prevent his wants from being regarded; nor surrounded by any difficulties, which can hinder them from being supplied. Between this friend and him, time and place can never intervene: he is every where, and is every where to him a God.

In this vast particular, the difference between the views of the Atheist and those of the Christian, I need hardly observe, is incalculable and immense. The efficacy of these views on the mind must, it is obvious, be proportioned to their nature.

2dly. *I will now examine the views which the Atheist forms of the moral world, and contrast them with the Christian's.*

The moral world is the *world of minds*, or of intelligent being. The importance of this world will, in some good measure, be conceived from these considerations; that the individuals who compose it, are the only beings by whom good can be contrived or done; and the only beings by whom it can to any extent be enjoyed. Of this world, the conceptions of the Atheist are, in a far greater degree, inferior to those of the Christian.

The only object which the Atheist knows in the moral world, is man; and man, lowered to the hum-

blest possible level of intellectual existence. His origin, in the view of the Atheist, is the same with that of a mushroom; and his character that of a mere animal. He is the subject of no moral government; insusceptible of moral obligation; incapable, therefore, of virtue, excellence and loveliness; possessing attributes, which, like himself, are the offspring, and under the control, of necessity or chance; united to his fellow men by nothing but time and place; insulated in all the interests, and those the interests of a swine only; without the knowledge, or the existence, of law or government, merit or reward; and born merely to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to propagate his kind, to decay, and to die. How obvious is it, that on these views of man, there can be erected no personal worth, enjoyment, or hope; no common good; no sense of rectitude; and no efforts for the promotion of general happiness.

Personal worth is all dependant on the existence of laws, and government, formed by one, who has a right to enact the former and administer the latter; a right founded on the relations, which he sustains to those who are under his government. To these relations, also, must the laws and the government be conformed in such a manner, as that that, and that only, shall be enacted, which requires the conduct suited to these relations, and promotive of general and individual happiness. In the same manner must be directed the rewards, punishments, and administrations. But in the scheme of the Atheist, there is no such ruler, and no such right to rule; there are no such relations, and no such duties. Rectitude, the sum of personal worth, consists in rendering voluntarily, that which others have a right to claim. But on his scheme no claim can be founded, and none exists. There is, there-

fore, nothing due; of course, no duty can be performed, and no rectitude experienced. Hence that high, unceasing, and refined enjoyment, which attends the sense of rectitude, can never be found by the Atheist.

As the Atheist is without rectitude or moral principle, and destitute of the sense and enjoyment of it; so it is plain, that his whole conduct must be directed by a regard to mere convenience; or rather by a regard to what his passions, unrestrained, rendered intense by habitual indulgence, and fastening their view only on the present object, may deem it convenient. In other words, his conduct must be dictated merely by the existing passion and appetite; and must, therefore, be that very conduct, which has produced almost all the miseries and complaints of mankind.

If this scheme be true, all men ought undoubtedly to be governed by it. What would become of such a world, and of the Atheist himself in the midst of such a world? No man, it is evident, could exercise confidence towards any other man. The loss of the enjoyment, furnished by this single delightful emotion, an enjoyment absolutely indispensable even to comfort and to safety, would infinitely overbalance every good which Atheists ever found. Without confidence, no society can be happy. Without confidence no society, no friendship, no union, no connexion, between intelligent beings, can exist. Even thieves and robbers, as has ever been proverbially acknowledged, cannot, without confidence, form even their dreadful state of society. The world, dispossessed of it, would become an image of hell; and distrust, jealousy, wrath, revenge, murder, war, and devastation, overspread the earth. In the midst of millions, the Atheist would find himself in a desert. His situation would be that of a hermit, his character that of a fiend. By

day, he would hide himself in his den: by night, he would prowl, as a wolf, for the prey on which he was to live.

To such a world, it is obvious, *Hope, which, in the language of the poet, comes to all, could never come.* On hope, even as the world now is, men in a great measure live. The prospect of something better to-morrow, brightens all the comforts of man, and tinges with light the clouds of melancholy and affliction to-day. Were all the enjoyments of human life to be fairly reckoned up, it is not improbable that those, which Hope brings in her train, would be the greatest mass, both in number and value. But in these, the Atheist could not share, because from Fate or Chance nothing can be rationally expected; and because, from his fellow men, governed by his doctrines, there could arise nothing but danger, distrust, and fear.

Should it be said, that this situation of things would be so absolutely intolerable, that mankind, unable to exist in it, would be compelled to unite in society, and establish government; I admit the conclusion, and perfectly accord with the premises from which it is drawn. But what would be the nature of this government, and on what basis would it be founded? Its basis would plainly be dire necessity, existing in the impossibility of living without it; and its operations would be only those of force. The rulers would feel no sense of rectitude, possess no virtue, and realize no moral obligation. To all those things their fundamental principles would be hostile, and would render the very thought of them ridiculous. God is the only acknowledged source of moral obligation; but to them there would be no God, and therefore no such obligation. Conformity to his laws is the only rectitude; but to these men there would be no such laws,

and therefore no rectitude. Convenience, of course, or, in better words, passion and appetite, would dictate all the conduct of these rulers. The nature of a government directed by passion and appetite we know, imperfectly, by the histories of *Caligula*, *Nero*, and *Heliogabalus*; and more thoroughly, though still imperfectly, in those of *Danton*, *Marat*, *Robespierre*, and their associates. Who could be willing to see such a tissue of madness, cruelty, misery, and horror, woven again?

The subjects of such a government would, at the same time, be, in the same manner, under the influence of the same doctrine. Their conduct would accordingly be an exact counterpart to that of their rulers. Appetite would change every man into a swine, and passion into a tiger. Right would neither be acknowledged, nor be felt, nor exist. Whatever was coveted would be sought, and obtained, if it could be done with safety. Whatever was hated, would, so far as safety would permit, be hunted and destroyed. To deceive, to defraud, to betray, to maim, to torture, and to butcher, would be the common employment, and the common sport. The dearest and most venerable relations would be violated by incestuous pollution; and children, such of them I mean as were not cast under a hedge, thrown into the sea, or dashed against the stones, would grow up without a home, without a parent, without a friend. The world would become one vast den; one immeasurable sty; and the swine and the wolf would be degraded by a comparison with its inhabitants.

The only instance in which infidels of any description have possessed the supreme power and government of a country, and have attempted to dispose of human happiness according to their own doctrines and wishes,

is that of *France*, since the beginning of the Revolution. If we consider this government as established over a nation, educated for ages to the belief and obedience of many doctrines of Christianity, and retaining, as to a great majority of the people, the habits formed by that education, the state of that nation will evince, beyond a question, that all, which I have said, is true without exaggeration. *France*, during this period, has been a theatre of crimes, which, after all preceding perpetrations, have excited in the mind of every spectator, amazement and horror. The miseries suffered by that single nation, have changed all the histories of the preceding sufferings of mankind into idle tales, and have been enhanced and multiplied, without a precedent, without number, and without a name. The kingdom appeared to be changed into one great prison; the inhabitants converted into felons; and the common doom of man commuted for the violence of the sword and the bayonet, the sucking boat and the guillotine. To contemplate men, it seemed for a season as if the knell of the whole nation was tolled, and the world summoned to its execution and its funeral. Within the short time of ten years, not less than three millions of human beings are supposed to have perished, in that single country, by the influence of Atheism. Were the world to adopt and be governed by the doctrines of *France*, what crimes would not mankind perpetrate; what agonies would they not suffer?

Let us now turn our view from this prospect of guilt and desolation, this dark and final abyss of sin and ruin, where no solitary virtue gleams, where no ray of hope or comfort trembles through the profound midnight; and refresh the wearied sight by casting a momentary glance over the moral world of the Christian.

Here, at the head of the vast chain of moral being, reaching like *Jacob's* ladder from earth to heaven, sits on the throne of infinite dominion, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, the God of *Jacob*; the God of all, who like them believe, worship, and obey their Creator. In him, the self-existent and infinite mind, the Christian beholds unceasingly an object of boundless sublimity, grandeur, beauty, and loveliness; commanding by the disclosure of his character, and exhausting all finite admiration, complacency, love, and praise; expanding every view, refining every affection, and ennobling every attribute. From the immediate contemplation of this glorious Being, raised to a superiority and distinction, of which he could otherwise have never conceived, he casts his eyes abroad into the universe, which that Being has created. There he beholds an endless train of intelligent minds, reflecting with no unhappy lustre, the beauty and glory of their Maker. From the pre-eminent dignity of the archangel, through the glowing zeal of the seraph, and the milder wisdom of the cherub; through the high endowments of *Moses*, *Isaiah*, and *Paul*, down to the humble but virtuous inhabitants of a cottage, one spirit lives, and breathes, and actuates in all; and that spirit is divine. Each wears and exhibits, in his own manner, and that manner a delightful and useful one, the image and beauty of JEHOVAH. All though of different magnitudes, diffuse a real light; all are stars, though *one star differeth from another star in glory*. All are the subjects of virtuous affections: all are fitted to admire and adore, to glorify and enjoy their Creator: all are formed and disposed voluntarily to fill up their existence with doing good, with promoting individual enjoyment, and increasing universal happi-

ness: all are bound together as children of one God, and brethren of each other, by *love, the-bond of perfection*. Every one, therefore, is lovely in the sight of his Maker.

To this universe of minds the Christian believes, that the Creator, who is of course the rightful law-giver, has given laws for the direction of its members, which require perfect conduct, and ensure to it perfect happiness. These laws extend to all the thoughts, words, and actions, alike; and regulate each with unerring propriety. Their obligation is, and is acknowledged to be, divine; nothing can sunder, nothing can lessen it. This, instead of being a source of regret to him, is his delight; for what these laws require is better than anything else; and more fraught with self-approbation, worth, and enjoyment. Of course, in all the relations and situations of life, as a parent or a child, a neighbour or a friend, a magistrate or a subject, he feels himself, on the one hand, irresistibly obliged, and, on the other, entirely delighted, to obey their dictates. As these dictates reach every moral being, in every situation, and with respect to every action, they provide of course, and universally, for that conduct, in every being, which is commendable and desirable.

Here an immovable foundation is laid for peace within, for dignity of mind, for real and enduring enjoyment, in the recesses of solitude; and for the endless train of duties and blessings, necessary to the happiness of society. A ruler, formed in this manner, will govern only to bless. Subjects of the same character will obey, because rectitude demands their obedience, and because obedience will ensure the happiness both of themselves and their rulers.

3dly. *I will now examine the views which the Atheist forms of the future world, and contrast them with the Christian's.*

On this subject, a few observations only will be necessary. The whole of the Atheist's creed, with respect to the future world, is comprised in the following summary: That his body, begun by chance or necessity, is continued without design, and perishes without hope; and that his soul is a mere attribute of his body, useless and worthless while he lives, and destined at his death to rottenness and corruption: "*Death an eternal sleep,*" he engraves on the gate-posts of every church-yard; and consigns, by his mandate, the numerous inhabitants to the dark and desolate regions of annihilation.

By this sweeping sentence, which he passes on all the human race, he takes away from himself, and his fellow-men, every motive, furnished by the fear of future punishment, or the hope of future rewards, to virtuous, upright, and amiable conduct.

From these three sources, expressed by the several heads of discourse, arise all motives, and all tendencies, to virtuous conduct; to truth, justice, and kindness, between man and man. From the two former, we have already seen, the Atheist derives neither motives nor tendencies to this conduct. The source under consideration, is to him, if possible, still more barren of both. There is, therefore, nothing in his scheme, which will prevent him from doing evil, or induce him to do good. How deplorable then, is his system, if it may be called a system, of doctrines!

On the other hand, how glorious are the Christian's views of the future world. From the promise of his Creator he learns, that *his body, sown here in corruption, weakness, and dishonour, shall be raised beyond*

the grave, *in incorruption, power, and glory*, with so many attributes of mind, or *spirit*, as to be denominated by him, who made it, *a spiritual body*. Ever young, active, and undecaying, it shall be reunited to the immortal mind, purified from every stain, and every error. This perfect man shall be admitted, *with an open and abundant entrance*, into the heaven of heavens, the peculiar residence of infinite majesty, and the chosen seat of infinite dominion. In this noblest of all habitations, this mansion of everlasting joy, he shall be united with an innumerable multitude of companions like himself, sanctified, immortal, and happy. Enrolled among the noblest and best beings in the universe, *a child, a priest, a king*, in the house of his heavenly Father, his endless and only destination will be to know, love, serve, and enjoy, God; to interchange the best affections and the best offices with his glorious companions; and to advance in wisdom, virtue, and happiness, for ever.

In the future world of the Christian, therefore, motives, endless in their number, and infinite in their power, excite him unceasingly to all the conduct which can make him useful and lovely, which can promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures, or secure the approbation of his God.

Thus have I taken a summary comparative view of these two schemes of existence. In that of the Christian, an intelligent mind, possessed of boundless power, wisdom, and goodness, existed from everlasting; commanded into being the universe of matter, and the universe of minds; is present in every place; sees, with an intuitive survey, every thing; controls all things with an almighty and unerring hand; and directs all to the accomplishment of the divine and eternal purpose, for which all were made.

Over the universe of minds, destined to an immortal existence, he exercises a moral and eternal government; and prescribes laws, which require the best conduct, and insure the greatest happiness. To obedience he promises an endless reward; to disobedience he threatens an endless punishment. From this great source, the Christian sees himself derived; to this glorious end believes himself destined; and in this sublime scheme, is presented with all motives to make him good, and with all means to make him happy.

The Atheist, on the contrary, supposes all things derived from chance or necessity; originated without design; existing to no purpose, and terminating, whenever they do terminate, by the coercion of fate, or the sport of accident, as they began. Himself he regards as a lump of organized matter; without a mind; without law or government, except that of fate or force; without moral action; incapable of obligation or rectitude; united to his fellow-men only by time and place; formed only to animal enjoyment; and destined to perish with his kindred brutes. By this scheme, all that is glorious, divine and lovely, in that of the Christian, is annihilated; and all which, in the natural world, cannot be annihilated, and which possesses an inherent greatness and sublimity, is miserably contracted and degraded. Nothing is left to expand his views, refine his affections, or ennoble his conduct. Motives to virtue, dignity, and usefulness, he obliterates from the creation. In the future world, he finds no such motives; for to him the future world is nothing. His evil passions, in the meantime, (for such passions, whencesoever derived, he possesses) are let loose without restraint, to rage and riot without control. Of all motives to do evil, his scheme is prolific; of all motives to do good, it is absolutely bar-

ren. At the same time, it is founded on mere hypothesis, sustained by no evidence, and believed, against demonstration and impossibility.

Thus it is, I think, unanswerably evident, that *he who hath said, There is no God, is a Fool*; that is, Atheism is a scheme, dictated only by an evil *heart*; that *it corrupts*, of course, the whole moral character; that it is productive of all *abominable works*; and that it completely precludes *the performance* of anything that is *good*.

UNITY OF GOD.

There is none other God but One.—1 COR. viii. 4.

THAT there is but one God is a doctrine acknowledged in this country by every man.

1st. *The human mind whenever it has admitted the being of one infinite God, has plainly found a difficulty in admitting the existence of more.*

All who have acknowledged one infinite God, have regarded the acknowledgment of more as an absurdity. In this sentiment have concurred the Patriarchs, Jews, Christians, Mahommedans, and all those modern Infidels, who have not denied the existence of such a God. These classes of men, have, with one voice, renounced the idea of more than one such God.

2dly. *Although the proofs of the existence of God are complete, yet there is no proof of the existence of more than one God.*

The argument for the being of God, which I mentioned as exhibited in the happiest manner, by *Mr. Locke*, proves unanswerably the being of one eternal self-existent cause. But this argument proves nothing concerning the existence of a second cause;

nor does it possess the smallest influence to persuade us that a second exists.

3dly. *If there were more Gods than one, it is incredible that no proof should be furnished of their existence.*

4thly. *Unity of design, and agency in Creation and Providence, furnishes another argument in proof of the existence of but one God.*

So far as we are able to understand the works of Creation and Providence, we discern a general simplicity and harmony in the nature and operations of all things. Amid the immense complication which surrounds us, we perceive one set of laws, in accordance with which all things proceed in their course. The same causes produce, uniformly, the same effects in every place and period. Vegetables spring from the same seed; germinate by the same means; assume the same form; sustain the same qualities; exist through the same duration; and come to the same end. Animals, also, are born in one manner, and exhibit the same life, powers, and tendencies. Man has one origin, form, life, system of faculties, character, and termination. All things in this world are, in one regular manner, made subservient to his use and happiness; and are plainly fitted by one design, and conducted by one agency to this end. Day and night uniformly return by a single power, and with exact regularity. With the same regularity and simplicity, the seasons pursue their circuit. The sun shines, illuminates, warms and moves the planets by a single law, and with exact uniformity. By one law, the planets keep their orbits and perform their revolutions. The face of the heavens is but one; and the oldest sphere which is known, presents to our view the same constellations which we now behold in the nightly firmament.

Thus all things, so far as our knowledge extends, present to our view a single design, regularly executed by a single agency. But unity of design is a proof of one designer, and unity of agency, of one agent.

This argument has ever struck the minds of thinking men, with no small force. Were we able to comprehend the universe, and to discern perfectly the manner in which all the parts of it are conducted, it is not improbable that this argument would be complete.

All the ancient nations, of whose religious opinions we have a distinct account, appear, in the early periods of their existence, to have acknowledged one God.

Among these nations, may be mentioned the *Persians, Hindoos, Chinese, Tartars, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Canaanites, Arabians, Egyptians, and Romans.*

1st. *This doctrine of the unity of God strongly exhibits the wickedness of mankind.*

The one perfect God was anciently and fully known to all nations; and has been, since, often declared to a great part of the habitable world. Yet singular, solemn, and interesting as this great object is, and impossible as it seems, that it should be lost by any man, who has once possessed it, it has still been wantonly forgotten, or wilfully rejected, by the great mass of mankind. In the place of JEHOVAH have been substituted gods innumerable, sinful, stupid, blind, deaf, and dead; and these have been zealously worshipped in preference to the glorious Creator of all things. Man has made his gods, and then prostrated himself before them.

The true and only reason of this conduct is, that men *loved not to retain God in their knowledge.* No higher proof of corruption can be given than this. God is infinitely excellent and lovely. A good mind

naturally regards him as infinitely more desirable than all other objects; and delights to contemplate, love, and obey him, in entire preference to all other enjoyments. A gross and guilty mind, therefore, is the sole cause of this apostacy and rebellion. The degree of this guilt is strongly seen in the completeness of the apostacy. God has been totally banished; and creatures, totally opposite to him in every attribute, have been worshipped in his stead. Thus the mind has loved to recede as far as possible from its Maker; and not only refused its proper love and homage to him, but rendered them to the vilest and most unworthy of his creatures.

2dly. *From the observations made in this discourse, appears, in the strongest light, the necessity of Revelation.*

Revelation, without question, originally began and has always continued, the knowledge of the true and living God in the world. This is infinitely the most important of all knowledge, and the most absolutely indispensable to the well-being of man. From God, all the good which will ever be enjoyed, must be derived. But no permanent or solid good can be expected from him, unless he be pleased. To be pleased, he must be obeyed, and to be obeyed, he must be known. But without revelation he has never been known in this world. Thus to the attainment of permanent and solid good, revelation is indispensably necessary, and infinitely important.

The love of God, also, is wholly built on the knowledge of his existence and character. But the love of God is the best of all characteristics, the foundation of all other good, and in itself the best good. Thus, in order to our moral and natural good, to our holiness and happiness alike, revelation is supremely necessary to man.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—ETERNITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

I said, O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days, &c.—PSALM cii. 24—27.

IN these words is presented to us, not only a direct assertion, but a highly poetical, sublime, and glorious exhibition, of *the eternity and immutability of God*; strongly impressed on the mind by the contrast which it forms to the vanishing character of these great works of his hands. The passage is indeed declared by the Apostle *Paul*, to be a description of the character and agency of the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the divine Trinity. But to us, with regard to Christ as being unquestionably God, it has exactly the same import, as if applied to the Father, or to the Godhead at large. In this light I shall, therefore, consider it; and proceed under its guidance, to examine these illustrious attributes of the Creator.

1st. *God is eternal; or, in other words, his existence is without beginning or end.*

Of this doctrine the text is a direct assertion, and therefore a complete proof: but it is only one, among a vast multitude of such assertions in the Scriptures. No attribute of God is perhaps more frequently declared, more variously recited, or more universally diffused, throughout the sacred pages. In the very first verse of Genesis it is said, *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.* He existed, therefore, before the beginning of created things; or, in other words, from everlasting. In the last chapter of the Apocalypse, Christ solemnly declares this character of himself; *I am Alpha and Omega*, saith he;

the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. In the 90th Psalm, and 2d verse, the divine writer exclaims, *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth, and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. I lift my hand to Heaven,* says God, Deut. xxxii. 40 *and say, I live for ever. I am ;* that is, I exist alike in all times and places, and eternity and immensity. JEHOVAH and *Jah ;* that is, existence illimitable by space or duration ; are, you well know, the peculiar and incommunicable names of the Godhead ; in accordance with which *the eternal God,* and *the everlasting God,* are current phraseology of the Scriptures. From this source, then, it cannot be necessary to adduce any further proofs of the doctrine.

To this full evidence from the Scriptures, reason subjoins her fullest attestations. That God existed before all things, has been heretofore, as I trust, sufficiently proved. The universe was plainly derived from him, the first or original cause. Consequently he was uncaused, underived, and, of course, from eternity, or without beginning.

That God will for ever exist is plain, also, from reason, beyond dispute.

II. *God is immutable.*

By this I intend, that he is subject to no change in his manner of being, his perfections, thoughts, desires, purposes, or determinations.

This doctrine, also, is directly asserted in the text. *They shall be changed ; but thou art the same* It is also declared in various other passages of the Scriptures. *I am the Lord ; I change not.* Mal. iii. 6. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* James i. 17.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.
 Heb. xiii. 8.

In these passages we are taught, not only that there is no *change* in God; but no *variableness*; no *capacity* or *possibility of change*.

Of this doctrine, also, reason furnishes to him, who admits the existence of an Intelligent Cause of all things, an absolute demonstration. God gave being to all things. Of course he contrived them all. Every being, and every event, which has been, is, or will be, together with all their qualities and operations, existed in his mind; or, in the beautiful language of David, *were written in his book, and what day they should be fashioned, when, as yet, there was none of them.*

From these considerations it follows, that the eternity of God is a totally different thing from that which is ascribed to created, particularly to intelligent, beings. All creatures change incessantly. *His duration is a mere and eternal Now.*

1st. *How great and glorious a character of God is presented to us by these perfections.*

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, he is God. Possessed of perfect excellence, contemplating with infinite complacency his glorious attributes, and containing in himself a boundless sufficiency for the accomplishment of every thing great and desirable, he saw, that it was becoming his character to unfold his perfections, and communicate his goodness, to an endless and innumerable race of beings. From an infinite height, he took a survey of the immeasurable vast of possible beings; and in an expansion without limits, but desolate and wild, where nothing was, called into existence with a word the countless multitude of worlds, with all their various

furniture. With his own hand he lighted up at once innumerable suns, and rolled around them innumerable worlds. All these he so dispersed, and arranged, as that all received light, and warmth, and life, and comfort; and all, at the same time, he stored and adorned with a rich and unceasing variety of beauty and magnificence, and with the most suitable means of virtue and happiness. Throughout his vast empire, he surrounded his throne with intelligent creatures, to fill the immense and perfect scheme of being, which originally existed with infinite splendour in his own incomprehensible mind. Independent of all possible beings and events, he sits at the head of this universe, unchanged, and incapable of change, amid all the successions, tossings, and tumults, by which it is agitated. When empires are overthrown, or angels fall; when suns are extinguished, and systems return to their original nothing; he is equally impassive and unmoved as when sparrows expire, or the hairs fall from our heads. Nothing can happen, nothing can be done, beyond his expectation, or without his permission. Nothing can frustrate his designs, and nothing disappoint or vary his purposes. All things, beside him, change and fluctuate without ceasing. Events exist and vanish. Beings rise and expire. But his own existence, the thoughts which he entertains, the desires which he admits, the purposes which he forms, are *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Throughout the coming vast of eternity, also, and the boundless tracts of immensity, he sees with serene complacency his own perfect purposes daily and invariably advancing, with a regular fulfilment, towards their absolute completion. In its own place, in its own time, and in its own manner, each exists in exact obedience to his order, and in exact accordance with his choice.

Nothing lingers, nothing hastens, but *his counsel exactly stands*, and *all his pleasure will be precisely accomplished*.

2ndly. *How necessary are these attributes to the character of God as the ruler of all things?*

By his eternity this glorious Being is always in existence, to know and to bring to pass, to approve or to condemn, to reward or to punish, whatever he pleases, and whatever is done by his intelligent creatures.

By his immutability, God is possessed of immeasurable dignity and greatness, and fitted to be entirely feared, loved, honoured, and obeyed, by all his rational creatures.

3dly! *By these attributes, the character of God is peculiarly rendered awful in the sight of wicked beings.*

By his eternity, he will exist for ever; and they cannot but know that he will exist for ever, to execute his threatenings against all the impenitent workers of iniquity. By his immutability every hope is forbidden that he will change any purpose which he has formed, or fail to accomplish any declaration which he has made. If he has ever been infinitely opposed to sin, and to sinners, this opposition cannot but be always and unchangeably the same. Of course, impenitence cannot rationally indulge a single hope of escaping from the punishment which he has denounced. All rational beings are, from this source, presented continually with a character of God inconceivably awful. Dreadful, indeed, will God be in this character to the finally impenitent. *How will they abide in the day of his anger? How will they stand in the fierceness of his eternal indignation? A fearful looking for of judgment* must that be, which is derived from a full conviction, that all the threatenings denounced by

God in the Scriptures, against sinners, dying without repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus, will be exactly executed.

4thly, *These attributes, especially, render God the object of supreme confidence to virtuous beings.*

Confidence, every man knows, can never, though chiefly an emotion of the heart, exist rationally or permanently, unless firmly founded in the conviction of the understanding. Of course, the Being who is rationally confided in, must be seen, with solid conviction, to possess those qualities on which confidence may safely repose. Immutability of character, and the immutability of purpose and conduct resulting from it, are undoubtedly the only objects in which rational beings can ultimately confide. A Being possessing these attributes must, if he love holiness at all, love it invariably and for ever. That which he loves he will bless, of course. All his designs to reward those who possess it, must be unchangeable; all his declarations true; and all his promises exactly fulfilled. That faithfulness, by which they are fulfilled, is no other than *the moral immutability of God*, and an essential part of his infinite glory. On this character every virtuous being places an entire and safe reliance; *a hope, which can never make him ashamed.* However vast, however rich, however incredible in appearance, the promises of future happiness may seem to such minds as ours, we know that they are the promises of Him, who can neither deceive nor change; and that, therefore, every one of them will be carried into complete execution. According to these observations, the immutability of God is directly asserted in the Scriptures to be the only foundation of safety to righteous men. *I am Jehovah;* says God, in the passage already quoted from *Malachi*; *I change not; therefore ye sons*

of *Jacob are not consumed*. The backslidings and provocations, even of the best men in this world, are, in all probability, great enough to shake any purposes of kindness in any mind, which is not absolutely incapable of change. *The eternal God is the true and final refuge of his children, only because he cannot change.* Amid all their wanderings, their unbelief, their hardness of heart, and their multiplied transgressions, they have hope and security, because *his truth is as the great mountains, steadfast and immovable; and his promises endure for ever.*

5thly. *How great encouragement do these attributes of God furnish to prayer?*

All encouragement to prayer is derived from these two considerations; *that God has required it of us as a duty, and that he has promised blessings in answer to our prayers.* Were he a mutable God, it would be impossible for us to know, that what was his pleasure yesterday, would be his pleasure to-day; that what he had required yesterday, he would not prohibit to-day; or that what he promised yesterday, he would be willing to perform at any future period.

The immutability of God has often, but erroneously, been imagined to involve *inexorability* in his character. The Scriptural account of this great Being is, on the contrary, that he is immutably exorable; or, in other words, that he is immutably disposed to hear and answer prayer. His own words are, *Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* This, and this only, is his true character, agreeably to which the system of his dispensations is immutably established. In this system, infinite encouragement is holden out to every suppliant, and to every faithful prayer. Here the petitioner knows, that what is once acceptable to

God will always be acceptable; and that the things which he has once required, he will require for ever. His faith, therefore, is built on the rock of ages; and with whatever violence the rains may descend, the winds drive, or the floods beat, their rage and fury will assault him in vain.

OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me, &c.
PSALM CXXXIX. 1—12.

IN the text, *the knowledge and presence of God*, usually termed, from their extent, *his omniscience and omnipresence*, are in the fullest manner declared.

With these views of the Psalmist, those of every other divine writer on this subject exactly conspire; and all, with a single voice, attribute these perfections to Jehovah. Thus *Jeremiah*, xxiii. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?*

Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?

The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. Great is the Lord, his understanding is infinite.

In accordance with this doctrine only, *is all our obedience*, particularly *our worship*, prescribed in the Scriptures. We worship and obey God every where, and are commanded thus to do; because God is every where present to see, and know, and accept our services, to protect our persons, and to supply our wants. It ought to be here observed, *that these attributes are directly ascribed to all the persons of the Trinity.* Thus CHRIST says of himself, *Where two*

or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. Again, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Peter says to him, John xxi. 17. *Lord, thou knowest all things.* Christ says of himself, *And all the churches shall know, that I am he who searcheth the reins and the hearts,* Rev. ii. 23. And again, Mat. xi. 27. *No one knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

The omnipresence of the spirit of grace is emphatically asserted in the question, contained in the seventh verse of the text;—*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* especially as connected with the answers following. *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you,* that is, Christians universally, saith St. Peter, 1st. Epistle iv. 14. *Your body,* saith St. Paul to Christians, *is the temple of the Holy Ghost,* 1 Cor. vi. 19; and, *The spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God,* 1 Cor. ii. 10.

These attributes of God are also demonstrated, and holden out continually to our inspection, by *reason and experience.*

In every part of the universe to which we turn our eyes, we discern in the inanimate, animated, and intelligent worlds, most evident proofs of an agency, which it is impossible, rationally, to attribute to any other being but God. In the motions and powers of the elements; in the growth, structure, and qualities of vegetables and animals; and in the thoughts, volitions, and actions of minds, we perceive a causal influence, an efficiency, totally distinguished from every other; as distant from that of man, as the agency of man from the movements of an atom. This character is never mistaken by savages, nor even

by children, when once informed of the character of God.

This agency is conspicuous in all places, at all times, and in all things; and is seen in the earth, the ocean, the air, and the heavens, alike. Equally evident is it in the splendour and life-giving influences of the sun; in the motions, order, and harmony of the planetary system; and in the light and beauty of the stars, as in the preservation, direction, and controul of the terrestrial things.

No agent can act where he is not. As, therefore, God acts every where, he is every where present. In this agency, contrivance, and skill, to which no limits can be set, are every where manifested: it is of course, equally and unanswerably a proof of the *omniscience* of God.

This attribute of God is also inferred, with absolute certainty, from his omnipresence. As God exists every where, so he is in all places the same God; all eye; all ear; all intellect. Hence it is impossible that he should not know every thing, in every place, and at every time.

Again, all things are derived from God and received their nature, attributes, and operations from his *contrivance*, as well as from his *power*. All things were, therefore, known to him antecedently to their existence. Nor are *possible* things less perfectly known to him than those which are *actual*. Nothing is possible, but what he can bring to pass; and whatever he can bring to pass, he cannot but know.

1st. *How majestic, awful, and glorious a manifestation of God is furnished to us by this passage of Scripture thus considered?*

We are here taught, that God is essentially present to all places and to all beings. The mind of man is

here exhibited as equally open to his view with the body; the thoughts and affections, as the words and actions: *hell*, as equally *naked* and present to him as heaven: and *the destroyer* and the seraph, as alike without a *covering*. It is indubitably certain, therefore, that he is able to attend, and actually attends, to all things at the same moment, to the motions of a seed, or a leaf, or an atom; to the creepings of a worm, the flutterings of an insect, and the journeys of a mite; to the excursions of the human mind, and the efforts of an archangel; to the progress of a world, and the revolutions of a system.

2dly. How necessary are these attributes to the government of all things?

God is eminently qualified by these attributes for the preservation of all things.

The motions of a fly are capable of terminating the most important human life, or of changing all the future designs of a man, and altering the character, circumstances, and destiny of his descendants, throughout time and eternity. Such defects may, unless prevented by him, continually take place in every part of his vast kingdom. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary, that he should be present to every being, at every moment, to perceive and regulate every event; to farther every part of his infinite designs, and to prevent every obstruction and failure. An exact, unremitted attention, on his part, is necessary to the greatest and to the least alike; a knowledge intimate, entire, and perfect, of all their relations, changes, and circumstances.

Of this attention, this consummate knowledge, the presence of God is the real foundation. In consequence of his presence in all places, he sees that every thing is contained in its own proper sphere of being and action; and discerns every approach

towards exposure, and towards defect. Hence his great work is always guarded, advanced, and prospered. In this world, his presence, attention, and knowledge, are indispensable, to renew, refine, and strengthen, in virtue, the souls of his children; to guide them in the path of duty; to relieve their distresses; to supply their wants, and to brighten their hopes of a blessed immortality.

Equally indispensable is it, to advance the general cause of truth and righteousness; to befriend his church in all its interests; to prevent *the gates of hell from prevailing against it*; to confine rebellion within the destined bounds; and to inflict the proper judgments on the workers of iniquity. In a word, his presence is indispensable here, *to bring light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and good out of evil.*

In the world of punishment his presence is equally necessary to confine the prisoners of his wrath; to render to every impenitent sinner the reward due to his crimes; to teach the abominable nature, and the deplorable consequences, of sin; and to show his unchangeable hatred of iniquity.

In the various worlds, where virtue and happiness reside, he is necessarily present, to inspire, invigorate, and quicken the obedience of their inhabitants; to distribute the innumerable and diversified rewards, which he has annexed to obedience; and cause *to arise and shine* the endless varieties of beauty and loveliness, of which that happy spirit is capable.

In heaven, the brightest and best of those worlds, he is indispensably present, to perfect that glorious system of virtue and happiness, which he has ordained through the mediation of his Son, and promised to all the redeemed. There he has instituted a perfect scheme of dispensations, which is the

consummation and the crown of all his works. There every inhabitant receives, and loves, and keeps his own place, duties and enjoyments; and consecrates with all his heart, without weariness and without end, his exalted faculties and immortal life, to the sublime purposes of glorifying his Maker and advancing the universal good. To this end, God there lives in every being, in a manner wholly peculiar, and diffuses a peculiarly quickening influence through every object. Hence *the river which proceeds from his throne, is styled the Water of Life; and the trees which grow on its banks, bearing twelve manner of fruits, are named Trees of Life.* The body he animates with vigour, youth, and beauty, which cannot decay; the mind he informs with a divine and supernal quickening, which empowers it to advance without intermission, and with incomprehensible celerity, in knowledge, virtue, and enjoyment. In that world, God unfolds himself in infinite diversities of beauty, glory, and majesty; enables them *to see eye to eye, and to behold his face in righteousness.* In that world he exhibits, with clear and unalterable conviction, that the great work which he has made, the system of dispensations which he has chosen, is a perfect work; a system of perfect wisdom and goodness; in which no real good is wanting, and into which nothing which, upon the whole, is evil, is admitted. Particularly, he manifests the transcendent wonders of forgiving, redeeming, and sanctifying love; and the supreme desirableness of restoring, through the Redeemer, apostate sinners to the character and privileges of the children of God. Here, also, he unfolds in a perfect manner the inherent tendency of virtue to make intelligent minds wiser, better, and happier, for ever.

It is hardly necessary to remark, that unless God

were present in heaven, all these divine purposes must necessarily fail of being accomplished.

The presence of God is equally indispensable to supply the innumerable wants of his creatures.

In every other world, as well as in this, every creature is dependent on God *for life and breath, and all things*. Here, as we well know, *all creatures wait upon God, that they may receive their supplies in due season. That which he giveth them they gather: he openeth his hand and satisfieth the wants of every living thing. He hideth his face; they die, and return to their dust.* These wants are endless in number, kind, and degree; exist every moment in every creature; are natural and spiritual; and respect alike both time and eternity. When God gives, creatures receive: when he withholds, they are destitute. Where he is not, where he gives not, there good is never found. But, if these wants are to be supplied, they must be known; and to know them, he must be present. Hence he must exist in every place, and in every being.

His presence is indispensable, that he may know the moral characters of his intelligent creatures.

3dly. *From the omniscience and omnipresence of God, it is evident that all things must come to pass either by his choice or permission.*

As God is thus ever present in all places and to all things, it is impossible that he should not know whatever comes to pass, or is about to come to pass. Whatever he chooses should not exist, cannot. Whatever he chooses should exist, must exist of course.

The same things are equally true, of the time and place, modes and circumstances, events and attributes, in connexion with which beings exist, as of the beings themselves; for there is nothing, beside his choice,

which could originally give these, or any of them birth.

4thly. *It is evident from what has been said, that God attends to every individual being, and his concerns, as perfectly as if there were no other being.*

He is every where present; and is all eye, all ear, all consciousness. Of course he cannot but attend to every thing, and know every thing. This is essentially, and unchangeably, his character. He can no more fail of regarding an insect than an angel; an atom than a world. As we, when our ears are open, cannot but hear; when our eyes are open, cannot but see; when our minds are directed to any object, cannot but perceive; so God, who is all mind, all perception, cannot but perceive all things.

Besides, experience unanswerable proves the doctrine which I have asserted. None but God can form or preserve, direct or regulate, an atom, a leaf, a mite, or an insect, any more than an angel, a world, or the universe. We see his power, wisdom, presence, and agency, in these least things, as truly and as constantly as in the greatest; and so clearly discern it to be the agency of an infinite hand, as to be incapable; when we open our eyes, of mistaking it for any other. In perfect harmony with these observations, the Scriptures declare, that *God clothes the grass of the field; continues the life, and directs the death of sparrows; and numbers the hairs of our heads.*

5thly. *From the above considerations, how solemn; how affecting, does our own existence appear!*

We are, at all times, and in all places and circumstances, surrounded by God. In our walks, amusements, and business, at home and abroad, when we are asleep and when we are awake, God is with us as really, and as evidently, as we are with each other.

Every thought in our minds, every *word on our tongues*, every action of our hands, is perfectly *naked to his all-seeing eye*. Of what amazing importance is it, then, that these thoughts, words, and actions, *be acceptable in his sight*; be such as we should be willing to have him witness; such as he can approve, justify, and reward. Those certainly are the only wise, the only prudent human beings, who continually remember this great truth; and who at all times, in their amusements as well as in their serious business, say in their hearts, *Thou God seest me*. No consideration is so solemn, so affecting, so useful as this. None possesses the same influence to restrain the hands or the heart from sin: to produce, preserve, or quicken, obedience; or to awaken, unceasingly, the most profitable attention of the soul to its everlasting welfare, or its remembrance of that awful judgment, where all its thoughts, words, and actions will be displayed in *the light of God's countenance*, and become the reason, and the measure, of its final reward.

On the contrary, how imprudent, how sottish, how delirious, is the conduct of him, who habitually forgets the presence of God; of whom it is truly said *that God is not in all his thoughts*; and who, *settled upon his lees*, quietly persuades himself, that *the Lord will not do good, neither will the Lord do evil*. This man has either negligently or intentionally removed from his mind the chief source of virtuous conduct, the well-spring of hope, the great security against temptation, the prime preventive of sin. He is left unguarded, therefore, in circumstances infinitely dangerous, and voluntarily exposes himself to evils of infinite magnitude. Compared with this man, the prodigal, who causelessly squanders a throne and an empire, is a miser; and the soldier, who, when the

enemy surrounds the citadel, sleeps at his post, is a faithful watchman.

6thly. *Let every sinner remember, that God is present at the commission of all his crimes.*

When thoughts of rebellion, profaneness, and ingratitude arise in the soul; when thoughts of pride, envy, malice, deceit, injustice and cruelty deform; and when thoughts of intemperance, levity, and lewdness debase it, then God is in the polluted guilty mind, searching its secret chambers, and laying open to the full sunshine all the hiding places of iniquity.

7thly. *Let every child of God remember, also, that his Creator is equally present with all his conduct.*

The christian may be in his own view, he may be in fact, poor, ignorant, little and insignificant. When he reviews himself he may not unnaturally exclaim, *I am a worm and no man*: when he reviews his services, he may pronounce them too worthless to be remembered of God: when he reviews his sins, he may believe them so great as to cut him off from every reasonable hope of a share in the divine attention. But notwithstanding his insignificance, fears and doubts, he is not forgotten here, and will not be forgotten *in the day, when God makes up his jewels*. The tears which he has shed; the prayers which he has offered up; the *two mites* which he has consecrated to God; the *cup of cold water* which he has given to a fellow-disciple, were neither unnoticed nor unregarded; God was present when each act of humble and sincere obedience was performed, marked it with his eye, recorded it in his book, and will acknowledge it at the final day.

From this constant, kind, and merciful regard of his Maker, no situation, no circumstances, will preclude him, even for a moment. However lowly, however

solitary; however forgotten of mankind, his course through life may be: himself and his interests, his wants and his woes, are tenderly, as well as continually, regarded by his God.

In seasons of sorrow, of sickness, bereavement or desertion, he may use David's words, Psalm xlii. 11.

When those around him become hostile to his character, and to his religion, God leaves him not.

In seasons of temptation, God still is present, to supply all his wants; to renew his vigour; to support his yielding constancy; to awaken in him new vigilance; to quicken in him a contrite sense of his backsliding; to deliver him from the unequal contest; and to bless him with returning hope, peace and safety.

Is he come to a dying bed? Is eternity, with all its amazing scenes, beginning to be unveiled? Is his final trial ready to commence? Is his account even now to be given; his sentence to be pronounced; and his endless allotment to be fixed? Behold on the throne of judgment that glorious person, who has promised, *that he will never leave him, nor forsake him.* He is the Judge, by whom he is to be tried; the Rewarder, by whom his destiny is to be fixed for ever. This divine Redeemer will now remember him as one of those for whom he died, as one of those for whom he has made unceasing *intercession before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*

8thly. *What an affecting and amazing display will be made of the omniscience of God at the last judgment.*

On this solemn day, all mankind will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. That these may be the foundation of the righteous judgment of God, it is indispensable, that they should be known clearly and certainly: the sins, together with all their aggrava-

tions and palliations; the virtues, with all their diminutions and enhancements.

What manifestations of the human character will then be made. How different will be the appearance which pride, ambition, and avarice, sloth, lust, and intemperance, will wear in the sight of God, in the sight of the assembled universe, and in the sight of those who have yielded themselves up to these evil passions, from that which they have customarily worn in the present world. How low will the *haughty man be bowed down!* How will the splendour of power and conquest set in darkness! How will the golden mountains of opulence melt away, and leave the dreaming possessor *poor, and naked, and miserable, and in want of all things.* How will the sensualist awake out of his momentary vision of pleasure, and find it all changed to *vanity and vexation of spirit!* How little, in innumerable instances, will the worldly great then appear! How contemptible the renowned! how weak the powerful! how foolish *the wise men and disputers of this world!* On the contrary, with what confidence and joy will the poor, despised, humble christian *lift up his head,* and take his proper place in the great scale of being, because he *beholds his redemption arrived!* Here, first, his character will be openly acknowledged and his worth confessed. Last in the present world, he will be numbered among the *first* in the world to come. A feeble, faded, half-extinguished lamp on this side of the grave, he will *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father.*

How differently will our own characters appear from what we imagine them to be, during our present life? Here most of our sins are forgotten; there they are all recorded in the book of God's remembrance. Here vast

multitudes of them are concealed; there they will all be displayed in the open day. Here they are often mistaken by self-flattery for virtues; there they will be irresistibly seen in all their native deformity. How delightful will it then be to find, that they have been *blotted out* by the divine mercy *as a thick cloud*; that they have been expiated by the blood of the Redeemer! What a consolation, what transport, will it be to find, that, numerous and great as our iniquities have been, yet our whole character was such in the eye of the heart-searching God, as to entitle us, through the merits of Christ, to a reward of endless life and glory!

OMNIPOTENCE AND INDEPENDENCE OF GOD.

I am the Almighty God.—GENESIS xvii. 1.

IN my last discourse, I considered *the omnipresence and omniscience of God*. The next subject in the natural order of discussion is *his Almighty Power*.

In the text, this attribute is asserted directly by God himself to *Abraham*, when he renewed with him the covenant of grace, and instituted the sacrament of circumcision. In a manner equally explicit are similar declarations made throughout every part of the Scriptures.

The omnipotence of God is, also, easily demonstrated by reason; so easily, that no divine attribute has, perhaps, been so strongly realized, or generally acknowledged. It cannot but be a profitable employment to examine, briefly, several things, in which we find the most striking displays of this perfection. To such an examination I shall, therefore, proceed; and observe,

That the power of God is gloriously manifested in the work of creation.

Creation may be defined, the production of existence where nothing was before. The power displayed in the act of creating, not only exceeds all finite comprehension, but is plainly so great as to exclude every rational limitation. It is impossible to believe, that the power which originally gives existence, cannot do any thing, and every thing, which in its own nature is capable of being done; or, in other words, every thing, the doing of which involves not a contradiction. When we contemplate creative power, we neither attempt nor pretend to form any estimate of its extent; but are lost in wonder and amazement at the character of him who gives being wherever he pleases.

On the simple act of creating, however, it is not easy for such minds as ours to dwell. A single glance of the mind makes us possessed of all, which we know concerning this effort of omnipotence, as it is in itself. But there are several things, relative to the effects which it produces, capable of mightily enhancing our ideas concerning this astonishing exertion of power. Of this nature is, in the

1st place, *The vastness and multitude of the things which were created.*

The world which we inhabit, is itself a vast and amazing work. The great divisions of land and water; the continents and oceans into which it is distributed; nay, the mountains and plains, the lakes and rivers, with which it is magnificently adorned, are, severally, sufficiently wonderful and affecting to fill our minds, and to engross all the power of contemplation. Nor are our thoughts less deeply interested by the vast multitude of plants, trees, and animals with which every part of the globe is stored at every period of

time. All these, also, rise and fall in an uninterrupted succession. When one perishes another immediately succeeds. No blank is permitted, and no vacuity found; but creating energy, always operating, produces a continual renovation of that which is lost.

When we lift up our eyes to the heavens, we are still more amazed at the sight of many such worlds, composing the planetary system. The comets which surround our sun, greatly increase our amazement by their numbers, the velocity of their motions, and the inconceivable extent of their circuits. It is still more enhanced by the union of these numerous worlds in one vast system, connected by a common centre, and revolving round that centre with a harmony and splendour worthy of a God.

The peculiar nature and splendour of many of these works strongly impress on our minds the greatness of Creating Power.

To single out one of them; how glorious a work is the sun! Of what astonishing dimensions! Of what wonderful attraction! Possessed of what supreme, unchangeable, and apparently immortal glory! Of what perpetual, and incomprehensible influence on the world which we inhabit; not only causing it to move around its orbit with inconceivable rapidity, but producing, over its extensive surface, warmth and beauty, life and activity, comfort and joy, in all the millions of beings by which it is inhabited.

Magnificent, however, as this object is, one mind is a more wonderful, more important, more illustrious display of creating power, than the whole inanimate universe. Suns with all their greatness and glory are still without life, without consciousness, without enjoyment; incapable, in themselves, of action, know-

ledge, virtue, or voluntary usefulness. A mind, on the contrary, is possessed of all these exalted powers, and is capable of possessing all these sublime attributes. A mind can know, love, and glorify its Creator; can be instamped with his image, and adorned with his beauty and loveliness; and can appear desirable and delightful to his eye. It can *reflect, as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* It can love and bless its fellow-minds; be loved and blessed by them; and become an useful and honourable instrument of advancing endlessly the universal good of the intelligent kingdom. In all these glorious attainments it can advance with an unceasing progress throughout eternity. In this progress it can rise to the heights where angels now dwell; and, passing those heights, can ascend higher and higher, till, in the distant ages of endless being, it shall look down on the most exalted created excellence which now exists, as the mere dawnings of infantine intelligence. Worlds and suns were created for the use of minds; but minds were created for the use of God.

The same impressions are strongly made, when we regard God as the Author of life.

The communication of life is a creative act, entirely and illustriously superior to the mere communication of existence. In the wonderful power, manifested in this communication, the glory of God, in the character of the Creator, is pre-eminently displayed. Accordingly *the living God, and the living Father*; that is, the God who has life, originally and independently, in himself, and is the source of it to all living beings, are titles chosen to unfold espe-

cially the glory of the Divine nature. In the same manner, also, our Saviour challenges this wonderful attribute to himself, as a direct and unquestionable proof of his divinity. *As the Father, saith he, hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* In the same manner, it is elsewhere said, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*

The manner in which the Scriptures exhibit the work of creation as being performed, most forcibly impresses on our minds the greatness of Creating Power.

The greatness of power is discerned not only in the magnitude of the effects which it produces, but in the ease, also, with which they are produced. In this we are led rationally and indeed irresistibly, to discern, that the whole of the power possessed is not exerted; and that other and greater effects would, of course, spring from superior efforts, of which the same power is obviously capable. When God created the heavens and the earth, he said, *Let there be light: Let there be a firmament: Let the waters be gathered into one place; and Let the dry land appear.* All these and other similar commands were exactly, and instantaneously, obeyed. In a moment, light invested the world; the firmament arched above it; the waters rolled backward into their bed; the dry land heaved; and the mountains lifted their heads towards heaven. The world, with all its furniture and inhabitants, the heavens with all their magnificence, arose out of nothing, at a command. How superior to all finite comprehension must be the power of Him, *who spake, and this stupendous work was done!*

The omnipotence of God is divinely displayed in the government of all things.

The existence and attributes, which God has given to all beings, He only can continue. He only holds together the innumerable atoms, which compose the innumerable material forms found in the universe; the plants and trees, the hills and mountains, the rivers and oceans. His power is the only bond by which worlds are bound, or by which they are united in the planetary systems. This union, this continuance of their being, is both an effect and a proof of the same energy, from which they were all originally derived. The same energy upholds all their attributes, and conducts all their operations.

These beings are endless in their multitude, immensely distant in times and places, wonderful often in their greatness and importance, and to finite minds innumerable in their diversities. All, also, are parts of one vast and perfect whole: to the perfection of which, each, in its appointed place and time, is indispensably necessary. What a power must that be, which, at one and the same moment, works in every vegetable and animal system in this great world; which upholds, quickens, and invigorates every mind; which, at the same moment, also, acts in the same efficacious manner in every part of the solar system, and of all the other systems which compose the universe. What must be the power of Him, who sends abroad, every moment, immense oceans of light from the sun, and innumerable such oceans from the stars; who *holds* all worlds in the *hollow of his hand*, retains them exactly in their places, and rolls them through the fields of ether with unceasing, most rapid, and at the same time perfectly harmonious motions; and who, thus accomplishing every purpose for which they were made, prevents the least disturbance, error, or imperfection.

The omnipotence of God is strongly impressed on our minds by the consideration, that it is unaltered and undecaying.

These mighty exertions have been already made through many thousand years: still they are perfectly made. They are made without intermission, rest, or relaxation. From century to century the energy operates night and day, and operates now with the same force and effect as at the beginning. Every where it is seen, and is seen every where to be the same. It is therefore wholly unspent, and plainly incapable of being spent or diminished.

In this wonderful fact is exhibited unanswerable proof of that sublime declaration of the Prophet: *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, JEHOVAH, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?*

From this doctrine we learn, first, *that God is absolutely independent.*

He who contrived, who created, and who governs all things, can contrive, create, and do whatever involves not a contradiction. He must, therefore, have all good in his power and possession, and can plainly need and receive nothing. Every created thing he made, and gave it just such attributes as he pleased. Every thing continues in existence for just such a time, and in just such a state, as he chooses; and operates in that manner only which is prescribed, or permitted by him. Nothing, therefore, can do, or be, what is, on the whole, contrary to his choice. Of course, he cannot be disappointed of any purpose, unless we were to suppose him pleased to be disappointed; a self-contradiction too manifest to be admitted, even by a child. According to this scheme, he says of himself, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do*

all my pleasure. And again, *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

2dly. *By this perfection, God is eminently qualified for the government of all things.* God is able to prevent all disorder and decay, and to frustrate all opposition.

He is infinitely able also, *to furnish all beings, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, with that energy by which they operate to the unceasing promotion of the infinite good, which he has begun to accomplish.* All the powers and faculties, by which his creatures perform the respective parts allotted to them, are continued, as well as given, by his omnipotence, which in this manner is every where glorified; and is every where the rock, on which is founded the great building of the universe.

His views and his conduct, alike, must be impartial; public; founded on the real state of things; and directed towards all beings, according to their proper character and real desert. His creatures can plainly present no motive to Him to depart from that course of conduct, which in His view is wise and good. Here, then, in the character and circumstances of the Deity, an immoveable foundation is laid for universal, perfect and glorious *rectitude.*

From the omnipotence of God, also, is derived that *awful character*, regarded by sinful beings with supreme dread, and by virtuous ones with supreme reverence. Here the righteous find the strongest motives to resist temptation, and the wicked to return to their duty.

3dly. *How terrible an enemy to obstinate and impenitent sinners is an omnipotent God.*

I love them that love me, and will cause them that love me to inherit substance; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and reward them that hate me; is language completely descriptive of the designs and dispensations of JEHOVAH towards his rational creatures. This is the only exhibition of the divine government in the Scriptures; it is the only view which can be satisfactorily formed of that government by reason. No man can for a moment seriously believe that God can love and reward those who hate him; or hate and punish those who love him. Such conduct would be wholly inconsistent with the nature of an intelligent being; and cannot, therefore, be attributed to the Author of all intelligence.

4thly. *How useful a friend must such a God be to the righteous.*

That God is a faithful and steadfast friend to the righteous cannot be questioned, because they love and labour to please Him, and must therefore be loved of Him; and because they are the friends and followers of his Son. Accordingly, he has disclosed in his Word, designs of mercy and goodness to them, so great as almost to transcend belief, and to leave the mind rather lost in astonishment than filled with expectation.

In the omniscience of God, we are presented with ample ability to contrive; and in his omnipotence with ample ability to accomplish, every part of this amazing sum of good.

From the omnipotence of God every righteous man may then confidently expect a final deliverance from all his enemies, sorrows and sins; from death and the grave; from future pollution and eternal woe. He may be certainly assured, that the same glorious and everlasting Friend will communicate to him, and to his

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fellow-Christians, immortal life; will enlarge their minds with increasing knowledge; will improve them with overgrowing virtue, and will supply them with endlessly advancing happiness.

5thly. *How great and glorious does God appear, as invested with Almighty power?*

Great is the Lord, says the Psalmist, and greatly to be praised. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. Canst thou, says Zophar, by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. Who hath measured the waters, says Isaiah, in the hollow of his hand; and meted out heaven with the span; and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

In the daily providence of God we are also witnesses of the amazing effects of his omnipotence. In the rising and setting of the sun, and the revolutions of the heavens, we behold a hand, whose exertions disclaim all limit. We hear him, also, *thundering marvellously with his voice*; we see him *sending forth lightnings with rain*, making the earth to tremble and the mountains to fall, pouring out rivers of fire from the volcano, and whelming cities and countries in a general conflagration.

On the other hand, what pleasing and glorious proofs of the same power are exhibited in its softer

and gentler, its less awful, but not less solemn exertions through the circuit of the seasons: in the spring, particularly, when God appears *as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even of a morning without clouds; and as the clear shining of the sun after rain upon the tender herb of the field.* Then, with a hand eminently attractive and wonderful, he diffuses life, and warmth, and beauty, and glory, over the face of the world; and from the death of winter bids all things awake with a general and delightful resurrection. The successive seasons are replete with successive wonders, wrought by the same Almighty hand. *Day unto day, indeed, uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge,* concerning this great subject. He who does not mark these astonishing disclosures, made in heaven and in earth, in ten thousand and ten million forms, must be a brute; and he, who surveying them, does not regard God as *infinitely wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,* has indeed eyes, but he sees not; ears, but he cannot hear; and a heart, but he cannot understand. Every good man, on the contrary, must admire and adore Him, *who doeth all these things;* must rejoice with humble gratitude and divine joy, in all the stupendous displays of his goodness; must tremble at the *terrible things, which he doeth in righteousness, when his judgments are abroad in the earth;* and must, on every occasion, be ready to exclaim: *Who is like unto thee, O Lord! glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.*

BENEVOLENCE OF GOD PROVED FROM THE WORKS OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

For God is Love.—1 JOHN vi. 8.

HAVING considered the *existence and the natural attributes of God at some length*, I shall now proceed to the next subject of theological inquiry; viz. *his moral attributes*. In the order best suited to the method of discussion which I have preferred, that which first offers itself for examination, is *his benevolence*.

This perfection is ascribed to God in the text, in a singular manner. It is not asserted *that God is benevolent*, but *that He is benevolence*: or that *benevolence is the essence, the sum, of His being and character*. The force and beauty of this assertion will be felt by every one, who attends to it, without any remarks from me.

In canvassing this important subject,

I propose to inquire in what manner it is exhibited to us by reason.

The importance of the question, *Whether God is a benevolent Being*, is no less than infinite. Everything, therefore, which seriously affects it, must be of high moment to every intelligent creature. The decisions of reason on this subject undoubtedly affect the question in a serious manner, and are of course very interesting to us.

God is absolutely independent; that all things, which can be done, or enjoyed, are in his power and possession; and he can neither need nor receive anything. From these considerations it is evident,

That God can have no possible motive to be malevolent.

An omniscient Being cannot but see, that it is more glorious to-himself, and more beneficial to his creatures, to sustain, and to exhibit, a benevolent character, than its contrary: or, in other words, in every respect more desirable.

The goodness of God, displayed in the present world, is a strong argument that he is a benevolent Being.

St. Paul observes, that God left not himself without witness to the heathens, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. In this passage God himself declares, that his goodness to mankind, in the several particulars here recited, is a witness to them of his true character. What the Scriptures here declare, the reason of man has in every age approved. All nations have supposed God to be a good Being; and whenever they have employed themselves in accounting for the origin of evil, by attributing it to the agency of superior beings, they have, in no case, within my recollection, attributed it to the original, or supreme God. Him they have uniformly believed to be a good or benevolent Being.

God makes mankind the subjects of extensive enjoyment in the present world.

Our health, food, and raiment, are means of enjoyment to us daily throughout our lives. Our friends and connexions, also, continually and extensively, contribute to our happiness. The pleasantness of seasons; the beauty and grandeur of the earth and the heavens; the various kinds of agreeable sounds, ever fluctuating on our ears; the immensely various and delightful uses of language; the interchanges of thought and affection; the peace and safety afforded by the institution of government; the power and agreeableness of motion and activity; the benefit and com-

fort, afforded by the arts and sciences, particularly by those of writing, printing, and numbering, and the continual gratification found in employment, are all, in a sense, daily and hourly sources of good to man; all furnished, either directly or indirectly, by the hand of God. If we consider these things with any attention, we shall perceive, that some of them are unceasing; and that others of them are so frequently repeated, as almost to deserve the same appellation. We shall also perceive, that they are blessings of high importance to our well-being; and that notwithstanding this character, they are apt to be forgotten in the list which we form of our blessings, and to be numbered among those which we call *things of course*. It ought to be remembered, that in this manner we are prone to diminish both the number and the greatness of our blessings, and the goodness of God in bestowing them; and that we are thus apt to regard them with a very erroneous estimation. But if we consider the number and the importance of these and the like blessings; the frequent recurrence of some of them, and the uninterrupted continuance of others; we cannot fail, if influenced by a just and candid spirit, to unite with the Psalmist in his earnest wish, *that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*

God has furnished mankind with many alleviations, and many remedies, for the evils, which they suffer in the present world.

The original and main design of each particular thing appears plainly to be benevolent.

This is an argument of Dr. Paley on the subject, and is certainly a sound one. The eye is made to furnish us with the benefit of seeing; the ear, of hearing; and the palate, of tasting. The organs of

speech are manifestly intended for the purpose of articulation ; the hands and the feet for their well known important uses. The evils to which these several things are subject, are in the meantime incidental, and not parts of the main design. No anatomist, he observes, ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease. But the character and disposition of the Contriver is, undoubtedly, chiefly seen in the main design of the contrivance ; and this is justly observed to be universally benevolent. In the state and circumstances of infants, where this contrivance is complicated with few appendages, we see, usually, the most pure, unmingled enjoyment, although even here it is not a little alloyed by many mixtures, derived from the agency of man.

All the blessings experienced by mankind, are bestowed on sinful beings.

An impartial and contemplative mind, when observing the conduct and marking the character of the human race, cannot but be struck at the sight of extensive beneficence, communicated unceasingly, for so many ages, to beings of such a character. The patience and forbearance of God, particularly towards such a world as this, are an illustrious proof of his benevolence. Mankind rebel against his government ; accuse him of weakness, injustice, and cruelty ; murmur against his dispensations ; profane and blaspheme his name ; refuse to him the only regard which they can render him, namely, reverence, love, and obedience ; and pay this regard to men and beasts, reptiles and stocks. In the meantime they deceive, defraud, pollute, hate, oppress, and murder, each other ; and make it a great part of their whole employment to carry violence, death, and devastation, through the

world. All these have also been their employment, and their character, ever since the apostacy; a character perfectly understood and comprehended by God. Still he has patiently waited on them six thousand years; has forborne to execute the vengeance which this evil conduct has universally merited; has returned day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, to this polluted world; and has given its inhabitants, unceasingly, *rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.* Can our minds conceive of a character, at once wise and just, and at the same time fraught with higher benevolence?

The manner in which revelation exhibits the Divine benevolence, is the following.

God directly asserts his character to be benevolent.

The text is the strongest conceivable example of this assertion. *Thou art good, says David, and thou dost good; and thy tender mercies are over all thy works. There is none good but one, saith Christ, that is, God.*

He recites a great variety of specimens of his goodness to individuals and nations; and exhibits them as being, unquestionably, acts of benevolence only.

He explains the whole system of his dispensations, in those instances not recorded in the Scriptures, in the same manner,

He exhibits to us sin, as far more vile, and deserving of far more punishment; and virtue, or benevolence, as far more excellent and meritorious, than our reason would otherwise have enabled us to conceive.

He exhibits to us, that he is kind, not only to such beings as are virtuous, but to such also as are sinners;

and that this kindness in its extent and consequences is infinite.

In the law which he has given to mankind for the regulation of all their moral conduct, he has required no other obedience, except their love to himself and to each other.

God requires the whole regard which he claims to be rendered to him only as a benevolent God.

In the Scriptures we are required to love, worship, and serve, that is, to exhibit our love in different forms to a God of love, and to such a God only.

God has informed us in the Scriptures, that there is beyond the grave an immortal state of retribution; in which whatever seems irregular in the present state will be adjusted according to the most exact dictates of benevolence and equity.

The benevolence of God is strictly infinite.

*In the divine Mind every attribute is necessarily coextended with the greatness of that mind. The benevolence of God is as truly thus extensive, as his knowledge or his power. To his love of happiness existing, to his desire of happiness as a thing to be produced, no limit can be affixed. Intense and glowing beyond degree, although perfectly serene and complacent, it furnishes the most solid foundation for the truth of that remarkable declaration in the text; *God is love*; or Infinite Love is the Infinite God.*

The benevolence of God cannot but be ever active.

This consideration is infinitely glorious to God. The Divine disposition, here exhibited, is infinitely unlike the boasted benevolence of modern philosophy; which is wholly confined to the mere contemplation of happiness as a beautiful picture, or to the impassioned exhibition of good-will in sighs, and tears, and pathetic

expressions; useless to the subjects of it, and fruitless towards its objects; or is spent in mere unavailing wishes, in themselves wholly devoid of efficacy or worth. This divine disposition is the boundless energy of the infinite mind; the intense and immeasurable love of doing good, unceasingly and endlessly producing that happiness in which it delights. It creates, with an activity never wearied and never discouraged, means to this glorious end, without number, and beyond degree, fitted with a diversity incomprehensible to effectuate in the most perfect manner this eminently divine purpose. It is a tree which, planted in this distant world, reachest the highest heaven; adorned with branches endless in their multitude, covered with leaves and blossoms of supernal beauty, and loaded with fruits of life and happiness countless in their number, unceasing in their succession, and eternal in their progress; while all the innumerable millions of percipient beings approach, and eat, and live.

I cannot but add, how different a Saviour must he be, whose mind is informed with this boundless love, united with its concomitant perfections, from the Saviour presented to us by *Socinianism* and its kindred systems? *Christ*, as exhibited to us by these systems, is a created, and, therefore, an imperfect and mutable being. When *Stephen* was expiring, he committed his soul finally, with all its interests, into the hands of the LORD JESUS. All his faithful followers, at the close of their lives, adopt the same conduct. How desirable must it be, at so solemn a period, when our all is depending, to realize, that He, on whom we depend, is possessed of love great enough to comprehend even *us*, and to be incapable of weariness, alienation, or change; love, in a word, *the same yesterday, to-day,*

and for ever? How desirable must it be to find Him, in whom we are required to repose confidence, as the condition of inheriting eternal life, able, willing, and faithful to bestow on us all that is meant by this divine reward.

The perfect benevolence of God must, it is evident, delight in greater good, more than that which is less, and most in that which is supreme.

That the omniscience of God cannot but discern all the differences of good, and distinguish, with complete accuracy, and in all cases, the greater from the less, and that which is, on the whole, most desirable, from that which is not, will be admitted of course.

It is evident that God, who is thus benevolent, must love the same disposition in his creatures, and hate the opposite one unchangeably and for ever.

That God delights with infinite complacency in his own moral character, cannot be questioned. Benevolence in his intelligent creatures is a direct resemblance of this character; and his own image, instamped on created minds, cannot fail, therefore, to be an object of the same complacency, wherever it exists. He loves, also, his own purposes. Of course, he must love this disposition in his creatures, because all those, in whom it exists, love the same purposes, and voluntarily coincide with him in their endeavours to promote them.

On the contrary, that disposition in his creatures, which is opposite to his own, is in itself odious, in proportion as his is amiable; and voluntarily endeavours to oppose and to frustrate his purposes: that is, to diminish or destroy the boundless good which he has begun to accomplish. It is not here intended, that so vast a scheme of thought or action usually enters into the minds of sinful creatures; but that this is the real tendency of all their opposition to his law

and government. In this view the rebellion of sinners assumes a most odious and dreadful aspect, and is here seen to be a direct hostility against the benevolent character and designs of God, and against the well-being of his intelligent creation.

When, therefore, he shall come to *judge the world in righteousness*, and to render to them such rewards as are suited to their characters, it is plain that he will approve of those, and those only, who resemble him by being benevolent; and disapprove of those, who have cherished the contrary disposition. The former he will bless or make happy; the latter he will punish or make miserable. His approbation, at the final judgment, is no other than a testimony of the pleasure which he takes in the moral character of those who are approved; and his disapprobation, a similar testimony of the displeasure which he feels towards those who are condemned. Of this pleasure and displeasure his rewards and punishments are only proofs of a still higher kind; all founded on the moral character of the respective beings who are judged and rewarded. How odious, how undesirable, then, is that disposition in us, which God by the dictates of his infinite benevolence is in a sense compelled thus to hate and punish, because it is a voluntary opposition to his own perfect character, and a fixed enmity to the well-being of his creatures. How lovely and desirable, on the contrary, is that disposition, which he thus loves, and will thus reward, because it is a resemblance of his own beauty and excellence, a cheerful accordance with all his perfect designs, and an universal goodwill to his intelligent kingdom?

THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

Just and right is he.—DEUT. xxxii. 4.

1st. *The character and circumstances of God strongly lead us to believe in his perfect justice.*

God is perfectly independent; in the actual possession of all possible good; and completely secure against every possible loss and evil. Whatever he pleases to have exist or done, is certainly brought to pass, and in the precise manner which is pleasing to him. Hence no temptation or inducement to any injustice can exist with respect to him. Possessing all things, he can need nothing; contriving all things, he can fear nothing; effecting all things, which he chooses, with infinite ease, and no possible obstruction, he can never have occasion to adopt any other character or conduct but that of perfect justice. Injustice, in our experience, is always derived, and of course, from the dread of some disadvantage, or the desire of some advantage, which otherwise would not exist. But these things have no possible application to God. Reason sees not, therefore, how God can be under any inducement to injustice: but without such inducement, injustice cannot exist.

2dly. *In this state of trial many exhibitions of the divine justice are made in divine Providence.*

These are seen chiefly in the application of punishments and rewards to nations, considered in their national capacity. Nations, as such, exist only on this side of the grave. Hence it would seem, that in this peculiar character, as nations merely, they are with propriety rewarded or punished here. Thus nations after they have become corrupted to a certain degree, have constantly been destroyed for their national corruption.

God, indeed, has usually waited with wonderful patience, until their iniquities were full; and so evidently, that the ancient heathens *described and painted Justice as lame; that is, slow in arriving.* This conduct of the Creator is highly becoming his glorious character, as a most bountiful and merciful God towards beings still in a state of trial.

Yet the destruction or punishment has been sure, however late it may seem to us. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us ward; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

So evident has been the justice of God in such instances, that the heathen have strongly marked, and fully acknowledged it, generally throughout the whole heathen world: a clear proof, that it has struck the eye, and convinced the mind of common sense.

3dly. *The justice of God is conspicuous in this great fact; that mankind are never afflicted beyond their deserts.*

As men always receive more good and less evil than they have merited, it is plain that the justness of God on the one hand, and his absolute freedom from injustice on the other, are strongly evidenced in his dispensations to man in the present world.

4thly. *All the arguments which I have deduced from the character and circumstances of God, to prove that he is benevolent, are capable of an equally forcible application to the present subject: and contribute in the same manner to prove that he is just.*

As these have been so lately rehearsed, it will be unnecessary to mention them again at the present time.

5thly. *As God is benevolent, it is impossible that he should not be just.*

A state of trial involves the doctrine, that in it a

complete exhibition of justice cannot be made. All that is just in such a state cannot be seen to be just; especially by creatures, whose discernment and comprehension are like ours so limited and so disproportioned to the objects of investigation. Amid the multitude of these objects we are lost; by their variety we are perplexed; by their strangeness we are staggered; and by the relations, which they bear to each other, often apparently very dissimilar, often seemingly inconsistent, we are not unnaturally, nor unfrequently overwhelmed with difficulties, doubts, and distresses.

It is probable, that, except in the case of nations already mentioned, the dispensations of good and evil in this world are designed rather as restraints on the sinful conduct, and as encouragements to the virtue of mankind, than as full manifestations of the justice of God. In this view of them, they contain abundant proofs of wisdom, equity, and goodness, wholly suited to the state of man. It ought at the same time to be observed, that there is no argument which renders it probable, in any degree, that God is not just.

What the state of providences teaches, the Scriptures have completely disclosed. The justice of God is in the Scriptures exhibited to us in various methods.

1st. *God has informed us, in multitudes of direct declarations, that he is a God of consummate justice.*

All these declarations receive the whole weight of his whole character, as exhibited in the Scriptures; a weight, which no mind, that admits any part of this character, can resist.

2dly. *He has displayed in the history of the Scriptures many highly important and impressive instances of his justice, executed on mankind, both as nations and individuals.* These are very numerous and various, and

in them all, complete examples of this awful attribute are presented to our view.

3dly. *In his law, he has required all men to be just; assuring them that in this character they will be loved by him, and in the contrary character hated; promising them in this character glorious rewards, and threatening them, in the contrary character, most fearful punishments.*

Exactly of this nature is every command, every promise, and every threatening. These promises and threatenings have also, as was observed under the last head, (for these considerations illustrate each other), been often most exemplarily executed even in the present world. In these instances, we are not left to our own conjectures to interpret the dispensations of Providence, but are directly informed of their nature by God himself. In these instances, therefore, the dispensations become plain and intelligible, and all doubt is excluded.

4thly. *He has informed us, that there is beyond the grave, a future being: that in the future world he has appointed, at the end of this system, a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and will reward every man according to his works.*

5thly. *He has required us to acknowledge, reverence, love, worship, and obey him, as being just, perfectly and infinitely.*

In no other character does he require any love, homage, or service. That God, in requiring our homage to him, should require it to a character, *not his own*, is an absurdity, which can neither be admitted nor explained.

There is, indeed, no possible reason, which can be devised, why any and all of these things should be

done in the Scriptures, except that God is the just Being, which he is there represented to be. These things united, comprise all the proof which we can reasonably wish, of the justice of God, and cannot possibly be destroyed nor lessened. Accordingly no person, who believed the Scriptures to be the word of God, ever thought of doubting this great truth.

The great reason why the Scriptures are opposed and denied by wicked men is, they declare God to be infinitely just.

All the difficulty which men find in admitting the Scriptures to be the word of God, exists in this attribute. I do not remember that I ever heard, or read, of a single objection to the Scriptural God, except what was pointed against his justice. All men are usually willing to acknowledge his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, truth, and mercy; but few, beside good men, are ready to acknowledge his justice.

Whence this objection? Is not justice a glorious and eminently divine perfection? Can an unjust ruler be the object of approbation? Is not injustice the ground of perpetual complaint against earthly rulers? The secret lies wholly in this fact. We are willing, nay, desirous, that rulers should be just, when justice does not endanger ourselves, and our happiness; but no character is so dreaded, so hated, when justice is considered as inconsistent with our safety, peace, and hopes. But can this be right? A just ruler must punish wicked and unjust men. We choose that other wicked and unjust men should be punished, and hesitate not to say, that the common good indispensably requires it. But we make another law for ourselves; and would rather that the ruler should prove unjust, than either reform ourselves or be punished.

The justice of God holds out to *us*, and to all others,

certain and dreadful punishment as the proper reward of our sins. If God be just, we cannot without repentance, faith, and reformation of life, possibly escape. Between reformation and punishment there is no alternative. Reform we will not; be punished we cannot. Hence we believe that God is not just, because we wish this not to be his character. Of course we deny the Scriptures to be his word, to free ourselves from the terror of his justice. What wretched reasoning is this! How foolish! how fatal! How foolish, because it cannot possibly help or save us; since God will plainly pursue his own counsels, and accomplish his own purposes, whether we believe his justice or not. How foolish, because the whole purpose, for which such reasoning is adopted, is to enable us to continue peacefully in sin; a miserable character, and plainly exposed alway to a miserable end!

How fatal is such reasoning, because it will actually induce us to continue peacefully in sin, and prevent us from repentance and salvation!

On what is it grounded? On mere wishes. Who form and indulge them? Wicked men only. Can God be such as wicked men wish him to be? Can they suppose it? What kind of a ruler do wicked men wish to have rule? A vile one. What God do wicked men wish to have rule the universe? A vile one. Why? Because such a God only can be supposed to favour them. No good man, no angel, ever regretted that God was just. It is impossible that a virtuous being should not rejoice in the justice of God. The instinctive voice of all the virtuous universe is the voice of angels and of the spirits of just men made perfect in the heavens, crying, *Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his Judgments.*

Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!

THE TRUTH OF GOD.

And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.
PSALM cxvii. 2.

THE word *truth* denotes *veracity*, that is, a disposition always to declare truth, or to speak according to the real state of things: and *faithfulness*, that is, a disposition always to fulfil covenants, trusts and promises.

Veracity and faithfulness are attributes so nearly allied, as to be considered together with great advantage. The former is speaking, and, as the case may be, acting according to a state of things, seen or supposed to exist. The latter is declaring a future state of our own conduct and afterwards acting so, that that conduct shall be conformed to the declaration. No moral attributes are more perfectly of a kindred nature; nor can we conceive of him, who possesses one of them, as in any less degree possessed of the other.

In the regular succession of causes and effects, a state of things is formed and continued, on which we usually and safely rely, and so far as this is concerned, enter upon our various kinds of business with security from disappointment. This state of things may be justly considered as manifesting a disposition on the part of Him, by whom it is established, not to deceive his creatures; but to exhibit to them that conduct, on which they may place a safe reliance. Thus we confide in the regular succession of seasons;

the return of day and night ; the productiveness of the earth ; the efficacy of rain and sunshine ; and, generally, in the nature, qualities, and effects, of the various things, by which we are surrounded.

The truth of God (by which I intend both his veracity and faithfulness), is completely evident from his benevolence.

From this attribute, his truth is easily and unanswerably inferred. The happiness of intelligent beings is derived in a great measure from society ; nor is it possible that they should be equally happy in the solitary, as in the social state. But no society can exist without confidence, and no confidence without truth. Truth, therefore, is the basis on which society rests. Even thieves and robbers are obliged to speak truth to each other, in order to maintain their own dreadful society.

God, we are ever to remember, is the last appeal, resort, and hope of intelligent beings. By whomsoever else the soul is deceived or disappointed, it rests on him with perfect reliance ; because it considers *his truth as the great mountains, and his faithfulness as enduring for ever.* If no confidence could be placed in him, none could be placed elsewhere. Every thought, purpose, interest, consolation, and hope, would be afloat on the waves of a boundless and perpetually disturbed ocean, where rest and safety could never be found. All beings would distrust all ; and the universe, filled as it is with inhabitants, would become a solitude. Suspicion and jealousy would make all beings strangers and enemies to each other. Suspense would fill every mind, and hang over every enjoyment ; a state always wretched and deplorable, but here supremely and finally wretched, because the suspense would be endless, as well as unceasing.

The mind, stretching its view through eternity and immensity, would discern no pole-star, by which it might steer its course; no haven, whither it might betake itself for safety and repose. The truth of God hushes this restless and stormy ocean to peace. All his creatures know, or may know, that his purposes, declarations, and promises, are eternal and immutable; and that, therefore, he cannot deceive their confidence, nor disappoint their reasonable hope; that he is *the rock*, on which is founded the great building of the universe: the foundation and the building both eternal. However uncertain therefore, however fluctuating may be the state of the soul with respect to creatures, on him it rests with perfect reliance and final safety.

We learn from these considerations how necessary faith is to acceptance with God.

St. Paul declares, that *without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Faith, in its first and simple sense, is *assent to probable evidence.*

The faith of the Gospel is the assent of the heart, as well as of the understanding, to the declarations contained in the Scriptures; the belief of a man, who regards them with good-will, and who is pleased with such truths as they present to the mind. The foundation of faith in these declarations is a similar faith in the character, especially the moral character of God, exhibited in them, and evidenced by them, and by other extraneous proof. This character, discerned to be glorious, great, and lovely, by a mind possessed of a suitable disposition, is not in the strict sense demonstrated to us; but is evinced with high and unexceptionable probability. To the ready and cheerful admission of it, a good and honest heart is wholly prepared, and is the only thing necessary.

The truth or veracity of God is especially that part of his moral character, on which the faith or confidence, which is termed evangelical, ultimately rests. On this attribute all his declarations, promises, and covenants entirely depend for their truth and certainty; and therefore all the confidence which creatures can place in his character, designs, and conduct. It is indispensable, in order to our exercising any regard towards him at all, that we *believe, that he is*. This, however, we may do by the aid of arguments, furnished by the light of nature. To *believe that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, is indispensable to the exercise of any virtuous regard to him; but this we cannot do without confidence in the truth of his promises, and in the veracity of himself, as the promiser.

But for these promises, we could not know that he thought of bestowing such rewards; unless we believed him sincere in promising, we could not believe that he would bestow them. Between confidence in the truth of God, and distrust of his truth, there is no alternative. It is metaphysically as well as scripturally true, that *he who believeth not God, hath made him a liar*. Let me, then, ask every person, whether this distrust of God, this attribution to him of so odious and contemptible a character, this last insult (as mankind estimate insults), can, in his own view, possibly be pleasing to God? Yet this is a fair description of all unbelief; or, as it ought rather to be termed, disbelief or distrust. As this conduct can never be pleasing in his sight, so it is certain that he, who is the subject of it, can never be accepted of God; for nothing is more evident, than that God will never accept *him* with whom he is not pleased. As, then, there is no medium between this character and con-

fidence, or faith; it is, I think, past all doubt, that faith is indispensably necessary to acceptance with God.

At the same time, distrust is an entire separation of an intelligent being from his Maker. We cannot possibly coincide voluntarily with the designs of a being, unless we confide in his truth and benevolence, and of course in the rectitude of those designs. No virtuous obedience can be yielded to laws, of whose rectitude we are not satisfied; no complacency exercised towards a character in which we do not confide; no gratitude rendered for benefits conferred by a suspected benefactor; no reliance placed on promises made by a being of doubted veracity; and no praiseworthy efforts made to promote designs regarded as suspicious and unworthy. Without confidence, the soul is separated, of course, from its Creator. Distrust is in its own nature *enmity against him, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be*. How, then, can God be pleased with this character, or accept him in whom it exists?

How greatly ought this attribute of God to terrify deceitful men?

By deceitful men I intend not only liars of every description, perjured persons and slanderers, but fraudulent men of every class; hypocrites, cheats, seducers, flatterers, sophists, and all other men guilty of intentional deception. From the character of God, as exhibited by the light of nature only, these men have every thing to fear and nothing to hope.

What a source of comfort, joy, and quickening to good men is the truth of God.

When we think on the character even of the best men; when we call to mind how often they backslide and sin; how cold and stupid they are in their affections, and how dull and slothful in their obedience; with

what eagerness they cleave to the world, and with what ease they yield to temptation; how frequently they wound religion, and how greatly they dishonour God; we cannot but feel, that all the truth and faithfulness of God are indispensably necessary to prevent him from forsaking such beings as they are, and incline him to conduct them safely to his eternal kingdom. Here created faithfulness would not suffice; nor prove to them a solid ground of unshaken confidence, nor of lively and supporting hope. A higher perfection of character seems plainly necessary in the blessed God, to enable his patience to bear with all their faults, and his mercy to triumph over all their transgressions.

In his holy word, he has given them promises of infinite extent and value. In these promises are contained blessings temporal and spiritual; blessings present and eternal; blessings of the first magnitude, and of the most delightful nature; extending alike to the soul and the body, to all times and all places, to every want and every situation. Whatever can be useful to them, honourable to himself, or beneficial to the universe he freely proffers from his unlimited bounty. Finally, Himself, the sum of all good, the overflowing fountain, the inexhaustible ocean, whence every stream of happiness flows, he engages to them as their everlasting possession.

What can secure the boundless good contained in these promises to beings of such a character? The unchangeable truth of God. On this they repose with perfect safety, with a hope which can never make them *ashamed*, with a faith which cannot be broken down. *Under the shadow of this great rock in a weary land, they sit down with unspeakable delight,* and see all these promises advancing to a regular, con-

stant, and certain fulfilment; throughout the progress of never ending being.

Here, too, they find the most persuasive inducement to faithfulness in his service. They know, that *he cometh in clouds, and that his reward is with him.* The *bruised reed*, they are assured, *he will never break;* the *smoking flax* he will not quench, until he shall have brought forth judgment unto final victory. Hence they wait on the Lord unceasingly, and renew their strength. Hence they mount up with wings as eagles; they run in the Christian course, and are not weary; they walk, and faint not in the strait and narrow way, which leads to life.

In the mission, life, and death, of the Redeemer, in his resurrection, intercession and kingdom, the truth of God has set his seal on all his promises. The covenant of grace is here seen to be an unchangeable and everlasting covenant.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.—PSALM ciii. 8.

God is a God of mercy.

Mercy is the exercise of good-will towards those who have not merited it, and especially towards those who have merited anger and punishment. In its most important sense it denotes the communication of forgiveness and consequent blessings to such as have been guilty of crimes; particularly as exercised by God to those who have transgressed his most holy

law, provoked his anger, and forfeited every claim to his favour.

Reason naturally leads us to conclude, that God is merciful, because,

- 1st. *He is benevolent.*
- 2d. *Because he exercises patience and forbearance towards mankind.*
- 3d. *Because he has formed the human mind in such a manner, that it necessarily considers mercy as high excellence of character.*

But whether the mercy of God will extend to the final forgiveness of sin, and the communication of future happiness to man; or, if this were to be granted, upon what terms these blessings will be communicated, cannot be determined by reason, from any considerations within its power. What conduct is proper for the Infinite Mind to pursue towards such rebellious and guilty creatures as we are; and whether that conduct shall include any future favour to us; can never be decided by the human understanding. *Socrates* doubted whether it were possible for God to forgive sin; and, in my view, expressed the real ultimatum of reason on this subject. The sins of men are so causeless, so numerous, and so great, as to leave to a sober man, solemnly considering this subject, little else beside *a fearful looking for of judgment*. To relieve the distress and despondency to which we are thus exposed, the Bible comes to our aid, and holds out to our view the most unequivocal proofs, not only of the existence, but also of the extent, of this divine attribute. These are found,

- 1st. *In the numerous declarations, which assert this character of God.*
- 2d. *In the precepts of the Bible.*

3d. *In testimonies of the divine approbation given to such as have exercised this disposition; and of the divine disapprobation of such as have exhibited the contrary character.*

In the instances of *Rahab, Ruth, Boaz, David towards Saul and his house, Obadiah towards the prophets of God, Ebed-melech the Ethiopian (or Cushite), towards Jeremiah,* God was pleased to give direct and important testimonies of his favour and approbation in blessing those who had showed mercy to their fellow-men. On the other hand, he manifested in the most awful manner his displeasure against *Saul and his house, for his cruelty towards the Gibeonites against Ahab, Jezebel, Athaliah, Pashur, Herod, and many others, for their cruelty.* These are all direct proofs, that mercy is highly acceptable to God, and that *the implacable and unmerciful* are an abomination in his sight.

4th. *In requiring all our homage and obedience to himself as a merciful God.*

On this argument, although unanswerable in its import, I shall not insist, because it will be easily understood from the application already made of it, to the moral attributes of God, considered in former discourses.

5th. *In the mediation of Christ.*

CHRIST is, to us, the channel through which the divine mercy flows; and his mediation the procuring cause for which it is exercised towards mankind. All the preceding arguments, therefore, so far as they are furnished by the Scriptures, have a reference to him, and are supremely illustrated by his mediation.

I shall now briefly consider the mercy of God, as illustrated by the—*Incarnation—Life, and Death of the Redeemer.*

Christ was, what he cannot with decency be denied to be, *the beloved Son of God, in whom he is ever well pleased: the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: as much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they: the first born of every creature, and the glory of God in the heavens, as well as in the earth.*

When this great and wonderful person, great and wonderful beyond any possible estimation of such minds as ours, became *incarnate, he who was rich in the best of all possessions, the unqualified love of his Father, for our sakes became poor, that we through him might become rich.* He allied himself, in a manner intimate, eternal, and inseparable, to *flesh and blood*, to sinners and worms of the dust; and was not unwilling, nor *ashamed, to call them his brethren.* The strength and intenseness of the purpose for which he interfered, the greatness of his tenderness and compassion for mankind, are exhibited, with the utmost possible force, in the greatness of the condescension and humiliation which he thus voluntarily assumed. It ought here to be remembered, that he not only *became man*, but man in the humblest circumstances; was the son of a poor virgin, who was married to a poor man; he was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

In the *life* of the Son of God, the same character was exhibited in a great variety of forms. Throughout almost all his residence in the world,—that is, during his minority, and about twelve years afterward, this glorious Person was entirely subjected to the commands and government of his humble parents; and wrought patiently in the business of a carpenter, laboriously earning *his own bread* and theirs, by the

sweat of his brow. After he began his public ministry, he went about doing good, particularly to those who were sick, blind, deaf, dumb, halt, maimed, and possessed of devils. To the poor, to publicans, and to sinners, he also preached the Gospel; and with supreme patience, labour, and benignity, invited them to eternal life. *Samaritans*, hated by the *Jews* beyond example, he brought into the divine kingdom; and after warning, instructing, and exhorting *Jerusalem* to the last limits of hope, he wept with the deepest compassion over its unbelief and ruin.

In his death, the same glorious attribute was still more wonderfully manifested. His death, like his incarnation and life, was wholly voluntary; for he who drove the money-changers and their companions out of the temple; at whose presence the guards fell backward to the ground; whose voice, diseases, demons, and elements obeyed; and who re-summoned life to the breathless corpses of others; could undoubtedly have prolonged his own life, prevented every assault upon his person, and forbidden by his power the approach of danger and harm. Accordingly he informs us, that *he laid down his life for his sheep, and that no man took it from him, but that he laid it down of himself.*

At the same time, his death was the most humiliating which can be conceived or suffered. It was the death of a malefactor, and that of the most scandalous kind; a death, also, pronounced by the voice of God to be accursed; and preceded and attended by every circumstance of contempt, abuse, and shame, which a furious rabble, and their more malignant masters, could devise or inflict. Nor was it less distressing than humiliating. The clear foresight of

it, *in the garden of Gethsemane*, threw even him, with all his lion-like fortitude, into an *agony*, and forced sweat from his body in the form of *great drops of blood*. The sufferance of it on the cross extorted from him that bitter cry, '*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*' It is, however, to be remembered, that *he made his soul an offering for sin*, and that, in his soul, his peculiar distresses were chiefly suffered. This death, together with all the anguish which it involved, he perfectly foresaw, and predicted; and in the full sight of this anguish devoted himself to the suffering. In the midst of his agonies, also, he prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers; and with such efficacy, that within fifty days from his crucifixion, several thousands of them believed on his name, through the preaching of *St. Peter*, and are now in the heaven of heavens, celebrating with songs of transport the divine compassion of their Redeemer.

The incarnation, life, and death, of Christ, were undertaken and accomplished by him, with a complete knowledge, not only of the distresses which he was to undergo, but also of the character of those for whom they were to be undergone. He knew perfectly, that they were sinners, rebels, and apostates, condemned and ruined; utterly indisposed to believe his testimony, to accept his person, or to become interested in his mediation. He perfectly knew, that to make them even reconciled to him, or grateful for the immense benefits which he proffered, it would be necessary, after all he had done, to send the SPIRIT OF GRACE into the world, to give them a new heart and a better mind. Of course, he engaged in this wonderful employment from compassion only to the mi-

serable beings whom he came to redeem. As his own character and conduct are, therefore, the strongest possible exhibition of mercy; so God, who gave him up to all these sufferings for this end, and to whom he was plainly the dearest object in the universe, has in this transaction equally exhibited mercy as his own character.

From these summary considerations on this subject, I remark,

1st. *The glory of this divine attribute.*

No moral characteristic has ever been esteemed so lovely as this, or so honourable to an intelligent being. To love virtue and the virtuous is undoubtedly excellent and commendable, and includes all which we intend by justice, candour, or complacency, as exercised towards the character of others. In those who exercise this disposition it is both honourable and lovely, and to those who are thus loved it is an eminent ingredient of happiness.

To love those whose character has not been exhibited to us as either virtuous or sinful; to love, for example, absolute strangers, merely because they are rational beings, seems plainly to be a still higher exercise of a virtuous and amiable character. But to love those who are known to be enemies to *us* as well as vile and hateful in *themselves*, and to endeavour, with peculiar self-denial or with great efforts, to render them virtuous and happy, is a still nobler exercise of goodness than either of the former. This, as mankind in the calm exercise of reason have ever determined, and as the Scriptures have abundantly declared, is the crown, the splendour, the glory, of moral excellence.

In considering this subject, it is difficult to refrain from calling to mind the views of it which angels have formed and expressed. At the birth of the Re-

deemer, these exalted and benevolent beings left their happy residence, and directed their flight immediately to this sinful world. Here, for four thousand years, they had in the course of their ministry witnessed little else in the conduct of men beside rebellion against God, injustice to each other, and the debasement of themselves. Still, with a divine sympathy, they rejoiced in the prospect of seeing the guilty mind renewed, the impious and deformed life purified from its stains, and the salvation of the ruined children of Adam certainly accomplished. Eagerly they hastened to proclaim *the glad tidings of great joy, that a Saviour was born unto men in the city of David.* One soul animated them all; and with one voice, inspired by the same exalted benevolence, they sung, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good-will towards men.*

How different have been the feelings of mankind, for whom this mediation has been accomplished! Mankind, when Christ appeared in the world, rejected, persecuted, and slew him. From that day to the present they have discovered the same disposition, with evidence which cannot be questioned, in their unbelief and rejection of the Redeemer. *We*, as well as others, possess and prove this character. Were Christ now to be born, there is but too much reason to fear that we, like the Jews, should leave him in a stable, consign him to a manger, persecute him through life, and compel him to a violent death. The Jews began their warfare against him with disbelieving and rejecting him; and ended it with his crucifixion. Our disbelief and rejection of Christ are but too fearful indications, that, were our circumstances the same with theirs, we should unite with them in nailing him to the cross. In the single act of refusing to commemorate his

death, how many here present declare that even in their own view they are not his friends. Let every such person remember the declaration of Christ himself, that *he who is not for him is against him.*

Let us all remember also, that *Christ was infinitely rich in all good, before he became poor for our sakes.* Of course, he needed not us nor any thing which is ours. With infinite ease, and by the mere exercise of his will, he could have blotted us out of being, and then have raised up millions of virtuous, obedient, and glorious creatures; all of whom would, throughout eternity, have employed themselves in his service with unchanging faithfulness and joy. Whence then, and let reason answer the question, did he choose to become man: to suffer and to die for the lost race of Adam, for you and for me? The only answer he himself has long since given. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* God was so benevolent, so disposed to shew kindness, so full of long-suffering and tender mercy, that even this exertion was not too great for him to make.

2dly. *From these considerations we also learn the absolute necessity of divine revelation to mankind.*

On the question, *Whether God will forgive sin, and accept sinners?* evidently depends every hope of happiness beyond the grave. The question is, therefore, infinitely important to us; and needs, in the highest degree, to be satisfactorily answered. The doctrine, *that God is merciful,* is, I think, in the view of reason, sufficiently probable to command our faith. But that it is, or can be, proper for God to forgive sin in any case, reason is utterly unable to evince.

If reason can know that God will forgive the sins of men, it must derive this knowledge either,

1st. *From the nature of this attribute*; or

2dly. *From the fact, that he has, in some one instance at least, forgiven sin*; or

3dly. *From some declaration, that he will forgive it*; or

4thly. *From some argument founded on analogy.*

From the nature of divine mercy, we cannot conclude, that God can or will forgive the sins of mankind. Whatever is best, and on the whole most proper to be done, we are warranted to conclude he will certainly do; but what this is can never be determined by our minds.

Revelation apart, we know no instance in which he has forgiven, and possess no declaration that he will forgive, the sins of men.

Equally destitute are we of any analogy from which this conclusion can be rationally derived.

Independently of revelation, man is left to the sentence of mere justice and rigid laws. By these he is of course condemned. He is in fact a sinner; and must therefore be pronounced guilty in the day of trial. In this situation, reason finds and leaves him; and to this situation infidelity conducts him again. Without the mediation of Christ there is no escape from the sentence of the divine law; and revelation itself furnishes no other way in which mercy can be extended to sinning man.

According to the most comfortable scheme of infidelity, you must go to the judgment on the footing of your own righteousness, and be tried by your own obedience. If you have faithfully obeyed God, you will be acquitted; if not you must be condemned. If,

then, justification, acceptance, and future happiness; if deliverance from wrath, and escape from ruin, are necessary to you; the mediation of Christ, and the revelation which alone brings this mediation to your knowledge, or furnishes you with a hope of sharing in its blessings, are equally necessary.

3dly. *These considerations strongly enforce the guilt and danger of cruelty.*

A merciful God, who esteems this attribute as the glory and consummation of his own excellence, cannot fail to detest supremely the opposite character, wherever it is found. These are the two extremes of *the moral nature*: the former supremely lovely, the latter supremely hateful. Thus God has declared in the Scriptures, and thus mankind have also testified in all ages and nations. The awful parable of *the servant who owed ten thousand talents*, brings this subject home to the heart with the greatest force of which language is capable.

4thly. *These considerations furnish the strongest inducements to the exercise of mercy.*

In the great kingdom of providence, how many blessings are continually provided by the hand of God, for the evil and unthankful race of Adam! In spite of all their innumerable provocations; in spite of their impiety, idolatry, lewdness, falsehood, oppressions, wars, and devastations; notwithstanding this great world has been from the beginning a temple of idols, a house of pollution, and a field of blood; the sun continually arises; the rain descends; the fields blossom; the harvests ripen; the *seasons are fruitful*; and the *hearts of men are filled with food and gladness*. In the divine precepts, the same glorious disposition reigns; and mankind are required, with infinite obligation, to imitate and assume this exalted character; *to be merci-*

ful as their Father who is in heaven is merciful. In the promises of the Gospel, we are allured to this most amiable of all conduct by the reward of immortal life and glory; and hear God himself declaring, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

In the threatenings we are deterred from the contrary conduct by the fearful denunciations of eternal woe.

In the mediation of our Redeemer, we are presented with a perfect example of the nature and effects of this most lovely attribute, furnished by a life of which this attribute was the soul and spirit; a life pure and excellent beyond all precedent and all praise; and closed by a death full of shame and agony, voluntarily undergone from mere compassion to this perishing world, and beautified and adorned with this consummation of benevolence in its most divine form. In this we indeed *behold the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Here we are drawn with cords of love, that we may run after him.

With these motives, with this example before us, can we fail to *forgive men their trespasses against us, and be kind to the evil and unthankful?* Can we fail to *deal our bread to the hungry, and to bring the poor, that are cast out, into our houses?* When we see the *naked,* must we not be willing to *cover him:* must we not be unable to *hide ourselves from our own flesh?*

When this importunate and seductive world intrudes itself into the mind, and is insidiously busy in establishing its ascendancy over the heart; when wealth is rivetting its chains, to fasten us in bondage; when ambition invites us to *the high places* of power and distinction, and promises, that we shall *be as gods* in grandeur and glory; when pleasure informs us, that we have *much goods laid up for many years,* and bids us *take our ease, eat, drink, and be merry;* in a word,

when temptation, sense, and sin, crowd around us, and prepare us to absorb all our affections in selfish gratification; let us look to the table of Christ, and remember, and behold there what he has done for us. If we are not hardened, indeed; if we are not literally *dead in trespasses and sins*; we shall find it difficult, and I hope impossible, not to *go, and in some measure do likewise*. We shall, like him, *love our enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again*; we shall *bless them that curse us, and pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us*. Then shall we indeed be the children of our Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to arise on the evil as well as on the good. Then shall our light break forth as the morning, and our health spring forth speedily: our righteousness shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our re-reward.

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.—1 TIM. i. 17.

IN this passage of Scripture, glory and honour are ascribed to God, in the character of the *eternal, immortal, and invisible Ruler* of all things, and also in that of *God the only wise*, with a solemn Amen subjoined to the ascription. When *God* is called *the only wise*, it is not intended that there is no other wisdom beside that which is inherent in him; but that he is the source of all wisdom, and wise to such a degree as to render all other wisdom nothing in comparison with his. The *wisdom of God* is, in other words, in-

finite; and shall now be the subject of our consideration.

The word *wisdom* is applied indifferently to the *character* and to the *conduct* of an intelligent being. As applied to the latter, it denotes *the choice of good ends, and the selection and adoption of good means for the accomplishment of them*: as applied to the former, it denotes *that attribute which thus chooses, selects, and adopts*.

Wisdom is, therefore, a *compound attribute*; being made up of *the knowledge to discern, and the disposition to choose, the ends and means* which I have mentioned. The *wisdom of God* is formed, therefore, of *his omniscience and benevolence, united in planning and accomplishing all real good, in the progress of his immense and eternal kingdom*.

In illustrating this dignified subject, as it is exhibited in the various conduct of the Most High, *a few examples only* will be selected. The scheme of discourse which I propose to pursue, is,

1st. *To mention summarily such exemplifications of the divine wisdom as are commonly insisted on.*

Among the numerous subjects included under this head, *the heavens* by their magnificence undoubtedly strike the eye with the greatest force and splendour. In all ages, contemplative men have regarded the illustrious objects presented to us in this great field of observation, as eminently indicating the wisdom of God. *O give thanks, says the Psalmist, unto him, who alone doeth great wonders; who by wisdom made the heavens; who made great lights; the sun to rule by day, and the moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy endureth for ever. The Lord by wisdom, saith Solomon, hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. When he prepared*

the heavens, says Wisdom itself, speaking by the voice of the same writer, *I was there when he set the compass on the face of the deep.*

To us, whose views are enlarged and rectified by the modern astronomy, this subject is presented with an importance, which it could not have assumed in the mind of the ancients. To them, the size, proportions, distances, and uses, of the heavenly bodies were in a great measure unknown; and, where this was not the fact, were so partially known, as to leave the mind in many respects perplexed and lost. With our superior advantages, we discern the sun to be a vast, luminous world, astonishingly greater than all the others united, which compose the Solar System. All these we behold arranged around this glorious world as their common centre. To them the sun communicates motion, light, regularity, and harmony; and to their inhabitants, life, and the means of sustaining it; food, raiment, warmth, and activity; and their consequences, usefulness, and enjoyment. This amazing scene of wonders, we have the most satisfactory reason to believe, is in a sense endlessly repeated in the stellary systems, diffused throughout the boundless expansion, and repeated with a similar display of divine wisdom in their regularity, harmony, and beauty. Even an Atheist must be compelled to confess, that in this scene there is a perfect and glorious accomplishment of just such things, as, in the view of the human mind, appear to be suited to the most perfect operations of the most perfect wisdom.

In *the revolution of the seasons*, intimately connected with this subject, we behold an inferior, but still a splendid, display of the same magnificence; and an exhibition, not less affecting, of the same glorious attribute. From the present position of the earth are

derived, in the different parts of its annual circuit, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest.

Nearly allied to the revolution of the seasons is *that, by which the world enjoys the vicissitude of day and night.* The diurnal rotation of the earth, connected with the position of its axis, furnishes to all its parts an equal enjoyment of these two great affections of our globe; just as its annual revolution, connected with the same position, distributes the seasons alternately, in a regular succession, over all the regions from the equator to the poles. By the day, man is enabled to pursue successfully all the business of life; and by the night is, at the necessary and most proper intervals, furnished with seasons of refreshment and rest.

A philosopher has made it an argument of the wisdom of God, and in my view justly, *that the earth is clothed in green,* a colour eminently easy, refreshing, and delightful to the eye.

In the provision made for the wants of men and animals, there are innumerable, as well as wonderful proofs of the wisdom of God. The means by which an ample supply for all these wants is continually furnished, were they not the objects of our daily inspection, and thus rendered so familiar, as to be in a great measure unregarded, would awaken in our minds, not approbation merely, but amazement. *A single plant produces yearly a great number of seeds:* so many, as to furnish, in the ordinary course of providence, abundant assurance, that that kind of plant shall be continued throughout the successive ages of the world. As a further security, *these seeds are,* to a great extent at least, and in all probability universally, *incorruptible, when lodged below the depth, within which vegetation springs,* notwithstanding they are so easily dis-

soluble above that limit. By the latter circumstance, an easy, certain, and abundant vegetation is secured: by the former, seeds are treasured in the earth for long periods of time; whence by deep ploughing, digging, and other means, they are brought again within the region of vegetation, and spring in the same manner as fresh seeds. I have been satisfactorily informed of the vegetation of seeds, which had in this manner been certainly kept in the earth no less than two hundred years. *The diffusion of these seeds over the face of the earth* is accomplished by means, which are perhaps still more wonderful. Such seeds, as are heavy, and immoveable by more obvious means,—such, for instance, as the stones and seeds of fruits,—are commonly swallowed both by birds and beasts, and conveyed in their stomachs whithersoever they rove, and are ultimately planted, not only in the neighbouring fields and countries, but also in more distant regions. Others, of considerable weight, are lodged permanently in a large and light husk; which, together with the seed contained in it, is easily separated, after the seed has become ripe, and blown by the wind over extensive tracts. Others, still, are winged, and feathered, in such a manner, as to be easily wafted in the breeze, and spread through all the surrounding country. A young gentleman once, in my presence, examining a seed of a particular kind of grass, and finding a beautiful feather thus adhering to it, was so struck with this contrivance for the dispersion of such seeds over the earth, that he exclaimed, “The man must be a brute, who does not believe in the existence of God.”

The most necessary and useful things are also, with the most perfect wisdom, generally diffused: while those which are less interesting to human happiness, are more rare and solitary. Food, raiment, drink,

and fuel, are spread every where. Gold and gems, wines and spices, are found only in particular places. Wheat and grass, the most useful of all vegetables, grow in more soils and climates than any other. Water and air exist throughout the world; and are placed beyond the control of man. Could any one of our race command either of these elements, he would possess an absolute dominion over every inhabitant of those regions, to which this command extended. Animals, useful for food, or other important purposes of man, are multiplied easily to any extent. Fish, which furnish so considerable a part of human sustenance, multiply, in a sense, endlessly. Other animals, of inferior use, are by various causes limited to a very moderate increase. The clothing of animals changes with the change of climate. When removed to a cold latitude, it becomes thick, soft, and warm; when to a hot latitude, it becomes thin, coarse, and cool. Without these changes, the animals thus removed would be unable to live.

Both *the body and mind of man* are astonishing exhibitions of wisdom, and that in ten thousand different ways. As I have dwelt on this subject, for a purpose somewhat different, in a former Discourse; and as it is so often insisted on by others, I shall dismiss it with only two or three observations. The eye, says *Nicholson*, were all other arguments for the existence of God unknown, or lost, would remain an unanswerable proof of the wisdom of God. The self-restoring power of our bodies, when diseased, or wounded, is among the most extraordinary evidences of this attribute.

2d. *I shall now mention some other exhibitions of the wisdom of God, less frequently insisted on than those already specified.*

A wonderful exhibition of this nature is found, in

the first place, *in the accomplishment of many ends by few and simple means.*

The unceasing and universal variety, introduced into the works of Creation and Providence, is a strong exemplification of the wisdom of the Creator.

Every variety, in beings or events, is a new disclosure of the character, skill, and contrivance, of the Creator; and where we understand the end for which it exists, of his goodness also. For this, as one great reason, God undoubtedly has formed, and conducted, all things on the plan of universal variety. No two beings, or events, appear precisely alike. The leaves of trees, the blades of grass, and the particles of sand, as well as other more important and more complicated objects, exhibit, even to the naked eye, an endless diversity. This characteristic extends through the mineral, vegetable, animal, and rational kingdoms, and throughout the whole progress of events.

By this scheme of things, a field is opened to intelligent beings for learning and understanding this glorious part of divine character. By the love of variety and novelty, which he has implanted in the minds of rational creatures, he has with the same wisdom prompted them voluntarily to an unceasing, unwearied, and delightful study of his works; which are only displays of himself. Thus an effectual, and most wise, provision is made for our knowledge of the divine character; on which alone is ultimately founded our admiration, reverence, love, and obedience. A virtuous mind, surveying this wonderful subject, can scarcely fail to exclaim, *O Lord! how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all.*

Further, variety is the foundation of all discernment and discrimination in rational beings; and this, again, is the directory of all our various conduct. For

example, if the features of the human face, and the figure of the human person, were not perpetually various, we could not know one man from another, nor distinguish our parents, children, friends, neighbours, or enemies. The judge would not be able to discriminate between the criminal and his innocent neighbour, nor between the witness and a stranger. The parties would become twins. The right of the judge himself to sit upon the bench would be safely doubted and denied; and the child of a beggar or a foreigner might successfully dispute the title to a throne with the lawful heir. Were the varieties even of the *human voice* to cease, a great part of the important concerns of mankind would be immediately so perplexed and disturbed, as to be necessarily given up. Nor could any clue be found to guide us out of the labyrinth in which we should be lost. Nay, if the *hand writing of men* were to become uniform, there would be an end of all certainty in our correspondence; in our instruments of conveyance and obligation; in signatures of testimony, agency, and office; in public and private records; and, in a word, in every thing which was the work of the pen. From these few instances we learn, what indeed might be illustrated by thousands of others, the supreme wisdom with which this variety has been introduced into the creation of God.

The Divine Wisdom is eminently conspicuous, in spreading over the Creation certain kinds and degrees of resemblance and uniformity.

Were there no such resemblance, men would always be children; necessarily ignorant of the nature, qualities, and uses of almost every thing with which they were concerned.

The wisdom of God is strongly conspicuous in the communication of language to mankind.

Language is the medium by which we convey our thoughts to each other, and record them for personal and common use. If we could not convey our thoughts to each other; they must of course be confined to our bosoms, and each man would know nothing except what he gained from his own observation.

Every generation, if successive generations could exist, would begin exactly where their fathers began; and not an improvement would be made in the affairs of men. *Bacon and Newton, Locke and Berkeley, Addison and Johnson*, would then be distinguished, if distinguished at all, as we now mark a shrewder ape, or a more sagacious dog.

By the communication of language to mankind, God has enabled us to unfold to each other all our thoughts, emotions, and designs; to treasure up what we know for the benefit of our posterity; to diffuse the knowledge of common danger and suffering, of common safety and happiness; to spread the same sentiments and improvements over a country, a continent, or a world; to embark in a single, useful, and great design, all whose labours are necessary to the accomplishment; to publish systems of laws for the preservation of the common rights, and the effectuation of the common duties; to unite nations in the great purposes of internal and external defence; to control the vast concerns of empires; to preserve and enlarge the science of preceding ages; to spread the Gospel of salvation through the habitable world; to advance knowledge and virtue on this earth towards the Millennial standard; and to prepare endless multitudes of mankind for immortal happiness and glory. In the promotion of these mighty purposes, language is a principal and indispensable ingredient. How strong an impression does it bear of the wisdom of God!

By the contrivance of the same wisdom which communicated it, is language so formed, *as to be easily learned in very early childhood*: the period in which necessity most demands, that it should be learned. Nay, it is obviously acquired at this period with far less difficulty than at a more advanced age.

5th. *The wisdom of God is gloriously seen in constituting one great class of his creatures moral agents.*

By the term, *moral agent*, I wish it to be understood, that I intend *a real agent, a being whose thoughts, affections, and actions, are his own.* Of such agents the divine kingdom is eminently composed.

A single remark, intended as a general comment on the several discourses concerning this most sublime and wonderful of all subjects, the existence, and character of the Creator, shall conclude.

When we call to mind even those views of this subject, which have been here succinctly and imperfectly given; we cannot, I think, fail to exclaim, *how great and glorious a being is God!*

I have now finished the observations, which I proposed to make on the existence and perfections of God; and considered this vast subject, as it is presented to us both by reason and revelation. What an amazing character is here manifested to our view! **JEHOVAH**, the self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and independent; the only good, just, faithful, true, merciful, and wise; the Maker, the Preserver, the Benefactor, and the ruler of all things; *to whom be glory for ever and ever.* What a Character, what a Being, is this! How do all creatures in his presence, and in comparison with his greatness and perfection, shrink into nothing, and become justly counted to him as *less than nothing and vanity!* How truly, how suitably to his charac-

ter, does he say, *I am, and there is none else!* How wonderful a cause must He be, from whom all things are derived! How divine an Architect must He be, who with *his finger laid the foundations of the earth, and built his stories in the heavens!* How amazing a Ruler, who doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; whose hand none can stay; and to whom no being may say, *What doest thou?* How exalted a Benefactor, who giveth unto all, life, and breath, and all things! How perfect a God, who conducts his immense kingdom along the ages of eternity, with ever increasing glory, happiness, and perfection!

How infinitely different is the JEHOVAH of the Scriptures from the Gods of the heathen, of philosophy, and of infidelity.

Seraphim and cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, feel no employment, no honour, no happiness, so great, as to worship, serve, and glorify God for ever and ever. With wonder, awe, adoration, and transport they surround his throne, *veil their faces, cast their crowns at his feet, and cease not day nor night, crying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art, and who art to come.*

If men possessed the disposition of angels, their employments, their views, and their happiness would, in substance, be the same. No polytheists, no atheists, no infidels would ever have disgraced the human name. To this end, no enlargement of our understanding is necessary. A mere change of disposition would convert this world into one great temple of Jehovah; in which *one faith* would command and control, and *one worship* ascend, *as the odour of sweet incense, from the rising of the sun to the going down of*

the same. Holiness to the Lord would be written on the hearts, the lips, the employments, and the pleasures, of the great family of Adam. Every heart would glow with love and rapture, and every hill and valley become vocal with praise. In all his wonderful works, God would be sought and seen, acknowledged and glorified. Every being and event would be viewed only as a manifestation of God; and the universe contemplated as a vast picture, exhibiting, in forms and varieties innumerable, the wisdom and power, the benevolence and amiableness, the beauty and glory, of JEHOVAH.

THE DECREES OF GOD.

But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.—JOB xxiii. 13.

IN this passage of Scripture, *Job* asserts that *the mind or will of God is one and unchangeable, or incapable of being turned; and that all its dictates or desires are carried by him into execution.* As God does whatsoever he chooses; it is hardly necessary to observe, that he does nothing but what he chooses. As his mind is unchangeable, and but one; so, this being admitted, it is intuitively certain, that it has always been but one. As all things were originated, are preserved, directed, and controlled by God; so it is plain, that they all come to pass exactly according to his pleasure. This doctrine is therefore clearly contained in the text.

That all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or what is commonly called, The Decree of God.

The decrees, and the conduct, of God are sovereign, in the true and Scriptural sense; viz. *that he does according to his will, independently and irresistibly; and that he gives no account of any of his matters, any further than he pleases.* Still it is equally true, *that he wills nothing without the best reason;* whether the reason be disclosed to his creatures or not. Real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, furnish the reason of the Divine choice, whether it respects the existence or motions of an insect, or the conversion and salvation of a man. The kind, the degree, the manner, and many other things, are either wholly or partially unknown to us; but the good is always in view, and always the reason of the Divine determination.

It is observable that the Scriptures rarely speak of this subject under the name *decrees*. This word, and others derived from it, are used in the Old Testament *twelve times, with a reference to God.* In each of these instances, a *particular determination or sentence, concerning a particular thing,* is spoken of; and in no instance, that general determination, or system of determinations, usually denoted by this term in theological discussions. In the New Testament, the word, as referring to God, is not used at all. Whenever the subject of this doctrine is mentioned in the Scriptures, the words *counsel, purpose, choice, pleasure, will,* or some other equivalent words, are employed to express it. These words are in my view more adapted, in the exact metaphysical sense, to the subject than the word *decrees,* and naturally lead the mind to more just conceptions of its nature. In accordance with this fact, I shall express my own views of it in this manner. *What is commonly intended by the decrees of God is, that choice or plea-*

sure of the Divine Mind, eternally and unchangeably inherent in it, by which all things are brought into being.

God cannot but have chosen the existence of all those things, whose existence was on the whole desirable, and of no others.

The benevolence of the Divine character furnishes complete evidence of the truth of this position. The benevolence of God is boundless and perfect. It is the nature of benevolence to desire and delight in the existence of good; of perfect benevolence, to desire the existence of perfect good; and of boundless benevolence, to desire the existence of infinite good; or, in other words, of all which, upon the whole, is good. If, therefore, the existence of any thing is desirable, God cannot but have chosen it, because its existence was necessary to this perfect good; which is the supreme object and delight of his benevolence. The existence of any being or event, is desirable, upon the whole, only because it is necessary to the perfect good, which I have mentioned, either by contributing to the existence or by being itself a part of that good. It is, therefore, completely evident, that God cannot but have chosen the existence of every thing, whose existence is upon the whole desirable.

The Scriptures directly assert this doctrine, Isa. xlv. 10.—Isa. xliii. 13.—Daniel iv. 35.—Rev. iv. 11.—Acts xv. 18.—Psalm. civ. 31.

It is objected, that this doctrine discourages all the efforts of mankind towards reformation.

That this doctrine has often been used to discourage such efforts, I readily acknowledge. This is not unfrequently the tenor of books, and of conversation; nor is it an uncommon thing for persons to make it

the source of discouragement to themselves, and to entertain gloomy and distressing apprehensions concerning their own final condition, when referred in their minds to the decrees of God. Still I cannot see that this conduct is wise, rational, or defensible; nor that the doctrine includes in itself any discouragement, which will not, with as good reason, flow from that which is opposed to it. It cannot result from the consideration *that the pleasure of God controuls this subject, rather than our own pleasure.* On the one hand, the pleasure of God is more wisely and benevolently formed than our own; more disposed to promote our salvation; and more able to contrive the best means by which it may be accomplished. This we never could have done ourselves; nor, if we were able, should we be willing: as is clearly proved by the fact, that, after the wonderful and difficult things, which have been done to provide salvation for us, and while it is proffered to us freely on the easiest of all terms, we are not willing to accept it. How much less willing should we have been to go through the labour and sufferings, could we have gone through them, which were necessary to procure it for ourselves.

On the other hand, if we please to be saved, we shall *now* be saved. This is one great part of the Divine pleasure. There is nothing which prevents us from being saved, but our own inclination; and this would as effectually prevent us in any supposable circumstances. Nor could we in any circumstances possess a greater freedom of choice, or action, with respect to this or any other subject, than we now possess. Nor is there, so far as I know, any influence from God, which at all hinders us from choosing salvation with all that freedom of action, which moral

beings can possess. It will be observed, I speak not here of persons, for their incorrigible obstinacy, punished with judicial blindness and hardness of heart; though it is to be questioned, *whether, even in this case, God does any thing more than leave them to themselves.* The language of God to every sinner is, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner; but would rather, that he would return and live.* His invitations to sinners are, *Ho! every one that thirsteth; come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price: and, Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.* This language is perfectly sincere, and exactly descriptive of the disposition of God.

This discouragement cannot arise from the certainty of the event, as established by this doctrine. The event is equally certain if the doctrine is given up. It is equally certain in fact, with what Mr. Lock calls certainty of truth, in distinction from certainty of knowledge, concerning any man, that he either will, or will not, be saved, whether it be foreknown or not. One of these assertions, either that he will, or that he will not, be saved, is now certainly true. *Which of them is true, I grant does not appear; and will not, until time shall disclose it.* Still, one of the events will take place, whether decreed, or foreknown, or not. God will then judge and punish the wicked; and will punish them for exactly the same reasons, on either supposition; *viz.* for their impenitence, unbelief, and disobedience. A person may, therefore, with exactly the same propriety, whether he admit the decrees of God or not; or whether God has or has not formed any decrees, say, *If I shall be saved, I shall be saved, whether I try to obtain salvation or*

not: and, however earnestly I may try, if I am to perish, I shall perish. The certainty, in either case, is the same, and equally absolute. Even the foreknowledge of God will not alter this fact at all; for though it affects him, it affects not the certainty of the event. All that can be truly said is, that an event, which would otherwise take place, is now foreseen by him. To us in both cases, also, it is equally unknown. The causes, which will bring it to pass, will in both cases be exactly the same. The language in both cases, therefore, may be adopted with exactly the same propriety. But the truth is, the language cannot be proper in either case. In my apprehension, it is never true, that the attempts of the man concerned, towards the attainment of salvation, make no difference as to the event. On the contrary it is clear, that of those who are saved, few, very few indeed, can be found, who have not made such attempts; nor is there any satisfactory reason to believe, that those, who make them with persevering earnestness and zeal, ultimately fail. I know no reason why the same language should not be used, with the same propriety and force, concerning our secular, as concerning our spiritual, business. But the farmer, who should loiter at home, and say, "If I am to have a crop the present year, I shall have one; and if I am not to have a crop, I shall not have one, whether I plough, and sow, and reap, or lie down in my bed:" the student, who should spend his time in dress, sports, and gaming, and say, "If I am to be a scholar, or to get my lesson, I shall accomplish it; and, if I am not, it will never be accomplished, whether I study diligently, or lose my time in idleness:" would be pronounced, and justly, a fool, or a madman. But the decree of God extends to each of these subjects as

absolutely as to our salvation. Men are as really chosen to be farmers, and scholars, as Christians: and learning and harvest are as truly appointed as holiness; although, from the comparative unimportance of the former, and the amazing moment of the latter, we are apt to apply the doctrine to one of the cases, and not to the other.

The kingdom of God, as established by his pleasure, is a kingdom of means, regularly connected with their ends. I do not perceive that this is less true when applied to spiritual than to natural things. The real discouragement, which men generally labour under with respect to their spiritual concerns, is their indisposition to make any efforts for the attainment of salvation. In truth, this indisposition itself suggests the discouragement, which I have obviated, and then admits it. To a dispassionate, unbiassed mind, it would never gain admission. By sober reason it was never devised, and can never be supported.

Were God really unwilling, that men should strive; had he discountenanced efforts; had he established no means of grace; or had those means, when anxiously and perseveringly used, failed of success; there would, indeed, be ample room for well founded discouragement. But when we find, as in my view we do in fact find, all these things reversed in the good pleasure and providence of God, we have every inducement to hope, and to labour: much more, it would seem, than from any supposable situation, in which all things were left to fluctuation and casualty. Stupid sinners have, indeed, according to this and every other scheme, the most fearful reason for discouragement and terror. But such as are awakened, anxious, and engaged to seek eternal life, have solid and abundant reason for hope.

Mankind seem, in many instances, to suppose, that the decrees of God produce the event without means; according to the *Mohammedan* doctrine of predestination. Whereas, if they believed that the pleasure of God formed the system, and selected the means and agents by which all events are accomplished; if they believed those agents to be endued with all the powers of the freest possible agency, and to be selected, and formed, so that they might act with perfect freedom; if they believed that God always furnishes them with the necessary means of obedience, and with motives to obedience, more and greater than any which they can find to disobey; if they believed that God, by a direct agency of his own, does not constrain them to any act whatever but leaves them in all instances to act, with perfect freedom, just as they please; I think they would also believe, that there is no more difficulty attending the fact, that he has chosen, and formed, such agents, as he knew would unitedly do all his pleasure, than would attend his choice and formation of such agents, as would act in any other manner whatever.

Whether the observations which I have made on the general doctrine of this discourse, will be viewed by others as possessing the importance which I have attached to them, I cannot determine. To me they have appeared to possess real weight. If they should contribute in any measure to remove difficulties, to settle doubtful opinions, to establish truth, and to communicate satisfactory views concerning a subject so often attended with perplexity and alarm, I shall esteem my labours amply rewarded.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps.—JER. x. 23.

IN this passage of Scripture, the prophet, after uttering a variety of sublime declarations concerning the perfections and providence of God, and the follies and sins of men, exhibits the progress of life as a way. In this way all men are considered as travelling. We commence the journey at our birth; pass on through the several stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and finish it when we enter eternity. The accommodations, and the fare, are greatly varied among the various travellers. Some find their entertainment plentiful, and agreeable; and some even luxurious and splendid. Others are slenderly provided with food, raiment, and lodging; are almost mere sufferers; and, literally, *have not where to lay their heads.*

In the meantime, sorrow and disease, dangers and accidents, like a band of marauders, lie in wait for the travellers, and harass and destroy a great proportion of their number. Of the vast multitude who continually walk in the path of life, almost all disappear long before they reach the goal at which it terminates. A very few arrive at the end. Of these, every one, dragging heavily his weary feet over the last division of the road, teaches us, that this part of his progress is only *labour and sorrow.*

A remarkable fact, universally attendant on our journey, is recited in the text. *O Lord,* says the deeply humbled prophet, *I know that the way of man*

is not in himself; it is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps. The enterprise is not contrived by ourselves. We are placed in it, and necessitated to accomplish it, by a superior, and irresistible hand. It cannot but seem strange, that in such a journey we should originally be prevented from the ability to direct ourselves; and that, while we are compelled to the undertaking, we should be furnished for it in a manner so imperfect. Yet such is unquestionably the fact. Nor is the explanation so difficult, or so unsatisfactory, as we are prone to believe. God originally intended, that all his creatures should be dependent on him for aid, guidance, and protection. Nor can it be rationally supposed, that such a dependence on his perfections and providence is either unreasonable or undesirable. *The sovereignty of God*, which is so clearly and strongly visible in this interesting subject, has ever been questioned, and very often denied, by mankind. To establish this doctrine in the minds of my audience is the peculiar design of the present discourse.

It will not be questioned, that this doctrine is deeply interesting to man. On this life is suspended that which is to come. Consequences, eternal and incomprehensible, will flow from those doctrines which we adopt in the present world. All our conduct will then be examined, and will either be approved or condemned. If we have chosen the strait and narrow way, prescribed to us, the termination will be happy. If we have preferred *the broad and crooked road*, it will be deplorable.

Few of this audience will probably deny the truth of a direct Scriptural declaration. With as little reason can it be denied, that most of them apparently live in the very manner in which they would

live, if the doctrine were false: or that they rely, chiefly at least, on their own sagacity, contrivance, and efforts, for success in this life, and that which is to come. As little can it be questioned, that such self-confidence is a guide, eminently dangerous and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. The folly of *others* in trusting to themselves we discern irresistibly. The same folly *they* perceive with equal evidence in *us*. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling, and cheerfully acknowledging, our dependence on GOD, and in committing ourselves with humble reliance to his care and direction.

With these observations, I will now proceed to illustrate the truth of the doctrine. The mode which I shall pursue, will probably be thought singular. I hope it will be useful. Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing this and several other doctrines of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large than the authors of them appear to believe. Facts, wherever they can be fairly adduced for this end, are attended with a superior power of conviction, and commonly leave little doubt behind them. On these, therefore, I shall at the present time rely for the accomplishment of my design. In the

1st place. *The doctrine of the text is evident from the great fact; that the birth and education of all men depend not on themselves.*

The succeeding events of life are derived, in a great measure at least, from our birth. By this event, it is in a prime degree determined whether men shall be princes or peasants, opulent or poor, learned or ignorant, honorable or despised; whether they shall be

civilized or savage, free men or slaves, Christians or Heathens, *Mohammedans* or *Jews*.

A child is born of *Indian* parents in the western wilderness. By his birth he is, of course, a savage. His friends, his mode of life, his habits, his knowledge, his opinions, and his conduct, all grow out of this single event. His first thoughts, his first instructions, and all the first objects with which he is conversant, the persons whom he loves, the life to which he addicts himself, and the character which he assumes, are all savage. He is an *Indian* from the cradle: he is an *Indian* to the grave. To say, that he could not be otherwise, we are not warranted; but, that he is not, is certain.

Another child is born of a *Bedouin Arab*. From this moment he begins to be an *Arabian*. *His hand is against every man; and every man's hand is against him*. Before he can walk, or speak, he is carried through pathless wastes in search of food, and roams in the arms of his mother, and on the back of a camel, from spring to spring, and from pasture to pasture. Even then he begins his conflict with hunger and thirst; is scorched by a vertical sun; shrivelled by the burning sand beneath, and poisoned by the breath of the *Simoon*. Hardened thus through his infancy and childhood, both in body and mind, he becomes, under the exhortations and example of his father, a robber from his youth; attacks every stranger whom he is able to overcome; and plunders every valuable thing on which he can lay his hand.

A third receives his birth in the palace of a British nobleman, and is welcomed to the world as the heir apparent of an ancient, honourable, and splendid family. As soon as he opens his eyes on the light, he is surrounded by all the enjoyments which opu-

lence can furnish, ingenuity contrive, or fondness bestow. He is dandled on the knee of indulgence; encircled by attendants, who watch and prevent alike his necessities and wishes; cradled on down, and charmed to sleep by the voice of tenderness and care. From the dangers and evils of life, he is guarded with anxious solicitude. To its pleasures, he is conducted by the ever-ready hand of maternal affection. His person is shaped and improved by a succession of masters; his mind is opened, invigorated, and refined, by the assiduous superintendence of learning and wisdom. While a child, he is served by a host of menials, and flattered by successive trains of visitors. When a youth, he is regarded by a band of tenants with reverence and awe. His equals in age bow to his rank, and multitudes of superior years, acknowledge his distinction by continual testimonies of marked respect. When a man, he engages the regard of his sovereign; commands the esteem of the senate; and earns the love and applause of his country.

A fourth child, in the same kingdom, is begotten by a beggar, and born under a hedge. From his birth he is trained to suffering and hardihood. He is nursed, if he can be said to be nursed at all, on a coarse, scanty, and precarious pittance; holds life only as a tenant at will; combats from the first dawnings of intellect with insolence, cold, and nakedness; is originally taught to beg and to steal; is driven from the doors of men by the porter or the house-dog, and is regarded as an alien from the family of *Adam*. Like his kindred worms, he creeps through life in the dust; dies under the hedge where he was born; and is then, perhaps, cast into a ditch, and covered with earth by some stranger, who remembers, that, although a beggar, he still was a man.

A child enters the world in *China*, and unites, as a thing of course, with his sottish countrymen in the stupid worship of the idol *Fo*. Another prostrates himself before the *Lama*, in consequence of having received his being in *Thibet*, and of seeing the *Lama* worshipped by all around him.

A third, who begins his existence in *Turkey*, is carried early to the mosque; taught to lisp with profound reverence the name of *Mohammed*; habituated to repeat the prayers and sentences of the *Koran*, as the means of eternal life; and induced, in a manner irresistibly, to complete his title to Paradise by a pilgrimage to *Mecca*.

The *Hindoo* infant grows into a religious veneration for the cow; and perhaps never doubts, that, if he adds to this a solemn devotion to *Juggernaut*, the *Gooroos*, and the *Dewtahs*, and performs carefully his ablutions in the *Ganges*, he shall wash away all his sins, and obtain, by the favour of *Brahma*, a seat among the blessed.

In our own favoured country, one child is born of parents devoted solely to this world. From his earliest moments of understanding, he hears and sees nothing commended, but hunting, horse-racing, visiting, dancing, dressing, riding, parties, gaming, acquiring money with eagerness and skill, and spending it in gaiety, pleasure, and luxury. These things he is taught by conversation, and example constitute all the good of man. His taste is formed, his habits are rivetted, and the whole character of his soul is turned to them, before he is fairly sensible that there is any other good. The question, whether virtue and piety are either duties or blessings, he, probably, never asks. In the dawn of life, he sees them neglected and despised by those whom he most reverences, and learns

only to neglect and despise them also. Of JEHOVAH he thinks as little, and for the same reason as a *Chinese* or a *Hindoo*. They pay their devotions to *Fo*, and to *Juggernaut*: he, his to money and pleasure. Thus he lives and dies a mere animal; a stranger to intelligence and morality, to his duty and his GOD.

Another child comes into existence in the mansion of knowledge and virtue. From his infancy his mind is fashioned to wisdom and piety. In his infancy he is taught and allured to remember his Creator; and to unite, first in form, and then in affection, in the household devotions of the morning and evening. GOD he knows almost as soon as he can know any thing. The presence of that glorious being he is taught to realize almost from the cradle; and from the dawn of intelligence, to understand the perfections, and government, of his creator. His own accountability, as soon as he can comprehend it, he begins to feel habitually and alway. The way of life through the Redeemer is early and regularly explained to him by the voice of parental love, and enforced, and endeared, in the house of GOD. As soon as possible he is enabled to read, and persuaded to *search, the Scriptures*. Of the approach, the danger, and the mischiefs of temptations, he is tenderly warned. At the commencement of sin, he is kindly checked in his dangerous career. To GOD he was solemnly given in baptism. To GOD he was daily commended in fervent prayer. Under this happy cultivation he grows up, *like an olive tree in the courts of the Lord*; and, green, beautiful, and flourishing, he blossoms, bears fruit, and is prepared to be transplanted by the Divine hand to a kinder soil in the regions above.

How many and how great are the differences in these several children. How plainly do they all, in

ordinary circumstances, arise out of their birth. From their birth is derived, of course, the education which I have ascribed to them; and from this education spring, in a great measure, both their character, and their destiny. The place, the persons, the circumstances, are here evidently the great things, which, in the ordinary course of Providence, appear chiefly to determine what the respective men shall be; and what shall be those allotments, which regularly follow their respective characters. As then, they are not at all concerned in contriving or accomplishing either their birth, or their education, it is certain, that in these most important particulars, the way of man is not in himself. GOD only can determine what child shall spring from parents, wise or foolish, virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, honorable or infamous, civilized or savage, Christian or Heathen.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and carefully remembered, that *in the moral conduct of all these individuals no physical necessity operates*: every one of them is absolutely a free agent, as free as any created agent can be: whatever he does is the result of choice absolutely unconstrained.

Let me add, that not one of them is placed in a situation in which, if he learns and performs his duty to the utmost of his power, he will fail of being finally accepted.

2dly. *The doctrine is strikingly evident from this great fact also, that the course of life which men usually pursue, is very different from that which they have intended.*

Human life is ordinarily little else than a collection of disappointments. Rarely is the life of man such as he designs it shall be. Often do we fail of pursuing at all the business originally in our view. The inten-

tional farmer becomes a mechanic, a seaman, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, or a divine. The very place of settlement and of residence through life, is often different and distant from that which was originally contemplated; still more different is the success which follows our efforts.

All men intend to be rich and honourable, to enjoy ease, and to pursue pleasure; but how small is the number of those who compass these objects. In this country, the great body of mankind are indeed possessed of competence, a safer and happier lot than that to which they aspire; yet few, very few are rich. Here also the great body of mankind possess a character generally reputable; but very limited is the number of those who arrive at the honour which they so ardently desire, and of which they feel assured. Almost all stop at the moderate level, where human efforts appear to have their boundary established in the determinations of GOD. Nay, far below this level creep multitudes of such as began life with full confidence in the attainment of distinction and splendour.

The lawyer, emulating the eloquence, business, and fame of *Murray* or *Dunning*, and secretly resolved not to slacken his efforts until all his rivals in the race of glory are outstripped, is often astonished as well as broken-hearted to find business and fame pass by his door, and stop at the more favoured mansion of some competitor, in his view less able and less discerning than himself.

The physician, devoted to medical science, and possessed of distinguished powers of discerning and removing diseases, is obliged to walk; while a more fortunate empiric, ignorant and worthless, rolls through the streets in his coach.

The legislator beholds with anguish and amaze-

ment, the suffrages of his countrymen given eagerly to a rival candidate devoid of knowledge and integrity, but skilled in flattering the base passions of men, and deterred by no hesitations of conscience, and no fears of infamy, from saying and doing anything which may secure his election.

The merchant often beholds with a despairing eye, his own ships sunk in the ocean; his debtors fail, his goods unsold, his business cramped, and himself, his family and his hopes, ruined; while a less skilful, but more successful neighbour, sees wealth blown to him by every wind, and floated on every wave.

The crops of the farmer are stinted, his cattle die, his markets are bad, and the purchaser of his commodities proves to be a cheat, who deceives his confidence, and runs away with his property.

Thus the darling schemes and fondest hopes of man, are daily frustrated by time. While sagacity contrives, patience matures, and labour industriously executes, disappointment laughs at the curious fabric formed by so many efforts, and gay with so many brilliant colours; and while the artists imagine the work arrived at the moment of completion, brushes away the beautiful web and leaves nothing behind.

The designs of men, however, are in many respects, not unfrequently successful. The lawyer and the physician acquire business and fame; the statesman, votes; and the farmer, wealth; but their real success even in this case, is often substantially the same with that already recited. In all plans and all labours, the supreme object is *to become happy*. Yet, when men have actually acquired riches and honour, or secured to themselves popular favour, they still find the happiness which they expected eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure can

yield such good as *we* need. As these coveted objects are accumulated, the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence, with whatever he acquires, he is usually as little satisfied, and often less than before.

A principal design of the mind in labouring for these things is *to become superior to others*. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honourable men, others more honourable; voluptuous men, others who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained, and the happiness expected never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed although it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstripped all his rivals, the contest is at an end; and his spirits which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

Besides, the happiness in view was only the indulgence of pride, or mere animal pleasure; neither of these can satisfy or endure. A rational mind may be and often is, so narrow and grovelling, as not to aim at any higher good, to understand its nature, or to believe its existence. Still, in its original constitution it was formed with a capacity for intellectual and moral good, and was destined to find in this good its only satisfaction. Hence no inferior good will fill its capacity or its desires. Nor can this bent of its nature ever be altered; whatever other enjoyment therefore it may attain, it will, without this, still crave and still be unhappy.

3dly. *The doctrine is further evident from the fact, that life does not depend upon man.*

All intend to live, and feel secure of many years;

but how often does death frustrate this intention, and dissolve the charm of this security? How many leave the world at an immature age? How many, in the midst of bold projects, sanguine desires, and strenuous exertions? How many asterisks appear with a melancholy aspect even in the younger classes of the triennial catalogue; marking solemnly, to a considerate mind, the termination of parental hopes, and the vanity of youthful designs? Where now are multitudes of those who a little while since lived, and studied, and worshipped here, with fond views of future eminence and prosperity, and with as fair a promise, as can be found, of future success, usefulness, and honour?

As we are unable to assure ourselves even of a single day, much more of a long life, it is plain, that our eternal state lies beyond our control. As death finds us, so the judgment will certainly find us. He therefore, who *kills* as well as *makes alive*, at his pleasure, must of course hold in his hands, only, all our allotments, which lie beyond the grave.

You see here, my young friends, the most solid reasons for gratitude to your Creator.

God, only, directed that you should be born in this land, and in the midst of peace, plenty, civilization, freedom, learning, and religion; and that your existence should not commence in a *Tartarian* forest, or an *African* waste. GOD alone ordered, that you should be born of parents, who knew and worshipped him, the glorious and eternal JEHOVAH; and not of parents, who bowed before the *Lama*, or the *ox*, an image of brass, or the stock of a tree. In the book of his counsels, your names, so far as we are able to judge, were written in the fair lines of mercy. It is of his overflowing goodness, that you are now here, surrounded with privileges, and beset with blessings; edu-

cated to knowledge, usefulness, and piety, and prepared to begin an endless course of happiness and glory. All these delightful things have been poured into your lap, and have come, unbidden, to solicit your acceptance. If these blessings awaken not gratitude, it cannot be awakened by blessings in the present world. If they are not thankfully felt by *you*, it is because you know not how to be thankful. Think what you are, and where you are; and what and where you just as easily might have been. Remember, that, instead of cherishing tender affections, imbibing refined sentiments, exploring the field of science, and assuming the name and character of the sons of GOD, you might as easily have been dozing in the smoke of a weekwam, brandishing a tomahawk, or dancing round an embowelled captive; or that you might yourselves have been embowelled by the hand of superstition, and burnt on the altars of *Moloch*. If you remember these things, you cannot but call to mind, also, *who made you to differ* from the miserable beings, who have thus lived and died.

This doctrine forcibly demands of you moderate desires and expectations.

There are two modes, in which men seek happiness, in the enjoyments of the present world. *Most persons freely indulge their wishes; and intend to find objects, sufficient in number and value, to satisfy them. A few aim at satisfaction by proportioning their desires to the number and measure of their probable gratifications.* By the doctrine of the text, the latter method is stamped with the name of wisdom; and on the former is inscribed the name of folly. Desires, indulged, grow faster and farther than gratifications extend. Ungratified desire is misery. Expectations eagerly indulged, and terminated by disappointment,

are often exquisite misery. But how frequently are expectations raised, only to be disappointed; and desires let loose, only to terminate in distress. The child pines for a toy. The moment he possesses it, he throws it by, and cries for another. When they are piled up in heaps around him, he looks at them without pleasure, and leaves them without regret. He knew not, that all the good which they could yield, lay in expectation; nor that his wishes for more would increase faster than toys could be multiplied; and is unhappy, at last, for the same reason as at first: his wishes are ungratified. Still indulging them, and still believing that the gratification of them will furnish the enjoyment for which he pines, he goes on, only to be unhappy.

Men are merely taller children. Honour, wealth, and splendour are the toys for which grown children pine; but which, however accumulated, leave them still disappointed and unhappy. God never designed that intelligent beings should be satisfied with these enjoyments. By his wisdom and goodness, they were formed to derive their happiness from virtue.

Moderated desires constitute a character fitted to acquire all the good which this world can yield. He who is prepared, *in whatever situation he is, therewith to be content*, has learned effectually the science of being happy; and possesses the alchymic stone, which will change every metal into gold. Such a man will smile upon a stool; while *Alexander*, at his side, sits weeping on the throne of the world.

The doctrine of the text teaches you irresistibly, that, since you cannot command gratifications, you should command your desires; and that, as the events of life do not accord with your wishes, your wishes should accord with *them*. Multiplied enjoyments fall

to but few men ; and are no more rationally expected than the highest prize in a lottery. But a well regulated mind, a dignified independence of the world, and a wise preparation to possess one's soul in patience, whatever circumstances may exist, is in the power of every man ; and is greater wealth than that of both Indies, and greater honour than *Cæsar* ever acquired.

As your course, and your success through life are not under your control, you are strongly urged to commit yourselves to GOD, who can control both.

That you cannot direct your course through the world ; that your best concerted plans will often fail ; that your sanguine expectations will be disappointed ; and that your fondest worldly wishes will terminate in mortification, cannot admit of a momentary doubt. That GOD can direct you ; that he actually controls all your concerns ; and that, if you commit yourselves to his care, he will direct you kindly and safely, can be doubted only of choice. Why, then, do you hesitate to yield yourselves, and your interests, to the guidance of your Maker ? There are two reasons, which appear especially to govern mankind in this important concern : they do not, and will not, realize the agency of GOD in their affairs ; and they do not choose to have them directed, as they imagine he will direct them. The former is the result of stupidity ; the latter of impiety. Both are foolish in the extreme, and not less sinful than foolish.

The infinitely wise, great, and glorious Benefactor of the universe, has offered to take men by the hand, lead them through the journey of life, and conduct them to his own house in the heavens. The proof of his sincerity in making this offer has been already produced. He has given his own Son to live, and die, and rise,

and reign, and intercede, for our race. *Herein is love, if there ever was love; not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us.* That he, who has done this, should not be sincere is impossible. *St. Paul, therefore, triumphantly asks, what none can answer, He that spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Trust, then, his word with undoubting confidence; take his hand with humble gratitude; and with all the heart obey his voice, which you will everywhere hear, saying, *this is the way, walk ye therein.* In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, he will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will *make you lie down in green pastures; lead you beside the still waters; and guide you in paths of righteousness; for his name's sake.* He will *prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies; and cause your cup to run over with blessings.* *When you pass through the waters of affliction, he will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on you.* From their native heavens, he will commission those charming twin sisters, Goodness and Mercy, to descend, and *follow you all your days.*

But if you wish GOD to be your guide, and your friend, you must conform to his pleasure. Certainly you cannot wonder that the infinitely Wise should prefer his own wisdom to yours, and that he should choose for his children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of his pleasure, which you are to obey, is all summed up in the single word duty, and is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed, as to be

plain, easy, profitable, and delightful; profitable in hand; delightful in the possession. Every part and precept of the whole is calculated for this end; and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

Life has been often stiled an ocean; and our progress through it a voyage. The ocean is tempestuous and billowy, overspread by a cloudy sky, and fraught beneath with shelves and quicksands. The voyage is eventful beyond comprehension; and at the same time full of uncertainty, and replete with danger. Every adventurer needs to be well prepared for whatever may befall him, and well secured against the manifold hazards of losing his course, sinking in the abyss, or of being wrecked against the shore.

These evils have existed at all times. The present, and that part of the past, which is known to you by experience, has seen them multiplied beyond example. It has seen the ancient and acknowledged standards of thinking violently thrown down. Religion, morals, government, and the estimate formed by man of crimes and virtues, and of all the means of usefulness and enjoyment, have been questioned, attacked, and in various places, and with respect to millions of the human race, finally overthrown. A licentiousness of opinion and conduct, daring, outrageous, and rending asunder every bond, formed by GOD or man, has taken place of former good sense, and sound morals, and has long threatened the destruction of human good. Industry, cunning, and fraud, have toiled with unrivalled exertions, to convert man into a savage, and the world into a desert. A wretched and hypocritical philanthropy, also, not less mischievous, has stalked forth as the companion of these ravagers: a philanthropy born in a dream, bred in a novel, and living only in professions. This

guardian genius of human interests, this friend of human rights, this redresser of human wrongs, is yet without a heart to feel, and without a hand to bless : but she is well furnished with lungs, with eyes, and a tongue. She can talk, and sigh, and weep, at pleasure ; but can neither pity, nor give. The objects of her attachment are either knaves and villains at home, or unknown sufferers beyond her reach abroad. To the former she ministers the sword and the dagger, that they may fight their way into place, and power, and profit. At the latter, she only looks through a telescope of fancy, as an astronomer searches for stars, invisible to the eye. To every real object of charity, within her reach, she complacently says, *Be thou warmed ; and be thou filled ; depart in peace.*

By the daring spirit, the vigorous efforts, and the ingenious cunning, so industriously exerted on the one hand, and the smooth and gentle benevolence, so softly professed on the other, multitudes have been, and you easily may be, destroyed. The mischief has indeed been met, resisted, and overcome ; but it has the heads and the lives of the Hydra ; and its *wounds*, which at times have seemed *deadly*, are much more readily *healed*, than any good man could wish, than any sober man could expect. Hope not to escape the assaults of this enemy : to feel that you are in danger, will ever be a preparation for your safety. But it will be only such a preparation ; your deliverance must ultimately and only flow from your Maker. Resolve, then, to commit yourselves to him, with a cordial reliance on his wisdom, power, and protection. Consider how much you have at stake ; that you are bound to eternity ; that your existence will be immortal ; and that you will either rise to endless glory, or be lost in

absolute perdition. Heaven is your proper home, The path, which I have recommended to you, will conduct you safely, and certainly, to that happy world. Fill up life, therefore, with obedience to GOD; with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life; the obedience to the two great commands of the Gospel; with supreme love to GOD, and universal good-will to men; the obedience to the two great commands of the Law. On all your sincere endeavours to honour him, and befriend your fellow-men, he will smile: every virtuous attempt he will bless: every act of obedience he will reward. Life in this manner will be pleasant amid all its sorrows; and beams of hope will continually shine through the gloom, by which it is so often overcast. Virtue, the seed that cannot die, planted from heaven, and cultivated by the divine hand, will grow up in your hearts with increasing vigour, and blossom in your lives with supernal beauty. Your *path* will be that of *the just*, and will gloriously resemble the dawning light, *which shines brighter and brighter, to the perfect day*. Peace will take you by the hand, and offer herself as the constant and delightful companion of your progress. Hope will walk before you, and with an unerring finger point out your course; and joy, at the end of the journey, will open her arms to receive you. You will *wait on the Lord, and renew your strength; will mount up with wings, as eagles; will run, and not be weary; will walk, and not faint*.

CREATION.—AIR: STARRY AND SUPREME HEAVENS.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—GEN. i. 1.

THE phrase, *In the beginning*, is universally expressive, in the Scriptures, of *the commencement of created, or finite existence*. Whether it is intended to be applied in the present case to both the heavens and the earth, with *exactly* the same meaning, is uncertain: by the text our contemplation is directed to the air: the starry and supreme heavens.

THAT ALL THINGS WERE BROUGHT INTO EXISTENCE BY GOD, is evident.

I. *The air, or atmosphere, by which the earth is surrounded, is replete with wonderful displays of the power and wisdom of God.*

Particularly it has ever engaged the attention of wise and observant men, and merits our own attention,

As it is the immediate mean of life to mankind, and to the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

All men know that living beings depend, in this world, for the continuance of life on respiration, and that the medium of respiration is air. Among the wonders which pertain to this subject, this is one; that, although the air is a compound substance, made up of very diverse materials, one of them noxious, and a second by itself perfectly unproductive of life; yet these are so blended with the third, in which alone the power of maintaining life resides, that in their combination they are better fitted to continue life, than even the life-giving principle would be if it existed pure and unmixed. Another is, that this

combination is maintained in such a manner, that the proportional quantities of these materials are at all times substantially, if not exactly, the same.

As it is a principal mean of heat and cold.

These great effects are both produced by different operations of the same element, hitherto inexplicably mysterious, but without any discord or confusion. The manner in which air withdraws heat from other objects, and again gives it out to those objects, must be confessed, familiar as the fact is, to be eminently wonderful: while, at the same time, the operation is absolutely necessary. On it depends a great part of the activity, comfort, and usefulness of mankind. From it, spring in a great degree, those changes of the seasons, those varieties of temperature, which are so pleasing, necessary, and useful, to the world. In a word, from this source, in a great measure, arise the growth and perfection of the vegetable world, the existence of a great part of the comforts and necessities of life, and apparently the continuance of our being.

As it is the medium by which are conveyed to us rain, dew, hail, and snow, and as it is, also, the source of drought in its various degrees.

As it is eminently the source of health and sickness.

Among the various exhalations accomplished on the surface of the earth by means of the atmosphere, there are many which are impure, noxious, and fraught with poison and death. Of this nature, in an eminent degree, is that suffocating vapour conveyed over the deserts of Nubia in the fatal blast which is called the Simoon. Of a similar nature are numerous other exhalations, not so immediately, but often more extensively, destructive to human life; which arise from marshes, ponds, and other stagnations of

water; as well as many more, ascending from decayed vegetables and other masses of putrefaction. All these, but for the atmosphere, would be confined to the surface, and fail of their malignant influence on human life. At the same time, air is the great source of health; and, wherever it passes freely, contributes perhaps to the preservation or restoration of this essential blessing. In its purest state it seems, in the ordinary circumstances of man, to promote health only, and often restores such as are languishing and decayed, more than all other causes united.

As it is the seat, and, in an important sense, the cause of many highly magnificent displays of Divine workmanship.

Storms, clouds, thunder, lightning, combustion, volcanoes, earthquakes, the magnificent rainbow, and the delightful breeze, are all dependent on air for their existence. All of them also are deeply interesting to man in many ways. Besides their obvious influence in promoting our daily health and comfort, our frequent delight and sorrow, the continuance of our life, and the arrival of death, they are in no small degree interesting to us, as displays of the Divine presence and character, eminently beautiful, various, awful, and majestic, and productive of important and extensive moral influence on mankind.

As it is in many respects an important aid to vision.

No small part of the beautiful, majestic, and interesting scenes of nature depend, for their peculiar appearance, upon the atmosphere. Such, in an eminent manner, is the twilight, which so usefully and beautifully returns every morning and every evening. Such also is the sky or firmament; that magnificent azure concave, which apparently bends in so glorious a manner over this great world. Such, also, are all

those scenes in which the refraction of light is concerned. Without the aid of the atmosphere none of these things would appear to us at all.

These summary hints will be sufficient to exhibit the importance of this wonderful subject, so far as is necessary for the present design. I proceed therefore to observe,

II. *That the starry heaven is a still more wonderful and magnificent part of the creation of God.*

To the most uninstructed mind, and the most vulgar eye, the firmament, with the innumerable and glorious bodies which it contains, has ever been far the most wonderful part of the visible creation; while minds of superior intelligence, especially when the subjects of piety have ever regarded this amazing scene with study, admiration, and awe, as pre-eminently displaying the wisdom and greatness of God. *When, says David, I consider the heavens the work of thy finger, the moon, and the stars, which thou hast ordained; Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

Of all material objects, the *sun* is beyond measure the most glorious and magnificent, and the noblest emblem of its Creator. This great world of light is, beyond every thing else, the most perfect symbol of the exaltation, unchangeableness, perpetuity, life-giving power, benevolent influence, omnipresence, omniscience, dominion, and greatness, of God.

The moon, a softer, but not less beautiful, object, returns and communicates to mankind the light of the sun in a gentle and delightful manner, exactly suited to the strength of the human eye; an illustrious and most beautiful emblem, in this and several other respects, of the divine REDEEMER of mankind; who softening the splendour of the Godhead, brings it to the eye of the understanding in a manner fitted to

the strength of the mind ; so that without being overwhelmed, or distressed, it can thus behold the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

The *stars* also, by their endless multitude, and their unceasing variety and beauty with which they everywhere replenish the vast expansion, astonish and delight the mind, while they manifest the greatness and wisdom of Jehovah. No stronger proof can be given of the nature or degree of the impressions with which these marvellous objects have affected the mind of man, than the fact, that in very early ages of the world they began, and through every succeeding period have continued, to be objects of religious adoration ; and by a great proportion of our race have been directly acknowledged as gods.

Such have been the views formed by the human mind, with the mere light of uninstructed reason, concerning this glorious part of the creation. But when the eye is permitted to look out of the window of science into this vast field, it assumes an entirely new and immensely nobler character. Instead of a great and splendid luminary, hung up in the heavens to communicate light and warmth to this world, and to measure the returns of day and night to its inhabitants, the sun is seen by the eye of the astronomer to be a vast world of itself, possessed of the most wonderful power of emitting this equally wonderful element in immeasurable quantities to immeasurable distances ; and the centre of many other worlds, which receive from this their light and warmth, their motion, regularity, and harmony. To the same eye *the planets* no longer appear as gems of inherent and immortal lustre, adorning the concave with unrivalled elegance and beauty, but as vast worlds, resembling

this globe in their various affections, and moving round the sun with a rapid, regular, and mysterious circuit; surrounded by other inferior worlds, by which they are wonderfully beautified and adorned; and inhabited, in all probability, by endless multitudes of beings, rational and immortal. Of these inferior worlds, the moon is one; and to us, far the most interesting. How many important purposes, which are known, does this beautiful attendant of our earth continually accomplish! How many more, in all probability, which are hitherto unknown, and which hereafter may be extensively disclosed to more enlightened, virtuous, and happy generations of men! At the same time, it is most rationally concluded, that intelligent beings in great multitudes inhabit her lucid regions, being probably far better and happier than ourselves.

The comets, of which the number already discovered is very great, are still more extraordinary parts of this amazing work. Man no longer beholds them as occasional and flaming meteors, wandering through the sky as mere omens to the human race of convulsions, famines, and pestilences; but sees them, with unquestionable certainty, to be worlds, which, like the planets, regularly move round the sun in orbits of extreme excentricity and inconceivable extent.

Concerning *the stars* our views have undergone a still greater change. The mind no more regards them as feeble but beautiful tapers, twinkling, merely for the gratification of mankind, with an innate and perpetual lustre. On the contrary, they are known, with absolute certainty, to be universally suns, resembling our own, and apparently so much less, only because they are removed to a distance incomprehensibly greater. The same science which has detected their

nature, size, and distance, has also to a great extent disclosed their numbers. Instead of the comparatively small collection, visible to the naked eye in any given night, they are proved to be in a sense innumerable, and to fill with an immense army the immeasurable fields of ether.

It cannot be rationally believed, that worlds so great and glorious as the sun were made in vain; yet of the endless millions of stars, less than three thousand have been seen by the naked eye of man, and, till within a few years, all the vast multitudes which have been since discovered, had been secreted from every inhabitant of this globe! *Herschel* first detected almost all which are now known, or have ever been visible to the human eye. So far as mankind are concerned, then the stars, ever since the creation, have, in far the greatest number of instances, existed in vain. Of course they were formed for other purposes than any in which we can be directly concerned. But for what purpose can we suppose such worlds of light were created? The only rational answer is, they were formed for the same purposes which are accomplished by our own sun, to give light and motion, and life and comfort, to systems of worlds of which each star severally is the common centre; such worlds, therefore, are with the highest reason supposed to exist, and to be, like the earth, the residence of intelligent beings, of incalculable numbers, and endless diversities of character, all supported, governed, and blessed, as the worlds which they inhabit are sustained, regulated, and moved by the hand of that Almighty Being who created them, and *whose kingdom ruleth over all*. Thus the universe is the immense and glorious empire of Jehovah; an empire formed of suns and systems; the families, cities, and

provinces of the vast kingdom, ruled by him, *who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names.*

III. *The heaven of heavens is a still more edifying object of our attention.*

On this sublime subject I shall discourse only in a very summary manner, at the present time, as I expect, God willing, to consider it more extensively at a future period.

The high superiority of this happy and glorious world is strongly marked in the scriptures, whence alone we derive any knowledge of it, by that peculiar epithet, *The heaven of heavens.* As *the God of gods* is distinguished by this phrase above all other gods, so the *heaven of heavens* is, in a manner indefinitely similar, intentionally exhibited as wholly superior to all *other heavens.* In the same scriptures we are taught that this glorious world is *the house of God*, or the peculiar and favourite place of his residence, the place where those manifestations of himself are seen, which he is pleased to make, as the most especial displays of his presence and character. Present in all other places, he is peculiarly present here.

It is also, as we are further informed by the same scriptures, *the throne of God*, the seat of universal and endless dominion, where the divine authority is peculiarly exercised and made known, and the splendour of the divine government exhibited with singular effulgence and glory.

It is *the residence of his most favoured creatures*, of the saints, who are redeemed by the blood of his Son, and of *the angels*, who, innumerable in the multitude, *stand round about his throne.*

It is the *everlasting seat of consummate holiness*, or virtue, where that divine principle shines without

alloy, flourishes in immortal youth, and reigns and triumphs with eternal glory.

It is *the place in which are seen all the finishings of divine workmanship*, and in which the beauty and greatness of the infinite Mind, and the endless diversities of omniscient skill appear in all their most exquisite forms, and in the last degrees of refinement and perfection.

It is the *centre of all divine communications*; the city in which all the paths of Providence terminate; the ocean, from which all the streams of infinite wisdom and goodness proceed, and into which they return, to flow again, and for ever.

It is *the theatre in which an eternal providence of progressive knowledge, power, and love*, rendered daily more and more beautiful and amiable, wonderful and majestic, *is begun and carried on* through ages, which will never approach towards an end.

It is *the place where all the works of God are studied and understood*, through an eternal progress of knowledge, where all the diversities of virtuous intelligence, all the forms and hues of moral beauty, brighten in an unceasing gradation, and where gratitude, love, enjoyment, and praise, resound day and night in a more and more perfect harmony throughout the immense of duration.

Thus I have finished the observations which I designed to make on this subject, and shall now conclude the discourse with some practical REMARKS.

1st. *With what entire propriety is God exhibited in the very first verse of the scriptures, as the Creator of all things!*

This verse may be regarded as an introduction, or preface, to the whole Bible, and to the system of doctrines which it contains. Accordingly it announces to

us in a few and simple; but those most sublime and affecting terms, the two great subjects about which the Bible and its doctrines are employed; *God, and his immense kingdom.* Him it exhibits to us in the character of Creator, and all things else as created by him.

On the act of creating is founded a great part of that character, in which especially he calls for the obedience of intelligent beings.

2dly. *With what reason does God, as the Creator of all things, claim the entire confidence of his creatures.*

He, who is the Author of the Creation, can do all things; is every where; knows every thing; and controls the universe with an absolute and irresistible dominion. He who has made such various, rich, and abundant provision for the wants of his creatures, can provide for all their wants. He, who was willing to provide in the bountiful manner which we actually see existing, is reasonably argued, and expected, to provide all other things, which are either necessary or useful. If they please him, he cannot but be expected to give to them freely; if they obey him, they will certainly please him; and if they are willing to do that, which their own minds, candidly employed, and enlightened by his word, must of course declare to be right, they will certainly obey him. The path, therefore, which leads to the most ample supplies of all their real wants, and the attainment of all real good, is open, direct, and certain. Nor can any reason be given why they should refuse or neglect to pursue this highway to the divine and eternal possession. How rich, how vast, how glorious a work is the visible creation! With what endless multitudes of creatures is it replenished! With what innumerable blessings is it stored! All these sprang from the mere goodness and bounty of the Creator. Who can limit such bounty, even in thought? Who can imagine a real

want, which it is not able and willing to supply? How plainly, then, ought *all* those creatures, not only to wait on him, but to trust in him also; that he may give them all blessings in due season.

Particularly, when his children remember, that he has created the heaven of heavens for their reception, and adorned and enriched it with every thing which can contribute to their happiness and glory; they cannot but discern and feel that he claims from them, on the most solid grounds, all possible confidence, as well as reverence and love. In the Scriptures, he has disclosed to them, that here there is made all the provision which they can need, and far more than they can ask or conceive; and that, however enlarged may be their faculties and views, they will through eternity receive all which they can ever desire. Of the power of God to fulfil these promises they are completely assured by the effects which it has produced in the visible creation. Of his willingness to perform them, and to satisfy every reasonable wish, they are furnished with no unhappy evidence, in the provision, which he so bountifully makes for rebels and apostates in the present world. When they add to this the gift of his own Son, whom *he did not spare, but delivered him up for us all*, they are completely assured that *he will also with him freely give them all things*.

3dly. *How amazing and glorious a Being does God appear in the character of Creator!*

Of what power, knowledge, and goodness, must He be possessed who has done all these things; who is, who lives, and who acts through all the worlds in immensity; who contrived them, and brought them into being; who stored them with such abundant furniture, and filled them with such multitudes of inhabitants; who controls them with an omnipotent hand, and with

an omniscient eye; and who will advance them for ever in their progress towards perfection! All these things are only displays of the Godhead. In them all JEHOVAH is seen in forms of beauty, wisdom, goodness, life, joy, loveliness, and greatness, which transcend both number and comprehension.

4thly. *How ought this great and awful Being to be feared by his intelligent creatures!*

How ought *we*, particularly, to realize his presence, agency, character and will, the obligations which we are under to obey, and the supreme interest which we have in doing his pleasure! His right to dispose of us cannot be denied. The rectitude of his pleasure cannot be questioned. At the same time, on him our all depends. How indispensable is it, therefore, that we act in all things in such a manner, as to secure his favour, and in this, the only possible manner, to obtain his blessing.

On the contrary, what madness must it be to forget, disobey and provoke him! Think what it is to *be found fighting against God*. *Hast thou, says JEHOVAH to Job, an arm like God; or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Then I will confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.* What evil is not to be expected from his anger? What terrible proofs have been given of its dreadful efficacy, in his ancient dispensations to the *Antediluvians*, to *Sodom and Gomorrah*, to the *Egyptians*, and to the *Israelites*, both in the wilderness, and the land of *Canaan*! What awful specimens are even now continually seen of his displeasure against this polluted world, in the ravages of the storm, the earthquake, the volcano, and the more extensive evils of pestilence and famine!

5thly. *How miserable must be the condition of those, who have no interest in the favour of God!*

God is the source of all the good which is found, or will ever be found, in the universe. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above; and cometh down from the FATHER of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Wherever then, he refuses to give, it is certain that no enjoyment can be found. How dreadful, of course how solitary, how friendless, how forlorn, must the situation of a creature be, if he were banished for ever from the presence, favour and love of God! Were the sun, as the heathen supposed, an intelligent being, capable of being pleased and displeased, and of communicating and withholding his light and warmth at pleasure; how lonely, dark and wretched would be the condition of men, if he should withdraw his beams from this world, and permit them never more to shine? of men consigned to everlasting night, and everlasting winter; who should yet *live*, in this cold and dreary solitude, and know and feel their wretched condition; while at the same time they also knew, that other favoured and happy beings, in all other respects resembling themselves, were in full possession of the life-giving influence, and cheering splendour of this glorious luminary. God is the sun of the intelligent and immortal world. Wherever he shines there is light, and peace, and hope, and joy; wherever he withdraws his beams, all is darkness and desolation for ever.

On this subject I am apprehensive, that Christians do not meditate nor converse, nor ministers preach, so frequently and so fervently as their interest and their duty plainly require. The apostles have dwelt often, and extensively, on the prospects, the joys, and the glories of heaven. In this respect they are obviously patterns to all succeeding preachers. Christians are in

the scriptures often invited to meditate on heavenly things; and presented with the most sublime, alluring, and delightful objects of a heavenly nature, to engage them in such meditations. They are directed also, to *set their affections on things above*; commanded to have *their conversation in heaven, and not on the earth*; and reminded that in a humble and figurative sense, they are already *come to the new Jerusalem*, and to the glorious beings by whom it is inhabited, by entering the church of God in the present world. All these precepts they are bound implicitly to obey.

CREATION.—ANGELS.

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. COL. i. 16.

AMONG other things conveyed to us by this assertion, the following doctrine is evidently one:

That the angels are a part of the creation of God.

It is a fact worthy of observation, that the Scriptures teach us scarcely any thing concerning any of the worlds included under the general name of *heavens*, except the supreme heaven. The reason is, I think, not difficult to be divined. With other heavenly worlds we have no direct concern.

But with *the heaven of heavens* we have a continual and most important concern. This glorious and delightful world is the place to which all our ultimate views are directed by our Maker; the home to which

he invites us to look as our final rest from every trouble; and the final seat of all the enjoyment which we are capable of attaining. With its inhabitants we shall, if we are wise, become familiarly acquainted, and intimately united; and shall live in the midst of them through ages which cannot end. Of this world therefore, and those who dwell in it, we need information, various and extensive. Accordingly, God has in the Scriptures to a considerable extent opened heaven to our view, and furnished us in many particulars with an account of the happy beings who inhabit it; of *the rank, or station which they hold in his great kingdom; the attributes of which they are possessed, and the employments to which they are devoted.* Under these three heads I propose to consider them at the present time. To an audience possessed of so many advantages for estimating the comparative importance of subjects of contemplation, and particularly the comparative worth of intelligent beings, it is reasonably hoped that a subject of such inherent dignity cannot be uninteresting.

That angels are the beings intended by the phraseology of the text, will not be questioned.

It ought to be observed, that angels are called *morning stars*, to denote their peculiar beauty and splendour of character, and not improbably as harbingers of Christ, *the SUN of righteousness*: and *sons of God*; to teach us that they are nearly connected with the Creator, dwell in his house as children, and enjoy his parental presence, care, and love.

From all these observations united, it is evident that angels are possessed of pre-eminent dignity, importance, and distinction, in the divine kingdom, since all these names are given to them by God himself, and are used therefore to indicate their true and proper

character. This character I shall now attempt summarily to exhibit as it is presented to us by the Scriptures, and according to the scheme of discourse which has been already mentioned.

1. *Angels are the highest order of intelligent creatures.*

The truth of this assertion is manifest, from a consideration of the *several names* given to them in the text and in other parts of the Scriptures.

The same truth is also completely evident from the place assigned them for their residence. *I am Gabriel*, said the angel, who appeared to *Zachariah* in the temple; *I am Gabriel who stand in the presence of God.* *And before the throne*, says St. John, *there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living ones, full of eyes before and behind. And they rest not day and night, saying holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come!* Rev. iv. 6, 8. And again, Rev. vii. 11. and Isa. vi.

Angels then surround the throne of God, stand in his immediate and awful presence, and worship continually at his feet. What beings, let me ask, can we rationally suppose would be admitted to a communion so intimate with their Creator, an access to him so near, a distinction so wonderful? To this there can be but one answer. Every man will, without hesitation, say, "None but those who sustain the first character and the highest station among created beings."

Nor is the same truth much less evident from the glory and splendour with which these celestial beings have customarily appeared in the present world. When the angel came to roll away the stone from the sepulchre of Christ, *his countenance was like lightning,*

and his raiment white as snow ; and for fear of him the keepers became as dead men. And I saw, says St. John, another mighty angel come down from heaven clothed with a cloud ; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. All these circumstances of splendour, greatness, and awfulness, surrounded these illustrious beings while employed as the ministers of God in executing *his* commands. They were therefore the proper emblems of their character, and the proper accompaniments of their station.

II. *Angels are endowed with the noblest created attributes.*

They are endowed,

1st. *With wonderful power.*

This perfection of angels is forcibly indicated by the fact that the name *power* or *might* is in several places given to them in the gospel. No stronger testimony of their high possession of this attribute can be conveyed by a single word ; for it is a direct declaration that their nature is *power itself*. In Psalm ciii. 20, David exclaims, *Bless the Lord ye his angels who excel in strength. A strong angel and a mighty angel*, are also phrases in the apocalypse, expressive of the same character.

2dly. *Angels are also possessed of activity equally wonderful.*

In Psalm civ. 4, quoted Hebrews i. 7, their nature in this particular is summarily described in this remarkable declaration : *who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire.*

But the following story in the prophet Daniel exhibits this doctrine with unrivalled force ; and will preclude the necessity of any further illustration. Chapter ix. verse 3, and 20—23.

3dly. *Angels are endued with unfading and immortal youth.*

Of this doctrine we have many most decisive testimonies in the Scriptures. Particularly it is beautifully exhibited in the name *Zwa*, *living ones*, given them by St. John in the apocalypse, and by Ezekiel in the first chapter, and several other parts of his prophecy. By this name we are taught that life is the proper nature, a pre-eminent and glorious characteristic of angels; life in a peculiar and distinguishing degree; the most perfect manifestation of that quickening energy which Christ attributes to the Father and challenges to himself, as an exclusive, appropriate, and wonderful attribute of the Godhead.

The youth of angels is like their other attributes, formed to refine, improve, and brighten for ever.

4thly. *Angels are endowed with the greatest intellectual faculties, and are of course possessed of knowledge superior to that of any other created beings.*

This character of these heavenly inhabitants is presented to us in the Scriptures in many forms. *The living ones* mentioned by the apostle John in the book of revelation, are declared to have been *full of eyes within*; that is, to have been all sense, all intellect, all consciousness; turning their attention every way; beholding at once all things within the reach of their understanding; and discerning them with a clearness of perception which is the most perfect created semblance of the intuitive and boundless views of the omniscient Mind.

5thly. *Angels are possessed of consummate holiness.*

The evidence of this truth is so multiform and so abundant in the Scriptures, that no particular proof, or illustration, seems to be necessary.

6thly. *That angels are possessed of distinguished loveliness of character.*

In the view of passion and taste, beings are lovely when possessed of external beauty of form, and gracefulness of deportment. A complexion finely coloured and blended, a figure finely fashioned, features happily turned and adjusted, and a demeanour elegantly exhibited, are to our fancy and our passions so engaging and lovely, as not unfrequently to engross the affections of the mind. Yet even *we* are sensible that these are very imperfect objects of our attachment. Accordingly, we speak of them in customary language, as things of mere fancy, unsolid, unenduring, of little value, and therefore incapable of claiming or receiving, the sincere approbation of the judgment, the full testimony of unbiassed reason, on account of any inherent or essential excellence.

But there are objects of a nobler kind, claiming in a far higher degree both our affections and our esteem. All the diversities of virtue or holiness are in their nature pre-eminently lovely. Virtue is the beauty of the mind, and as superior to that of the form as the soul is superior to the tenement in which it dwells. On this delightful object the understanding, in spite of every human prejudice, fixes its eye with unqualified approbation; and the heart, if not wholly destitute of candour, with sincere delight. Virtue is the beauty of the heavenly world, and while it engrosses the attachment and the homage of angels themselves, is regarded with entire complacency by its divine Author.

Of this loveliness, angels are above all created beings supremely possessed. Angels are sincere, gentle, meek, kind, compassionate, and perfectly conformed to that great moral principle communicated in the words of the Lord Jesus, which he said, *It is more*

blessed to give, than to receive. This sublime excellence, incomparably *more precious than gold which perisheth*, has, in them, been from the beginning debased with no alloy, tarnished with no spot, impaired by no length of years, and changed by no weakness or imperfection. Free from every defect and every mixture, it has varied with length of years merely towards higher and higher perfection, and shone not only with undiminished, but with increased beauty and lustre. There is no good which it is proper for angels to do, which they are not habitually prepared to do. There is no kindness capable of being suitably exercised by them, which they do not in fact exercise. The more their faculties are enlarged, the more their knowledge is increased; the more their means of usefulness are multiplied, the more exalted is their excellence; the more disinterested and noble their disposition, the more intense their benevolence, and the more lovely and beautiful their character. The good which they have already done, has only prepared them to do more and greater good; and the disposition with which it was done, has only become stronger by every preceding exertion.

7thly. *Angels are invested with high personal dignity and glory.*

Dignity originally denoted the same with worth, but is now generally used to signify *that kind of worth which is elevated and great*, which inspires reverence and admiration, rather than that which is more gentle and familiar, as well as the manifestations of it in the conduct and the honours, with which it is considered as suitably rewarded. *The spirit and character formed by the magnanimous and sublimer virtues*, are here intended by *personal dignity*, and all the honour with which God has invested this character in angels; is

intended by *personal glory*. In these respects, angels are totally distinguished from all other created beings.

This truth cannot but be evident from the account already summarily given of the attributes, both natural and moral, of these exalted intelligences.

It is to be remembered further, that they are *eternal*. Angels live for ever, and are hence termed, by way of distinction, *living ones*, or *living creatures*. With their being, their excellencies are all co-extended, and are in the same manner immortal. Nor are they merely immortal, but are perpetually improving. Every day they study and understand more and more the wonders of creation and providence, and the character of their great Author. With their knowledge, their love to God is continually enlarged and enraptured, their benevolence to their fellow-creatures, their amiable conduct, their sweetness, loveliness, and dignity of character, are all enhanced and refined. Great, wise, noble and excellent at first, they have regularly advanced in this divine progress of improvement to the present time.

III. *Angels hold the first employments and offices in the universe.*

The intelligent beings to whom the greatest and noblest of these concerns are entrusted, and by whom the most illustrious of all these offices are sustained, are undoubtedly the angels of God. Whatever demands the employment of created power, activity, knowledge, and virtue of high distinction; whatever is in an eminent degree complicated, vast, or sublime; can with propriety be committed only to beings eminently invested with these illustrious attributes. In the amazing extent of creation, in the eternal progress of providence, fields sufficiently ample are furnished for the employment of immense numbers of these

glorious beings, in business of high import, and inestimable dignity. To this scheme of things, accord, not only their attributes, but their numbers, as they are exhibited in the scriptures; for we are there told that *thousand thousands minister unto God, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.*

That angels are actually thus employed can scarcely be doubted by any man, who remembers the illustrious attributes of which they are possessed, and who believes that these attributes were not given in vain. Should he however doubt, he may be furnished with proofs from the Scriptures which cannot rationally be questioned.

1st. *Their names clearly indicate their high employments.*

They are styled *angels*; that is, the immediate messengers of God. They are styled *thrones, dominions, authorities, principalities or governments, and powers*; to denote that they sit upon thrones, exercise dominion, hold authority, preside in government, and are invested with the power necessary for these great purposes.

They are called *chief princes*; to indicate that they are the first order of rulers in the universe, under Him *who has prepared His thrones in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all.* They are called *sons of God*, to teach us that they are beings nearly related to God in character, favour, place, and authority. They are called *morning stars*, to teach us the splendour and glory with which they outshine all other intelligent creatures. They are named *cherubim and seraphim*, to inform us that they are beings furnished with superior knowledge to discern, and with superior holiness to pursue, whatever is good and

right, honourable to the Creator and useful to his creatures.

All these names are descriptive either of the nature and attributes of these exalted beings, or of the stations and employments for which, by this nature, they are qualified.

2dly. *The Scriptures, in many instances, exhibit them as thus employed.*

(1st.) *Angels are in the Scriptures declared to be extensively engaged in the immediate business of glorifying God and celebrating his praise.*

At the creation, *the morning stars*, in the dawn of their being, surrounded their Maker during the progress of that great work, and, when it was finished, in the celebration of that peculiarly Divine sabbath, observed, consecrated, and blessed by God himself, as an infinitely solemn and authoritative example to mankind, *sang together, and shouted for joy.*

When the Lord Jesus Christ descended on Mount Sinai, to publish, amid *thunders and lightnings, and a flame of devouring fire*, his most holy law, to the children of men, *the chariots of God, even thousands of angels*, attended him at this awful solemnity, and glorified him by their ministry in this sublime dispensation.

When the same Divine Person became incarnate, *Gabriel* announced his birth to *Zachariah* and to *Mary*. An angel also proclaimed these *glad tidings of great joy* to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and a *multitude of the heavenly host* praised God on the same occasion, in the noblest hymn ever heard in this lower world, and sang *Glory to God in the highest! and on earth, peace: good-will towards men.*

When he ascended on high, and led captivity cap-

tive, having finished the work of redemption, and triumphed over all his enemies, the same exalted beings, with renewed transport and adoration, surrounded him with the same magnificent attendance as at *Sinai*, singing, as he approached the heaven of heavens, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors! and the King of Glory shall come in.* Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18, compared with Ephes. iv. 8 See also Ps. xxiv.

At the end of this earthly system, when *he shall come to judge the quick and the dead*, and blot out from under heaven this world of iniquity and rebellion, an arch-angel preceding him, will call the dead out of their graves; while the multitude of the heavenly host will shout to the universe the awful wonders of the final day, and subjoin to all its amazing transactions, their solemn Amen.

In the heaven of heavens, the four living ones *rest not, day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! who was, and who is, and who is to come.*

And I beheld, says St. John, *and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living ones, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and wisdom, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

2dly. *Angels are employed in studying the works of God, and in learning from them his perfections.*

Who created all things, says St. Paul, *by Jesus Christ, to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

Which things, says St. Peter, the angels desire to look into; or more literally, into which things angels earnestly desire to look with the deepest attention.

3dly. *Angels are employed in executing the judgments of God upon this world.*

The first judgment upon man, which was excluding him from Paradise, appears to have been committed to the execution of these ministering spirits. In the same manner they were the immediate instruments of inflicting the vengeance of God on the *Israelites*, on the army of *Sennacherib*, on *Nebuchadnezzar*, and on *Herod*. In the same manner also they are exhibited in the Revelation of St. John, as pouring out the vials of Divine wrath upon the nations of this guilty world, and especially upon the anti-christian hierarchy, as the peculiar ministers of the justice of God.

4thly. *Angels are also employed in ministering blessings to the children of God in this world.*

Are they not all ministering spirits, says St. Paul, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? In this passage we are plainly taught, that ministering to the saints is a standing employment of angels throughout the ages of time. Accordingly, they are exhibited in *Jacob's* vision of the ladder, as *ascending and descending* from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, continually in the discharge of this great duty. According to this declaration, also, we are furnished by the Scriptures with numerous examples of their actual ministry to the children of God. Thus angels delivered *Lot* from *Sodom*, *Jacob* from *Esau*, *Daniel* from the lions, his *three companions* from the fiery furnace, *Peter* from *Herod* and the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, and the nation of the *Israelites* successively from the *Egyptians*, *Canaanites*, and *Assyrians*. Thus they conducted *Lot*, *Abraham*, and

the *Israelites*, in seasons of great difficulty and danger, to places and circumstances of safety and peace. Thus they conducted *Gideon* to the destruction of the *Midianites*, *Joseph* and *Mary* to Egypt, *Philip* to the *Eunuch*, and *Cornelius* to *Peter*, to the knowledge of the Gospel through him, and to the salvation of himself, his family, and his friends. Thus angels instructed *Abraham*, *Joshua*, *Gideon*, *David*, *Elijah*, *Daniel*, *Zechariah* the prophet, *Zachariah* the father of *John the Baptist*, the *Virgin Mary*, the *Apostles*, and their fellow-disciples. Thus they comforted *Jacob* at the approach of *Esau*, *Daniel* in his peculiar sorrows and dangers, *Zechariah* in the sufferings of his nation, *Joseph and Mary* in their perplexities, **CHRIST** in his agony, the *Apostles* and their companions after his resurrection, *Paul* immediately before the shipwreck, and the church universally, by the testimony and instruction given in the Revelation of *St. John*.

Generally the Scriptures inform us, especially in the visions of *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and *John*, that they are employed in executing various great and wonderful purposes of Divine providence. Here we behold them controlling evil spirits, wielding the elements of this world, producing, directing, and terminating the great convulsions of time, conveying the souls of the just to the paradise of God, severing the wicked from the good at the day of judgment, and performing the duties of other dignified and glorious missions. All these are instances, either of wonderful power and skill, or of singular benevolence and excellency of character, both eminently honourable to them and eminently important to the universe. By these facts we cannot fail to be convinced that their employments are wholly noble and magnificent, and

wholly suited to their dignified stations and exalted titles ; as well as to the attributes of power, knowledge and goodness, of which they are so transcendently possessed. Nor can we rationally doubt, that they visit every other habitable world, with messages and designs of the same sublime import ; execute the great purposes of God, in all the parts of his vast kingdom ; and thus become, in an extensive sense, illustrious benefactors of the intelligent creation.

1st. *How delightful an object of contemplation is this glorious order of beings !*

All things pertaining to this illustrious subject, are cheering, luminous, animating, and sublime. The very names assigned to angels by their Creator, convey to us ideas pre-eminently pleasing, fitted to captivate the heart, and exalt the imagination ; ideas only cheerful, refined and noble ; ideas which dispel gloom, banish despondency, enliven hope, and awaken sincere and unmingled joy. They are *living ones* ; beings in whom life is inherent and instinctive ; who sprang up under the quickening influence of the sun of righteousness beneath the morning of everlasting day ; who rose, expanded, and blossomed, in the uncreated beam on the banks of the River of Life, and were nourished by the waters of Immortality. They are *spirits* ; winged with activity and informed with power, which no labour wearies, and no duration impairs ; their faculties always fresh and young ; their exertions unceasing and wonderful ; and their destination noble and delightful : without example, and without end. They are *burning ones*, glowing with a pure and serene, with an intense and immortal flame of divine love ; returning without ceasing, the light and warmth which they have received from the great central Sun of the universe, reflecting with supreme beauty the image of

that divine luminary, and universally glorious, although *differing* from each other *in glory*.

The place in which they dwell is perfectly suited to their illustrious character. It is no other than the heaven of heavens; the first and best world that will ever be created; the place where God himself delights peculiarly to dwell; the house where virtue, peace, and joy, dwelt in the beginning and will dwell for ever; the throne of boundless dominion; the parent city of the great empire of JEHOVAH; the happy region where all things are verdant with life, and blossom with immortality.

The station which they hold is of the same cheerful and elevated nature. It is the first station allotted to created existence. These sublime intelligences, are the immediate attendants of JEHOVAH; the nobles and princes of the universe. All their employments, all their allotments, are honourable and happy; all their destiny dignified and divine.

Angels then present us with an object of contemplation replenished with inherent light, beauty, and greatness; with nothing to tarnish, nothing to impair its lustre; nothing to alloy the pleasure of the beholder: a vivid landscape formed of all the fine varieties of novelty and greatness, without one mis-shapen, decayed, or lifeless object to lessen its perfection: a morning of the spring without a cloud to overcast it: a sun without a spot, shining only with the various colours of unmingled light.

2dly. *How different from these glorious and unspotted beings are men!*

Numerous are the ways, in which we may, if we please, derive instruction, improvement, and delight, from the contemplation of this illustrious race of beings. A comparison of ourselves with them, and of

our circumstances with theirs, will particularly teach us our own littleness and depravity; and happily, as well as naturally, prepare us for humility and reformation.

Man is of the lowest order of intelligent beings; kindred to animals; often raised very little above their level; possessed in the humblest degree of rational attributes; the subject of extreme weakness, sluggishness, and ignorance; hastening with a rapid tendency to decay, old age, and death; without love to God, or his fellow-men; depraved throughout with sin; and voluntarily yielded by himself to final perdition.

What an affecting contrast is here presented to our view! Angels so great, virtuous, and happy: man so little, sinful, and miserable. How deeply humbled ought we to be by the sight of this picture, presenting so just, as well as forcible, a delineation of our real character! How ashamed ought we to be of our impiety, deceit, injustice, unkindness, pride, and vanity! For in this humble state, we are vain: possessed of this guilty character, we are proud. Of what are we proud? Of what are we vain? Of our sin, our disgrace, our folly, our frailty, our diseases, or our death? What beside these things can we find to excite our pride.

Yet we are proud and vain: wonderfully proud; deplorably vain. We are proud of a body fattening for worms, and pampered for corruption and the grave; of clothes which we borrow from the sheep and the silk-worm; of endowments given us by God; of wealth amassed by fraud and avarice; and of stations, conferred by base favourism and popular frenzy. Nay, we are proud of profaneness, cursing, and blasphemy. We boast of bargains, made only by the cunning of fraud, or the violence of oppression.

We glory in the infernal arts and infamous success of seduction. We murder our fellow-creatures in duels, and wreath our temples with garlands dyed in blood. We slaughter thousands and millions in war; plant laurels amid the bones, and nourish them with the blood of those whom we have destroyed. We raise our thrones on the cemetery of buried nations; and mistake the groans and shrieks of surviving parents, widows, and orphans, for the trumpet of fame. In a word, all that ought to humble us in the dust, all that ought to clothe us in sackcloth, and cover us with ashes, all that blackens us with disgrace and guilt, all that makes us deformed and loathsome in the sight of God, is converted by us into the means of pride and exultation.

Angels, although so greatly exalted above men, are neither proud, nor vain. The plain reason is, they are not sinful. Pride and vanity are derived from sin only; or rather sin is the root and stem of bitterness, of which they are the branches. To be proud, or vain, then, is not to resemble the holy Angels, but the fallen ones. Can this resemblance flatter any man? a resemblance to the worst and most odious of all the creatures of God! Who would not eagerly drop this wretched likeness, this tattered garb of guilt and shame, assume a resemblance to the glorious beings whom we have been contemplating, and adorn himself with the unspotted, spiritual, and never-fading robe of humility and righteousness? The faith, repentance, and love of the Gospel, are the fine linen of the saints, wrought, and made white, in the heavens; and with this best robe, in his Father's house, every repenting and returning prodigal will be clothed.

3rdly. *What a happy change would be accomplished*

in this world, if men would assume the spirit and conduct of Angels.

Angels never indulge sloth, deceit, wrath, malice, envy, or impiety. Angels never cheat, corrupt, betray, nor oppress. Angels never profane the name of God, perjure themselves, ridicule sacred things, insult the Redeemer, resist the Holy Ghost, nor deny the being, the perfections, the word, or the government, of God. Angels never consume their time in idle amusements, or guilty pleasures; never slander each other, never quarrel; never make wars; and never desire, nor plunder, each other's blessings. How miserable have men, by all this conduct, rendered this unhappy world! With what a prodigal hand do we waste the blessings given to us by God; pervert our talents, and frustrate the end of our being. With what rapacity and violence do we plunder the blessings, and destroy the lives, of our fellow-creatures? In an existence, *naturally* accompanied by many evils, we are impatient to create and multiply sufferings; to lessen the good which God has given; to shorten the period of life, already so little; and to surround it with miseries of our own creation. In this manner, and by ourselves, the evils which we suffer have been immensely multiplied; and the world, destined for our habitation, which, if we were pious, just, sincere, and kind, would be a comfortable residence, has been converted into a region of sorrow and mourning. Private dwellings, the proper mansions of peace and love, have been disturbed by domestic broils; the father contending against his son, and the son against his father: the mother, with parental unkindness, provoking her daughter to wrath, and the daughter, with filial impiety, revolting from her mother: brethren have become strangers to each other; and

for such a length of time, and with such a violence of passion, that they have been *harder to be won than the bars of a castle*. Neighbourhoods have been distracted with divisions and contentions, and nations rent asunder by faction and discord. Empires have become fields of war and slaughter, and the earth has been changed into a vast receptacle of misery and ruin. All this wretchedness is the consequence of sin; its immediate product; its genuine offspring. Should we, then, drop this character, would not our consciences be more serene, our lives more pleasant, our families more harmonious, and the world more quiet and happy.

The mighty differences between heaven and earth, angels and men, lies in holiness and sin. Angels are holy; we are sinful: their residence is happy; ours in many respects wretched. This world was originally formed to be a delightful habitation; and at the close of the creation, was by God himself pronounced to be very good. Man was once immortal and happy, because he was just, kind, sincere, humble, and pious. What has the world, what has man, gained by the change? The afflicting answer may be summed up in a word. God made the earth a beautiful image of heaven; man, by his apostacy, has changed it into no obscure resemblance of hell. God made man *a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor: man, being in honor, abode not, but became like the beasts which perish*.

4thly. *These considerations furnish us with a strong presumptive argument that the scriptures are a divine revelation.*

In the Scriptures we find an order, or rather a kind, of beings described, which were never known or ima-

gined by any person who did not derive his acquaintance with them from that book.

All heathen writers have stained even their gods with great defects, and deformed them with gross crimes, and wherever they have exhibited their gods as acting, have filled up their history with weakness and depravity. The angels of the Scriptures, on the contrary, are every where, by every writer, and in every attribute and act alike, pure and perfect. The only answer which can be given is, God directed the one class of writers, and human reason and imagination the other.

5thly. How wonderful, and how amiable, do these considerations exhibit the humility of angels?

In the observations which have been made, we have seen their character to be great and glorious without a parallel, their station exalted above that of all other created beings, and their employments the first in the kingdom of God. Yet they do not disdain nor grudge to minister to the wants and the relief, to the instruction and the comfort of men, who, compared with them, are only worms of the dust.

A single fact will set this subject in a stronger light than any train of general observations. Call up to your view then a choir of these illustrious beings, cheerfully leaving the glory of heaven, and directing their flight to this forlorn and sinful earth, to accompany the departing spirit of poor, despised, forgotten Lazarus to the world of happiness, to point the way to that distant and delightful region, and to aid his trembling wing to the house and presence of his Father and his God. What monarch, what noble, what gentleman, what plain man, would willingly have even attended his funeral? Who would have received him, when alive, into his house, powerfully as his

sufferings pleaded for charitable relief? Who, much more, would have consented to become his companion? Who, still more, would have acknowledged himself his friend? Yet all this angels did not disdain.

Let us take to ourselves shame and confusion of face at the remembrance of our pride and haughtiness of heart. How often do we despise, neglect, insult, and trample under foot those who, in the sight of God, are far better than ourselves! For what do we despise them? Because, perhaps, their houses, their persons, their dress, their wealth, or their talents, are inferior to our own. We might, indeed, sometimes pity them for these reasons, and be justified. But where shall we find an excuse for despising them?

Nor is the meekness of angels less contrasted to our wrath and revenge. They do not even bring railing accusations. Much less do they, like ourselves, indulge furious resentment, and seek insatiable revenge. There is not a single reason to believe that they ever exercised, even in one instance, personal resentment against the basest and most guilty child of Adam, or a revengeful thought against the most depraved inhabitant of hell. No provocation is able to disturb the serenity of their minds. No cloud ever overcasts their smiles, or intercepts the clear sunshine of their benevolence.

6thly. *How are the meek and humble virtues dignified by this great example!*

These virtues are the constant character, the essential attributes, the peculiar glory of *thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers*. But these virtues, and those in whom they are found on earth, *man, who is a worm, and the son of man, who is but a worm*, regards with contempt. Men glory in being proud, in

being wrathful, in being revengeful, in being tyrants and oppressors, in being heroes and butchers. To men of these characters statues are erected; nay, temples have been built, and altars smoked with victims. To them the page of the historian and the harp of the poet are consecrated. To their praise the sculptor bids the marble breathe, and the painter teaches his canvass to glow. They live in palaces, and are entombed in mausoleums. Shouts and hosannas follow them through life, and, at their death, nations re-echo the cries of lamentation, and kingdoms are covered with sackcloth and ashes. How strange is all this to the eye of reason! *Dives arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day,* while *Lazarus* lies at his gate under the naked heaven, coveting only to be fed with the crumbs which fall from his table! Nay *Pilate* and *Herod* on the seat of judgment, and *Christ* on the cross!

In the invisible world these things are wonderfully inverted. *Dives* expires, but no *angels* convey him to *Abraham's bosom*. There the meek and lowly virtues claim the esteem and love, and engross the kind offices of beings possessed of the highest wisdom and excellence, and obtain the everlasting favour of the infinite God. On these virtues angels smile with complacency, while fools and sinners regard them with hatred and scorn. But, if we would be like angels; if we would secure their good-will; if we would be admitted to their glorious company; if we would share in their immortal blessings; if we would dwell in the house of their Father and our Father, of their God and our God, we must esteem the things which they esteem; love the things which they love, and do the things which they do; we must renounce the haughty, angry, revengeful character which we are so pleased

to assume, become *meek and lowly of heart*, like the Divine Redeemer, and in the midst of provocations, however great, must be ready cheerfully to say, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!*

7thly. *What exalted views does this subject present to us of the future state of the righteous!*

In the resurrection, says our SAVIOUR to the Sadducees, the children of God shall be *ισαγγελοι*, equal to the angels; or, perhaps more properly, *they shall be like the angels* in attributes, stations, and employments. Like the angels, they will possess endless youth, activity, power, knowledge, and holiness; enjoy the same immortal happiness, dignity, and divine favour; be lovely, beautiful, and glorious in the sight of God; and *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. Like the angels shall they be *sons, and kings, and priests to God, and live and reign with him for ever and ever*.

What a change must this be from the present weakness and guilt of man, from sluggishness and ignorance, decay and death, sin and misery! What a wonderful display of the boundless compassion of God to raise us from such a depth to such a height! Can we hesitate to exclaim, "This is *love, passing all understanding*." Who would not, for these Divine blessings, renounce the pleasures of sin, and cheerfully bid adieu to all that avarice, ambition, and sensuality can boast? Who would not, with all the wise and good, cease at once from the sordid pursuits of sinners, and direct every view, desire, and effort, towards the state and character of angels, and the attainment of the same residence, employments, happiness and glory.

8thly. *What sublime views does this subject furnish us of the greatness of Christ?*

By him, says the text, were all these illustrious beings created, together with all their attributes, importance, and dignity. The character of every workman is seen, of course, in the nature of the work which he has made. If these be insignificant and worthless, it exhibits nothing but the insignificance and worthlessness of the maker. If curious and excellent, if sublime and wonderful, it unfolds strongly, and certainly, his greatness, wisdom, and glory. Of what faculties are angels the subjects? Of what intelligence, purity, power, loveliness, and elevation of mind? What then must be the perfections of Him who contrived and formed angels; who with a word called them into being; who preserves, informs, directs, controls, and blesses them for ever? Great and excellent as they are, they are exhibited as *unclean in his sight, and as charged with folly* before him. How amazing, then, must be the perfection of his character! how great; how wise; how good.

CREATION.—FALLEN ANGELS.

And the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved, in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.—JUDE vi.

IN this passage we have a concise, but very interesting account of certain angels who once dwelt in heaven. Created, at first with all the excellencies of the angelic nature, placed in circumstances of the highest honour, and enjoying the greatest happiness, they are here represented as having lost their charac-

ter, and forfeited their honour and happiness. *The nature and allotments* of these angels furnish the subject which next demands our attention in this system of discourses.

The angels, who fell, were, in their first estate, of the same rank and character, engaged in the same employments, and possessed of the same happiness, which were enjoyed by their virtuous companions. Accordingly, they are described by the same names in 1 Cor. xv. 24. and Ephes. vi. 10. This doctrine is also clearly indicated in the text; where, in the original, it is said, *that they kept not their principality; instead of their first estate*, as it is improperly rendered in our Bible. All these blessings, however, they lost by rebelling against God. Of this great and wonderful event; a revolt in the heavenly world, and among the highest order of created beings, we have no regular history in the Scriptures. Still, we are abundantly assured by them, that it actually took place. By various declarations, allusions, and hints, contained in them, we are taught that Satan, an angel of pre-eminent distinction in heaven, rebelled, under the influence of pride and ambition, against his Maker. In this deplorable enterprise, we further learn, that multitudes of the heavenly host united with him; and with the same disposition, violated the law, and revolted from the government of God. That pride and ambition were especially the sins by which Satan and his companions fell, is, I think, sufficiently evident from 1 Tim. iii. 6: where St. Paul, speaking of a bishop, says, *he must not be a novice, νεοφύτου, a new convert, lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.* In this passage, it is plainly asserted, that the devil was condemned for his pride, and it is fairly pre-

sumable that the same sin was the source of condemnation to his companions. The revolt appears to have been but one, to have existed at one time, and to have united those who shared in it, in the same guilt, as well as in the same undertaking.

II. *They left their own habitation.*

By this phraseology, heaven is perhaps intended; or that happy world in which all the angels were originally united together around the throne, and in the peculiar presence of God. They despised and disturbed the happiness of heaven; and therefore were permitted to enjoy it no more. They were discontented with their blessings; therefore they were taken from them. They had revolted from their God, therefore he cast them off.

III. *They are confined in chains under darkness.*

Darkness is a state, obviously suitable for beings, to whom the light of heaven was unsatisfactory and odious; and chains are most proper for beings, whose proud and wanton wishes were discontented with *the glorious liberty of the sons of God.*

IV. *They are reserved unto the judgment of the great day.*

The punishment and degradation of these evil beings are not completed. They will hereafter be tried and condemned for all the evils, which they will have wrought or attempted, during the continuance of this earthly system. These evils, however gratifying to them in the perpetration, will, after the judgment, return upon their own heads; and instead of the triumph for which they hoped and laboured, will cover them with eternal shame, and overwhelm them in endless ruin. The chains which they now wear, are literally everlasting, and will confine them unto the judgment, so that they cannot escape; and will confine them for

ever in the sufferance of that misery to which they have destined themselves by a voluntary devotion.

Such generally, is the Scriptural account of the character and allotments of evil angels. It will be proper to add a few more particulars derived from the same source. The leader or prince of these evil beings, was the tempter of our first parents; the author of all the miseries, and an instrumental cause of all the sins which have followed that dreadful event. The same disposition which manifested itself in his rebellion in the heavenly world, was here directed in the same manner against the government of his Maker: a disposition compounded of malice, baseness and treachery. Hence he is styled in the Scriptures, the *adversary*; the *calumniator*; the *father of lies*; the *destroyer*; a *murderer*, and a *liar from the beginning*. All his followers sustain the same dreadful and detestable character. So far as has been in their power, they have deceived, betrayed, and destroyed the race of men; have been uniformly the enemies of God and mankind; have tempted them unceasingly to sin; and have especially persecuted and distressed the children of God. They powerfully excited the persecution and crucifixion of the Redeemer, and the sufferings of his apostles and their followers. From that time to the present, they have unceasingly pursued the same malignant course; and will, hereafter, so far as they are permitted, delude, distress, and destroy unto the end of the world.

REMARKS.

I. *In this passage, we find a short, but affecting account of one of the most stupendous events, which have taken place in the universe.*

A vast multitude of intelligent beings of the first

order in the divine kingdom, excelling all other orders in knowledge, power and splendour, and unrivalled in the favour of God, rose up in rebellion against their Creator, Benefactor and Sovereign; lost their pristine honour and happiness, their primæval virtue and dignity; sunk down to the depths of sin, shame and misery; and incurred the endless hatred and contempt of all good beings.

From this singular and amazing event, many interesting truths may be learned by us.

1st. *No created faculties, no finite holiness or happiness, furnish sufficient inducements to prevent creatures from apostacy.*

Angels fell. All others, therefore, may fall; and, if left to themselves will fall. The true reason, why *the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of holy angels*, persevere in their own obedience is evidently, I think, not their own inherent perfection, but the promise of God and his almighty power, especially exerted to secure them from sin.

2dly. *We are here taught, that pride could disturb the peace and happiness of heaven, and prove the cause of endless ruin to a multitude of its inhabitants.*

How great an evil, then, is pride! It overcast, in a moment, all the beautiful and eternal prospects; it eclipsed in a moment, all the splendour, virtue and dignity of angels. What a vast, what an immeasurable ruin did it here accomplish! What a change did it make in the universe! What an amazing change did it produce in those, by whom it was exercised! How ought we then, to tremble at the indulgence of pride; the sin, to which we are probably more prone than to any other! More or less, it occupies every heart; manifests itself in all the conduct of the children of men; and intrudes itself into their piety, their bene-

volence, their prayers, their songs, their alms, their humility, and their repentance. If angels were so odious in the sight of God, on account of their pride; how odious must we be! If they were ruined by it for ever, what will become of us?

3dly. *We are further taught, that no creatures are so necessary or important to God, as to be secure from his anger, when they sin against him.*

The number of wicked men, often relied on in no small degree as a foundation of hope and safety, is merely a foundation of sand. The number of the wicked angels did not avail themselves at all. Every one of the rebels was destroyed as absolutely, as if no other had been concerned in the rebellion. Their number, also, was immensely great; and one of them was of more worth and importance than many men united.

5thly. *The punishment of the evil angels is not disciplinary.*

They have been already punished at least six thousand years; yet, instead of being reformed, they have grown worse continually; and will grow worse, not only till the day of judgment, but probably for ever. The Scriptures inform us, that the punishment of evil angels is the same with that of evil men. The punishment of evil men, therefore, is not disciplinary, but punishment properly so called; punishment designed to reward the sins, not to amend the characters of either angels or men. Both are hopeless of amendment; yet both may be useful, although dreadful examples to the rest of the universe. There is not a reason to believe, that sin was ever renounced or a sinner reformed, except by the almighty power of the Spirit of Grace.

II. *We learn from these observations, that opposition to God is supremely odious and deformed.*

This is the fundamental characteristic of apostacy in both angels and men. Of this the diabolical character is made up. How odious and deformed is it most justly accounted! How false, how malicious, how cruel, how base, how detestable! Let it be remembered, that all opposition to God, is in nature and substance the same; and that it differs not in kind, but merely in degree.

III. *In how many respects do wicked men resemble wicked angels!*

Like them, do wicked men exalt themselves against God, hate his government, oppose his designs, and revile his character; inflate themselves with pride; murmur at their own allotments; covet the enjoyments of others; corrupt their fellow-creatures; tempt them to iniquity, and to defraud them of endless life. Like them do they hate, envy, injure, calumniate, and destroy. How much of the history of this great world has resembled a history of fiends! How much of it has been a history of falsehood, fraud, treachery, pollution, slanders, contentions, murders, oppression, slaughter, irreligion, impiety, profaneness, and blasphemy! How readily have evil men, like evil angels, undertaken to rival God; and demanded the homage, worship and obedience due to him alone.

How laboriously do Infidel writers, even now, oppose their Maker and their Redeemer, and strive to shut both their fellow-men and themselves out of heaven! Particularly with what frequency and constancy, do they repeat the very falsehood which was first told to the parents of mankind: *Although ye disobey God, ye shall not surely die.* How continually do wicked men, by argument, ridicule, eloquence, and example, tempt each other to sin against God! How great a part of their life and labours, do multitudes

spend in this employment. Where can we find a moral distinction between this conduct, and that of fallen angels?

IV. *The same punishment which is reserved for evil angels, is accordingly reserved for evil men.*

This punishment was prepared at first, for the devil and his angels. But Christ the final Judge of the quick and the dead, has informed us, that impenitent men shall at the great day, stand with them on the left hand; be included in the same sentence, and depart to the same place of torment. Both will have been embarked in one cause, will have sustained one character, and will, therefore, share in one allotment of woe. Perhaps there is not a more affecting, more overwhelming consideration to a serious mind than this: that evil men will hereafter be confined in the same habitation with these hateful beings, who are possessed of a disposition to do every thing which is injurious to God and their fellow-creatures, and to perpetrate all the crimes dictated by malice, cruelty, deceit and revenge. To be imprisoned in *this* world with a collection of abandoned villains; to be hated and despised, deceived and betrayed, oppressed and insulted, wounded to the soul with unceasing cruelty and treachery, and broken down by scorn and insolence, even for our present momentary life, would, I think, be a lot sufficiently dreadful to lacerate the soul with agony. What then must be the nature and misery of a confinement with these powerful, active, sagacious beings; whose minds are all malice, fraud, and cruelty; and whose endless being is only a succession of rage, revenge, and despair?

CREATION.—THE EARTH.

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.

GENESIS i. 1.

IN the history given by Moses of this great work, we are informed,

That, together with the rest of the material system, it was made of nothing; or, in other words, the materials were brought into existence, of which the world was afterwards composed. That we might be at no loss concerning this truth, Moses has taught it distinctly in Gen. ii. 3, where he informs us, that *God rested from all his works, which he created and made; or, as in the original, created to make.* Of the energy by which this mighty effort was accomplished, the psalmist gives us a most sublime conception, when he says, concerning the Creator, that *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.* These materials, after they were first brought into being, were originally a mere mass of confusion, in the language of the divine writer, *without form and void; and are styled successively, the earth, the waters, and the deep.*

1st. *How mighty and majestic a work was the creation of this world?*

The earth is a vast and solid globe, composed of particles so small as to be imperceptible to us, united by the energy which called them into being, and holden together by the same energy in a manner wholly incomprehensible. This globe is *hung upon nothing; and moved through the fields of ether with amazing velocity, and yet with infinite ease, by the hand of its Creator.* Too great to be moved at all, perhaps, by all created intelligences, it

has yet for many thousand years been rolled on with perfect ease by Him *who fainteth not, neither is weary*. It has also moved always in its own place, and in perfect harmony with other worlds. Its motion, at the same time, is so regular and undisturbed, as to be imperceptible to its inhabitants; and yet so rapid as to outrun every human conception.

In a manner not less wonderful, it turns its face continually to the sun; and derives light, and warmth, and energy, for the comfort of its inhabitants; the production of its fruits, and the accomplishment of the business allotted to the race of man.

How expressive of infinite power were the acts of calling it into being, uniting its parts, preserving its structure, moving it through the boundless void, and regulating with perfect harmony all its various affections?

How expressive of infinite wisdom is the endless diversity of beings which it contains; their structure, qualities, and uses; their relations and dependencies; their wants and supplies; their endlessly various beauty, novelty, and grandeur?

Nor is infinite goodness less wonderfully manifested by the bounty, every where displayed in providing for the least as well as the greatest; in making the least, that it *might be provided for*; and in giving to each its own peculiar happiness? How evidently are all these things the work of a God.

2dly. *How wonderful is the order of things which was established at the Creation.*

This subject may be advantageously divided into two parts:

The order of things, which is permanent; and that, which is subject to perpetual revolutions

Of the former class, are the stable position of the

globe at given distances from the heavenly bodies; the position of its poles; its regular motions round its axis, and round the sun, by which the revolutions of the seasons, and the returns of day and night are accomplished; the steady attractions of gravitation and cohesion, which produce the stability of the earth itself and all its great affections. All these are indispensable to the existing state of the world and its inhabitants. The order of these things I call permanent, although subject to many changes, and in several instances a mere series of changes, because they are stable, regular, and unvarying in their nature.

The other and more mutable course of things respects the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms; the state of the atmosphere, the ocean and the surface of the earth. These all are subjects of unceasing changes, and several of them of continual decay, and continual renovation. Plants and animals are formed to renew and perpetuate their kinds through an indefinite period; and were the date of the earth to be sufficiently protracted, to continue them for ever. Nor are mineral substances, so far as they are liable to decay unprovided with the means of re-production. Stones decay and return to earth; and earth is petrified or hardened into stones. Ores are supposed to be exhausted and renewed. Gems and other beautiful substances are multiplied and worn out. Soils are furnished anew for the most luxuriant vegetation. The ocean is also, in a sense, emptied and filled again. From that great storehouse of waters, vapour perpetually ascends, and is discharged on the earth in rain, snow, and hail, in mists and dews: while the earth, through its various channels, returns again its tribute of waters to the ocean. Thus, in the language of the wisest of men:

“ Generation goeth, and generation cometh ;
 But the earth doth ever abide.
 The sun also riseth, the sun also setteth,
 And hasteth to the place where it rose ;
 It passeth to the south ; again it circleth to the north.
 Round and round goeth the wind,
 And ever repeateth its circuits.
 All the rivers run down into the sea ;
 Yet the sea doth not overflow :
 To the place, whence the rivers go forth,
 To the same, to flow again, do they return.
 All the things, thus at their task, no man can recount ;
 The eye would not be able to behold them,
 Nor would the ear be competent to hear them.”

3dly. *How wonderful are the uses of the various things which constitute this earthly system.*

How important to mankind is *the mineral kingdom*. How indispensable is the soil for vegetation, the stones and clay for building ; the peat and coal for fuel ; the metals for all the necessary and ornamental arts of life, and for the existence of almost every thing which we name a convenience or a comfort. Iron alone is indispensable to the employments, and even to the existence of civilized life. Without it, agriculture, commerce, arts and science, would dwindle speedily into nothing ; and but for its aid would never have been.

To minerals, also, we are indebted for medicines, of the most valuable nature ; indispensable to the restoration of health and the continuance of life.

What then shall be said of *the vegetable kingdom* ; of grass, as food for cattle ; and herbs, and grains, as the food of men ; of the flax, cotton, and hemp, with which we are clothed ; of trees, as the materials of fuel, building and fencing ; and as the means of accomplishing a multitude of other purposes equally demanded by necessity and comfort ?

Finally, What shall be said of *the animal kingdom* ;

of the horse, the ox, the cow, the camel, and the sheep; of the furry tribes, and the silk-worm; all of which so largely contribute either to the husbandry of man, his food, his clothing, or his pleasure?

Nor ought we, in considering the nature of earthly things, to forget them, as the delightful means of *beauty and grandeur*.

Were all the interesting diversities of colour and form to disappear, how unsightly, dull, and wearisome would be the aspect of the world? The pleasures conveyed to us by the endless varieties, with which these sources of beauty are presented to the eye, are so much things of course and exist so much without intermission, that we scarcely think either of their nature, their number or the great proportion which they constitute in the whole mass of our enjoyment. But were an inhabitant of this country removed from its delightful scenery to the midst of an Arabian desert,—a boundless expanse of sand; a waste, spread with uniform desolation enlivened by the murmur of no stream, and cheered by the beauty of no verdure; although he might live in a palace, and riot in splendour and luxury, he would, I think, find life a dull, wearisome, melancholy round of existence; and amid all his gratifications, would sigh for the hills and valleys of his native land, the brooks and rivers, the living lustre of the spring, and the rich glories of the autumn. The ever-varying brilliancy and grandeur of the landscape, and the magnificence of the sky, sun, moon, and stars, enter more extensively into the enjoyment of mankind, than we, perhaps, ever think or can possibly apprehend, without frequent and extensive investigation. This beauty and splendour of the objects around us, it is ever to be remembered, is not necessary to their existence, nor to what we com-

monly intend by their usefulness. It is, therefore, to be regarded as a source of pleasure, gratuitously superinduced upon the general nature of the objects themselves; and in this light, as a testimony of the divine goodness, peculiarly affecting.

Still more deeply ought we to regard this part of the creation, as exhibiting in the most convincing manner, *the being and agency of God*. How plainly, how delightfully, how solemnly, is this glorious Being seen every where in these works of his hands.

At the same time, this earthly system strongly displays *the anger of God* against the sins of men.

Amidst all these pleasing manifestations of the Creator, the world around us furnishes, also, many proofs of his displeasure. The storm plunges multitudes in the deep. The lightning destroys its victims in a moment. The famine sweeps its millions to the grave. The volcano overwhelms towns and cities with deluges of fire. The pestilence, *walking in darkness*, drives before it whole nations into eternity: while death, both with and without the aid of these ministers, empties once in thirty years the world of its inhabitants. What awful, as well as decisive proofs are here furnished, that the Maker of all things regards our race with severe and terrible displeasure. How solemnly do they impress this humiliating truth upon every serious mind. How forcibly do they summon us to repent and reform, that we may find mercy.

If this great work is thus wonderful, how wonderful, how glorious, must be its Author!

All these things *He* contrived and executed. All of them are merely pictures or archetypes of the thoughts originally existing in the uncreated mind. Whatever is beautiful, useful, majestic, or exalted, is only a display of the beauty, excellence, greatness, and sub-

limity of Divine perfection. How naturally do our first parents exclaim, in the language of the great English poet,

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair ; thyself how wondrous then,
Unspeakable ! ”

What an astonishing act must it have been to create a world, its furniture, and its inhabitants, together with all their natures and qualities, and to prepare them for all their successive operations, many of these inhabitants destined to live, and many of these operations destined to affect them throughout eternity.

What a mind must that be which could contain an exact, as well as comprehensive scheme of all the parts, characteristical qualities and operations of such a work, which, without confusion or mistake, could see through the whole, and discern every consequence, even in the remotest ages of being ; which could so exactly prescribe the nature, determine the operations, and limit the number of parts, however great, however minute ; and, in the progress of duration, find no cause for the least change in the work, or the least deviation from the system ?

Such are the views which justly arise from the contemplation of our world as it now is. How much more forcibly would they have been impressed on our minds, had we lived in the same world, as it came fresh and fair from the hands of the Creator, when he surveyed every thing that he had done, and pronounced it *very good* ? How delightfully should we have been affected by the objects contained in the present world, had we been superior to death and

destined to live for ever, had we been planted in Eden, where the air, the earth, and the waters teemed with life, and immortality breathed in the winds, flowed in the streams, ripened in the fruits, and exhaled from the flowers? At the side of our first parents, and encircled by Paradise, how instinctively should we have exclaimed, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive blessing, and glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast made all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

The source of all these wonders is the Lord Jesus Christ. *For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things; and by Him all things consist.* To Him, therefore, is this admiration and glory due; and to Him the obedience, confidence, and worship which the Creator of the universe justly challenges from his intelligent creation.

MAN.

And God said, Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness, &c.—GEN. i. 26, 27.

THE next subject of our investigation, is *man*. This subject, though far less splendid than several of the preceding themes of contemplation, is yet peculiarly interesting to *us*. Every thing that relates to it must directly and intimately concern ourselves; and nothing of this nature can be to us uninvested with serious importance, or undeserving of our particular attention.

Nor is this the only point of view in which man claims a high regard. God himself has bestowed an attention upon him which has not been given even to angels themselves. Angels, when they fell, were banished for ever from the presence and favour of their Creator. But, when man had fallen, the Son of God descended from heaven, assumed our nature, lived in this world a suffering life, and died a shameful death, that we might be saved. From the grave also He arose on the third day, ascended to heaven, sat down at the right hand of God the Father, and became *head over all things* for the benefit of his church. Angels themselves are employed by Him in promoting this mighty work, and *are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation*. For man, heaven, shut to the apostate angels, is again opened. For man also, when *the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved; new heavens, and a new earth, like the fabled phoenix out of its ashes, shall arise, in which righteousness shall dwell for ever*.

Man, therefore, notwithstanding his humble origin, and guilty character, is an object rendered highly important on account of the peculiar regard exhibited to him by his Maker. At the same time we ought, in every general estimate of man, to remember, that at this creation he was endued with powers, placed in circumstances, and destined to enjoyments of no inconsiderable distinction and glory.

The text declares to us, in a clear and decisive manner, that more persons than one were concerned in the design of creating man, and that some person or persons were addressed by the Speaker. Various attempts have, indeed, been made to avoid the proof

furnished by this passage to the doctrine of the TRINITY, and in this manner to force out of view the obvious and only meaning of the terms. But none of these attempts which I have seen, will bear examination.

Let us make man, said the Divine Workman, *in our image, after our likeness*; not, "Let man exist," or "Let there be man;" as He had before said, *Let there be light, let there be a firmament, let the earth bring forth grass*; and so on with respect to every thing else which was made. This solemn manner of introducing man into being, was strongly expressive of his importance, and very honourable to his character. The distinction made between him and all the preceding objects of creation, was intentional, and declared him to be of more consequence than them all.

This subject I will now endeavour to illustrate in the following observation :

I. *The time at which man was created, is strongly expressive of the importance of his character.*

The creation of the world was now completed. *The heavens were finished, and all the host of them.* The sun was constituted a perpetual fountain of light, and set in the firmament to rule over the day, and to distribute warmth and life, activity and enjoyment, to all the sentient inhabitants of this world. In his absence, *the moon walked in brightness to rule the night*, and shed on the earth a softer but not less beautiful splendour, than that of the day. The stars also, spreading their glory throughout the sky, delightfully illustrated the wisdom of the Creator, and rejoiced over the inferior works of his hands.

The whole process also of forming the earth, of clothing it with verdure, of replenishing it with ani-

mals, of providing the means of their subsistence and comfort, and of arraying it with beauty and magnificence, was brought to an end. Fresh from the perfect hand of its Creator, it was a work of such excellence, that the eye of Infinite Wisdom, surveying all its parts, saw that it was *very good*. It was a habitation which angels beheld with delight, a palace fitted for the residence of an immortal, virtuous, happy being, of him who was to be made in the image of God, of him who was to have dominion over the earth and every thing which it contained.

This mighty preparation conveys to us high ideas concerning the object for which so much was done. God does nothing but with the strictest propriety. The bounty which here flowed in such copious streams was directed by infinite wisdom, as well as poured out by infinite goodness: while, on the other hand, it was glorious to its author, it was, on the other, perfectly suited to the character of the recipient. The recipient, therefore, was of such a character, as to be the proper object of these illustrious communications.

II. *The nature of man is a still more interesting object of our attention.*

Man is a compound existence, made up of two great parts, the *body*, and the *soul* or *spirit*. The body was formed of the dust of the ground, and can claim no higher origin than that of the animals by which we are surrounded, is possessed only of the same life and activity, and is the subject of the same suffering and enjoyment. Still it is a frame of a most wonderful nature. The parts of which it is composed, their number, their various natures, dependencies, operations and uses, the arrangement by which they are formed into a system, a world within

itself, the faculties attached to it of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling, its capacity of pain and pleasure, the warnings which it is fitted to give of approaching or commencing evil, and the power which it so variously possesses of self-restoration, are all wonderful, mysterious, and strongly declaratory of the skill and goodness of the Creator. Nor ought we, on this occasion, to forget the peculiar structure of the person, the beauty of the complexion, the symmetry of the members, particularly that displayed in the features of the face, the gracefulness and dignity of the motion, nor the power of the countenance to express the thoughts and feelings of the mind. By this last-mentioned attribute, the face becomes an index to the character of the invisible man, and shows, not only his ideas but his emotions also, his virtue and vice, his loveliness and deformity, and, in a word, whatever his fellow-men are interested to know.

All these things were at first formed for endless duration. The body, like the mind, was originally incapable of decomposition or decay. Its life was a mere progress of youth, and bloom, and beauty; and disease and death had not yet marked it for their prey.

Of a still more wonderful nature was the human soul or spirit. This, indeed, would naturally be expected from the peculiar description of it given in the text. *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* And again, *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.* It will not be doubted that the image of God was impressed, and was capable of being impressed on the soul only, and not on the body. As little ought it to be doubted, that this phraseology attributes to the soul a distin-

guished importance, not a little enhanced by these repetitions.

The image of God, in which man is here said to have been created, denotes especially the following things:

1st. *That the soul or spirit was created a pure un-compounded substance.*

2dly. *The soul was formed a THINKING substance.* Col. iii. 10.

3dly. *That the soul was formed with dispositions or affections.*

4thly. *That the affections of the soul were duly at-tempered and directed; or, in other words, were virtuous.* Eph. iv. 24.

5thly. *That the soul had dominion over the world.*

6thly. *That the soul of the first man was possessed of spiritual enjoyment.*

By this I intend, *that enjoyment which springs from affections harmonizing with the conscience, and with each other.* In such a soul every affection is delightful, and all its views, purposes, and pursuits, are just, sincere, benevolent, and lovely.

7thly. *That the soul was created immortal.*

Both the body and mind of man, were originally formed and destined for immortality. After the apostacy, however, the body was sentenced to *return to the dust*, as being rendered wholly unfit to exist in the new creation. But the soul was left possessed of the never-dying principle, with which it was originally endowed; was incapable of dissolution; and was indestructible, except by the exertions of Almighty power.

Thus was man as he came from the hands of his Maker, a creature endued with high and glorious perfections. To complete his happiness, *God created him*

male and female : and this not only for the multiplication of his species, but also for the interchange of those amiable affections and those offices of kindness, which arise from the inherent diversity of character in the sexes. In the emphatical language of the Scriptures, they were made *help-meets* for each other ; and were designed to furnish mutually a social and superior happiness, of which solitude is incapable. A more delicate and beautiful form was united in the woman, to a mind possessing gentler and lovelier affections, a more refined taste and more elegant sentiments. In the man, a firmer, and stronger frame was joined to a mind more robust, more patient of toil, and more equal to difficulties. In each, the other was intended to find that, which was wanting in itself ; and to approve, love, and admire both qualities and actions, of which itself was imperfectly capable : while in their reciprocations of tenderness and good-will, each beheld every blessing mightily enhanced and intensely endeared.

From these considerations are naturally derived the following

REMARKS.

1st. *How illustrious a being was man, as he came from the hands of his Maker?*

With what dignified attributes was he endued ? For what high pursuits was he qualified ? To what sublime enjoyments was he destined ? In him was found, in an important sense, the *end* of this earthly system. Without man, the world, its furniture, and its inhabitants, would have existed in vain. Whatever skill, power and goodness were displayed by the creating hand ; there was, before the formation of man, none to understand, admire, love, enjoy, or

praise the Creator. The earth was clothed with beauty: the landscape unfolded its delightful scenes: the sky spread its magnificent curtains: the sun *travelled in the greatness of his strength*: the moon and stars solemnly displayed the glorious wisdom of their Author; without an eye to gaze, or a heart to contemplate. A magnificent habitation was, indeed, built and furnished; but no tenant was found. Brutes were the only beings which could enjoy at all, and their enjoyment was limited to animal gratification.

But man was separated from all earthly creatures, by being formed an intelligent being. His mind could trace the skill and glory of the Creator in the works of his hands; and from the nature of the work, could understand, admire, and adore the workman. His thoughts could rise to God, and wander through eternity. The universe was to him a mirror, by which he saw reflected every moment, in every place, and in every form, the beauty, greatness and excellence of JEHOVAH. To him, his affections and his praises rose more sweet than the incense of the morning; and made no unhappy harmony with the loftier music of heaven. He was the priest of this great world, and offered the morning and evening sacrifice of thanksgiving for the whole earthly creation. Of this creation, he was also the Lord: not the tyrant; but the rightful, just, benevolent Sovereign. The subjection of the inferior creatures to him was voluntary, and productive of nothing but order, peace and happiness. With these endowments and privileges, he was placed in paradise; no unhappy resemblance of heaven itself: and surrounded by every thing *which was good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or fragrant to the smell*. In an atmosphere, impregnated with life, amid streams in which life flowed; amid fruits, in which life bloom-

ed and ripened; encircled by ever-living beauty and magnificence; peaceful within, safe without, and conscious of immortality; he was destined to labour, only that he might be useful and happy, and to contemplate the wonders of the universe, and worship its glorious author, as his prime and professional employment. He was an image of the invisible God, created to be like him in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, his most illustrious attributes; and like him, to exercise dominion over the works of his hands.

In this situation, also removed far from death and disease, from sorrow and fear, he was formed for endless improvement. His mind, like that of angels, was capable of continual expansion, refinement and elevation; and his life of perpetual exaltation in worth, usefulness and honour. God was his visitor: angels were his companions.

To complete this system of delight, he was created to be the parent of countless millions, who, like himself, were all to be sinless. They were also to inhabit the same world of peace, life and happiness; to possess the same immortality; and to share in the same endless enjoyment. At the head of this lower creation, he was to stand and survey this great globe, filled with his own offspring; and to see the whole immense family like himself, children of God, and heirs of his everlasting love.

2dly. How greatly has man fallen from his original state.

What proofs of humiliation are visible in every thing found in the present world?

In our bodies particularly, what seeds of weakness, distress and decay. The first proofs that we possess life, are the cries of pain and suffering inarticulately uttered by the infant just entered into the world. How

often does even that infant agonize and expire in the cradle. If he passes into childhood, how many pains does he undergo, how many fears, how many sorrows? How frequently is he carried while a child to the grave. Should he arrive at youth: what a train of new evils is he obliged to encounter. And in how many instances does the canker-worm, or the frost nip the blossom, and wither it beneath the fond eye of parental love. Should he become a man; sickness, pain and sorrow still hunt him through every course of life; and not unfrequently infix their fangs in his heart-strings: while death, always watching for its prey, descends when he is least aware, and seizes and bears away the miserable victim. Should he live to old age, his strength declines; his face is furrowed with wrinkles; and his head whitened with hoary locks: his body bends towards the earth, from which it was taken; and exhausted by suffering, he resigns his breath, and is conveyed to the dark and narrow house, devoured by worms, dissolved by corruption, and changed into his original dust.

His mind, in the meantime, the sport of evil, ungovernable passions, is ignorant, wild, wayward; the seat of a thousand errors, weaknesses and follies. With its follies, its sins keep at least an equal pace. Selfishness in many forms, all of them odious, distresses the parental eye even in infancy. In childhood, in youth, in manhood, it is seen in new varieties of operation, and new appearances of deformity. Pride and ambition, avarice and sensuality, pollute and debase the man in early stages of life; and all increase their savage, brutal control, as he advances in his progress. At the same time, envy, fraud, deceit, violence, and cruelty, mould him into a monster, and scarcely permit us to believe that he was once formed in the

image of God. Where is now the mild, benevolent, equitable dominion, exercised by our great progenitor over his happy empire? Where the peace between man and the inferior inhabitants of the earth? The chief traces of his footsteps, through the animal world, are oppression, blood and death.

In the moral world what scenes of pollution, fraud and tyranny, of war and ravage, are every where displayed. What groans of anguish have been heard from one end of heaven to the other, and from the apostacy to the present hour.

In the natural world, what a host of enemies to man are arrayed by famine and disease, the storm, the earthquake and the volcano? Even his breath, his food, his pleasure, are all means of his destruction.

Where is his purity, justice, truth, and good-will? Where his piety, his morning praise, his evening incense? Where his converse with God; his familiarity with angels? Men are now the family of Adam; but how different a family from that which has been described. Were the great ancestor of mankind to rise from the dead, and cast his eyes over this earth; what a race of children would he behold. Accompany him in your imagination to the retreats of drunkenness, gluttony and pollution. Could he believe that the wretches, burrowed in these foul recesses, sprang from him, who once offered up the worship of paradise? Enter with him into a hall of justice, and see him ponder, in silent amazement, the terrible exhibitions of fraud and falsehood, private injustice and personal cruelty. Behold him mark with a failing eye the lowering gloom of the gibbet, the horrid recesses of the gaol, and the felon crimes which they were destined to reward. Follow him to the throne of tyranny, and see his bosom heave with emotions

unutterable, while he watches the devastation of human happiness and human hope, accomplished by the iron-hand of power; man blasted and withered by its touch; and the fiend himself rioting on sorrow, tears, and death. Finally, adventure with him to the field of battle, and see him tremble and faint at the shouts and groans, at the sight of immeasurable fury, carnage and woe. How would his heart rend asunder with agony, how would his eyes weep blood, at such a view of this miserable world! At the remembrance, that both the authors and the subjects of these sufferings were his own offspring. Where would he now find his Eden, his virtue, his immortality?

3dly. *How desirable would it be to regain the blessings originally bestowed on man.*

The paradisiacal state has been an object of high estimation to all men. Our first parents were wise, virtuous and happy. They were at peace with God, enjoyed his presence; and received continually communications of his favour. They were companions of angels, and shared their conversation, their friendship, and their joys. Alike were they free from pain, sickness, sorrow and death; safe from fear and hatred, injustice and cruelty; and superior to meanness, sloth, intemperance and pollution. They were also immortal, were destined to dwell in a perpetual Eden, were surrounded always by beauty, life and fragrance, and were employed only in knowing, loving and enjoying. To regain all these things, would, indeed, "be a consummation devoutly to be wished." But God has offered them all to us, has commanded, has besought us to receive them; and has given his Son to die, that we might obtain the glorious possession. We may, therefore, regain the blessings of that para-

dise, the loss of which we so deeply lament, and the splendour of which is, at times, the delightful theme of our contemplation, and the most fascinating ornament of descriptive song.

The best of its blessings we may in a great measure regain even here. Sin blasted all the bloom and beauty of the primitive state, and changed the garden of God into a desolate wilderness. This happy place was formed to be the residence of virtue; and virtue can again call forth all its glories, even on the face of this dreary world. *Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* The piety, truth and benevolence, which adorned our first parents, would again call down similar blessings from heaven. What a world would this become, if such were again the disposition of man? How transporting a deliverance to be freed from all the sins and sufferings of this melancholy state; and to enjoy, wherever we roved, an approving conscience, serenity of soul, an unspotted life, kindness interchanged with all men, universal peace, mild and equitable government, and the pure, constant and delightful worship of the Infinite Benefactor. To escape from our present, melancholy, stormy, bloody world, to such a state, would be to quit, for a palace of splendour and delight, the gloom of a vault, hung round with midnight, and peopled with corpses; a bedlam, where the eye of frenzy flashed, the tongue vibrated with malice, and chains clanked in dreadful concert, to rage and blasphemy; a dungeon, haunted with crimes, teeming with curses, filled with fiends in the human shape, and opening its doors only to the gibbet and the grave.

4thly. *How glorious does the Redeemer appear in the contemplation of this subject.*

Christ formed our first parents, endued them with

unspotted holiness, and invested them with immortal life. Christ planted Eden for their possession, and placed them in the enjoyment of all its felicity. Christ gave them the dominion of this lower world, and entitled them to the company of the heavenly host. All these blessings they lost by their apostacy, and, with their apostacy, the loss also has descended to their posterity. To restore our ruined race to the enjoyment of these blessings, Christ, with infinite compassion, left his own glory, lived in our world a frail suffering man, and died a death of shame and agony.

He who created paradise at first can create it again. He who gave immortal life and youth; He who communicated spiritual knowledge, refined affections, and spotless holiness to our first parents, can communicate them to us. By creating them at first, He has proved that He is able; by becoming incarnate, living and dying for our sakes, He has proved that he is willing.

For this end he has assumed the government of all things. *In his Father's house, He has told us, are many mansions. To that happy residence He has gone before, to prepare a place for us.* Nay, He has declared, that He will create *new heavens and a new earth*, for the reception of those, who trust in him, and love his appearing. In this new world, He has assured us, *there shall be no more death nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain: for all these former evil things shall then have passed away.* In this happy region, the *righteousness*, which the Paradise below the Sun was destined to reward, *will dwell for ever.* There the Tree of Life blossoms, and bears anew: and there Immortality flows again in *the pure river of the Water of Life.* There *the sun no more goes down; neither does the moon withdraw itself; for*

Jehovah is the everlasting light of his children, and their God their glory. From that delightful world the Redeemer cries, Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me. Oh! that every heart present may answer, Even so, Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

THE CHIEF END OF MAN.

Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.—1 Cor. x. 31.

I HAVE considered *the creation and nature of man*. The next subject naturally offered to our view by a system of theology, is *the end for which man was made*. By this I mean *the principal purpose which he is fitted to answer, the thing which God had principally in view in bringing man into existence*.

The importance of this subject can need very little illustration. The question, *For what end was I made, or what ends are my existence and faculties designed to answer*, is instinctively realized by every sober man to import all that is of any real moment to himself.

In the text we are required *to do whatsoever we do to the glory of God*. This precept I consider as disclosing to us the true end for which we were made. In examining it,

I. I shall attempt to show, *what it is to glorify God*.

In the Scriptures, mankind are frequently required to glorify their Creator. But it is perfectly plain that *they cannot, in any manner or degree, change his nature, or the state of his perfections*; these being absolutely *without variableness, or shadow of turning*. It may, I think, be said, not only with truth, but with the highest reverence, that God himself cannot alter his perfections. Indeed this is directly declared in the

text, which I have partially quoted. Yet it will not be denied, *that God can glorify himself; that is, make himself glorious, by acting in such a manner as is approved by his own infinite wisdom, and as will display the glory of his character to the view of his intelligent creatures.* In a manner, generally resembling this, those creatures, and among them mankind, can also glorify him; that is, they can act in such a manner as to show his glory to each other, and in this way to please him, and gain his approbation.

To glorify God in this sense, is,

1st. *To know him.*

The perfections of God are the glory of his character.

The knowledge of God is gained wholly either from his works, or from his word. To himself only is he known in the abstract. In creation and providence, however, and especially in the Bible, his intelligent creatures can *behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.*

2dly. *To think of him in a manner suited to his character.*

To this end it is necessary that we think of him willingly, or with pleasure; that we find him in all his works, both of creation and providence; that we regard him as the original and universal agent, as present, acting, and visible in every thing which is great or good.

3dly. *To love him.*

Love, in the general sense, is the sum and substance of all the exercises of piety, of reverence, submission, dependence, resignation, confidence, hope, and joy. When, therefore, it is here said, that it is necessary to love God in order to glorify him, it is intended that, to this end, we must become the subjects of all

these exercises. Nor is this all which is necessary. We must also become the subjects of them habitually, and unceasingly, and the more we know of his character the more we must delight in it, and thus render to him a continually increasing tribute of piety. All this, and this only, is glorifying God with the heart, the most exalted and noble of our moral faculties: for this is the conduct of the heart, which is suited to the nature of the object beloved.

4thly. *To serve him.*

God is *originally* obeyed in the correspondence of the heart with its precepts, and is never *in the proper sense* obeyed, except in those cases where such a correspondence exists. But to serve him, in the full sense, denotes also the conformity of our external conduct to his most holy will.

5thly. *To enjoy him.*

Our enjoyment is really and chiefly found in the exercises already specified, and whenever we are the subjects of those exercises, we are also the subjects of corresponding enjoyment.

II. *To glorify God is constituted by him, the chief end of man.*

This truth is easily evinced in two ways.

1st. *God has, in the Scriptures, enjoined this conduct as the only duty of man.*

Whatever God designed as the great end of the creation of man, he himself perfectly knew, unquestionably chose, and has certainly enjoined on man, if he has enjoined any thing. But this he has enjoined, and this is all which he has enjoined.

2dly. *From the nature of the case, it is evident that this is the highest and noblest end which man can accomplish.*

As this position will be rendered clearly certain by

the considerations suggested under the following head, I shall only observe here, that, admitting it to be true, the consequence follows in a manner which allows of no debate.

III. *I shall now attempt to exhibit the propriety of this divine constitution.*

This I think will plainly appear from the following observations :

When God created the universe, he created it that he might glorify himself.

For the accomplishment of this end, he has created innumerable creatures capable of voluntarily co-operating with him in this great design.

Angels and men, and probably many other beings, are formed in the image of God, and, like him, are possessed of the three great powers of understanding, will, and motivity.

Such creatures are of course capable of glorifying God in a two-fold manner; viz. by the elevated and important endowments of which they are possessed, and in the voluntary exertion of their active powers towards the accomplishment of the same end. Thus they are far more noble, exalted, and estimable in the eye of God, than any other creatures.

In a conformity of heart and of effort, consists all the worth and all the happiness of rational creatures.

God is the source and sum of all good, both moral and natural. To know and love him, is to know and love in a sense; all that is excellent, great, and lovely. To serve him is to do all that is amiable or desirable, all that is good or honourable, all that is pleasing to God or profitable to his rational creatures.

It is further to be observed, that in glorifying God, the mind is engrossed by an object which knows no limit, and in which, therefore, its efforts may be for

ever repeated, enlarged, and exalted. No law nor consideration demands that it should limit its views, desires, or labours. Excess here is impossible. Approved alway by itself and by its Maker, the more, the greater its efforts are, it sees no bound set to them, except by its capacity.

We learn hence the true dignity of man.

The dignity of man has been always a favourite topic of his thoughts, conversation, and writings. When he looks into his own bosom, and discerns the nature and extent of his powers, or casts his eye abroad and beholds what he has done, it is not strange that he should form elevated ideas concerning his own character and destination. Unhappily, however, he has always formed, when left to his own speculations, erroneous opinions concerning this subject, and has placed his dignity in things of which it can never be constituted. Personal accomplishments, brilliant or profound talents, extensive acquisitions of learning and science, ingenious inventions or improvements of art, bold achievements, and heroic exploits, have ever been the objects in which he has supposed his dignity to consist, and of which he has ever been inclined to boast. Some of these are, indeed, both desirable and commendable; but all of them, by themselves, are utterly insufficient to constitute real dignity. This is found in the mind only. Intelligence is necessary to it; but of intelligence alone it cannot be constituted. Its real seat is in the disposition. Virtue, moral excellence, the beauty and loveliness of the mind, is the real and only dignity of an intelligent being. To devote all the faculties and labours to the glory of the Creator, in the pursuit of the supreme good of the universe, is the true worth, honour, and glory of every intelligent

creature; and, compared with it, all things else, of which we are capable, are *nothing, less than nothing, and vanity.*

We cannot but see in these considerations the obligation which we are under to devote all our faculties and labours to the promotion of this end. This observation needs no comment.

We also see here, in a clear light, the necessity of regeneration.

The native disposition of man is opposed to the end of his being. This disposition nothing has ever changed essentially, except the power of the *spirit of truth.* As necessary, therefore, as it is, that man should answer the end of his creation, so necessary is it, that he should become the subject of this change in his moral character.

We discern in this subject the transcendent excellence and glory of God.

All things display the glory of God; but some display it much more than others. In the scheme of creation, which has been now discussed, there is a splendour wholly peculiar, attributed to JEHOVAH. In the end, proposed by intelligent beings in their designs, and displayed in their conduct, their proper character is especially manifested. The end proposed by God, and displayed in his works of creation and providence, is unquestionably the noblest and most important of all possible ends, and the strongest proof of the best of all possible characters. It is the most finished and the most ample manifestation of all that is great, exalted, lovely, and divine. Out of it springs created intelligence, virtue, and enjoyment, enlarged, refined, and brightened for ever. Heaven and its immortal glory are its fruits; angels, *and the spirits of just men made perfect,* are its offspring. The sun of

righteousness here rises on the astonished sight, without a cloud, and shines with the clear effulgence of eternal day. In the future world, that *sun shall no more go down, neither shall that glory withdraw itself*, but with a presence ever enjoyed, a lustre ever increasing; shall enlighten, warm, and quicken the universe of virtuous minds with one unceasing day, one everlasting spring; while all that is beautiful, fragrant, and delightful, lovely in the eye of God, and possessed a resemblance of his transcendent perfection, shall rise, and bloom, and flourish beneath the life-giving influence for ever and ever.—Amen.

PROVIDENCE.—THE PROBATION OF MAN.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.—GENESIS ii. 15—17.

The providence of God towards man began immediately after he was created.

In the great and wonderful work of creation, provision was effectually made for the production, subsistence, and comfort of such beings as were afterwards to exist in this world.

As man was the last creature which was made, when he was formed the work of creation was finished. From this time that superintending and controlling

agency of God, commonly called providence, commenced, and has ever since been unceasingly extended over all the works of his hands.

The providence of God is twofold, *ordinary and miraculous*. *Miraculous providence is an immediate agency of God in the production of events adopted, at times, to accomplish certain ends which would be less advantageously accomplished in any other manner. The ordinary providence of God is an agency directing the several creatures which he has made, to the several purposes for which they were made, and conducted according to certain rules which he has been pleased to establish, and which are commonly, although improperly enough, called laws of nature.* In the scriptures, with much more propriety as well as beauty, they are termed *ordinances of heaven*. In the succession of things, according to these ordinances, the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are gloriously manifested in a series of events, beautiful and harmonious, wonderful and sublime, beyond any limit assignable by the thoughts of man.

Man, immediately after his creation, was placed in a state of active employment.

He was, at the same time, placed in a state of trial.

The situation in which man was placed, furnished him with eminent inducements and advantages to obey.

The obedience of Adam was concentered in a single point, and was thus rendered easy, and, so far as might be, secure, in a manner strongly expressive of the goodness of God.

If he ate not of the forbidden fruit, he was approved.

The rewards promised to him were infinitely great, and furnished therefore an infinite motive to obedience.

Coming directly to his heart, affecting him, as far as might be, with their whole importance, daily forced upon his view; and reasonably expected, if any thing could be expected to prevail.

We learn, that motives, equally powerful, lent their whole force to deter him from disobeying.

The reward promised was immortal life; the punishment threatened was, I apprehend, eternal death. What motives could possibly have greater influence on a thinking mind than these? With what force, especially, must they be addressed to such a mind as that of Adam; unbiassed by any influence of sin, loving obedience entirely, accustomed only to happiness, entitled to immortal life, and yet capable of losing finally this glorious state? What a contrast between these two objects; how affecting, how amazing!

From these summary considerations it appears,

1st. *That God acted, in establishing the probation of our first parents, not only justly, but kindly and bountifully.*

2dly. *These considerations teach us also the extreme error and perverseness of those men who, in the language of sneer and contempt, declare that God cannot be supposed to have condemned mankind for the mere eating of an apple.*

The fruit, whatever it was, was plainly of no importance in the possession to Him who, at his bidding, can in a moment call into existence a world, or a million of worlds, with all their furniture and beauty. Nor has it, in this sense, the most remote relation to the subject in hand. The guilt of our first parents lay solely in rebelling against the will of God; their Crea-

tor, Sovereign, and Benefactor. For this rebellion they were justly condemned, if God can justly condemn a rebellious creature.

3dly. *We are taught by this passage of Scripture, in one important particular, the views which God entertains of sin.*

The sentence here denounced against disobedience is denounced against the first act. *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* The death, threatened in this law, is threatened to a single transgression. Accordingly for a single transgression they were afterwards condemned.

How different is this exhibition of the mind of God concerning this subject, from the views which we are accustomed to cherish! We are prone to believe that even after numerous transgressions, nay after the sins of a whole life, God will still regard us with so much favour, that we shall scarcely be condemned. Our first parents ate the forbidden fruit, and were condemned. How many things, apparently much more aggravated, have *we* done? Yet how greatly are we at ease concerning the divine anger, and our approaching destination. Under the persuasion that we are not so sinful as others, and indeed that we are scarcely sinful at all, we hear the law, the transgression, and the penalty, awfully resounded in our ears, and hardly suppose ourselves interested in either. To the final judgment, and the final condemnation of the wicked, we turn a careless self-satisfied eye, as objects which, however interesting to others, have little or no reference to ourselves. Thus flattered and supported by views of our guilt, utterly opposed to the Scriptures, and wholly contrary to those of God, we go on in the commission of sin without any serious alarm; and persuade ourselves that, whether *the Lord will do good to*

us or not, *he certainly will never do evil.* In this deplorable manner life is spent, the day of repentance trifled away, and the hope of redemption and forgiveness lost for ever.

But let every sinner constantly remember that he was condemned for his first sin, for the second, for the third, and for every one which has followed. Call to mind then, I beseech you, the amazing number of transgressions actually charged to the account of every sinner present. Think how many have been committed in a single day, how many more in a week, in a month, in a year. How astonishing must be the sum of those which are committed in a whole life! The same God who condemned Adam for one transgression, regards every sin, of which you have been guilty, with the same abhorrence. How awful was the sentence of condemnation pronounced on him! What then can remain for you in your present condition, but *a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation?*

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said, &c.—GEN. iii. 1—6.

THE tempter is exhibited to us here by the name of *the Serpent.* Of this serpent, St. John declares that he was Satan, the head or leader of those angels *who kept not their first estate,* but revolted from God, and threw off their subjection to his government.

This exalted being, unsatisfied with his dignity and glory in heaven, appears to have aspired to a station still higher, and to have chosen to hazard the loss of

all which he possessed, rather than to continue in that in which he was placed; a station not improbably the first in the created universe. In thus aspiring, he fell from this height to the lowest depth of degradation, guilt, and misery, and completely verified the declaration of Christ, that such as have been *first will*, in various instances, *be last* in the great kingdom of God.

After his fall, the evil passions, which began to influence him in heaven, appear to have gained an entire ascendancy. All his purposes have, since that event, been evil, mischievous, and abominable; and the means by which he has laboured to accomplish them have been base, grovelling, and suited to the nature of the purposes.

That upon which he now entered was probably as base, as hateful, as unjust, and as cruel, as was ever formed; and will perhaps be more remembered with horror hereafter than any other, unless we are to except the rebellion to which he successfully solicited his companions in heaven, and the crucifixion of the Redeemer.

The motives by which he was influenced to this work of death and destruction, were probably such as these :

Envy, resentment against God, pride, malevolence.

For the gratification of these abandoned dispositions he was prepared to employ any means. Accordingly he chose rather to inhabit and animate a serpent, and ally himself to the brutes, than to fail of his design.

The manner of the temptation was remarkably distinguished by art and subtilty.

The consequences of the temptation were, as you well know, eminently unhappy.

In the history of the fall, we see the amazing evil of sin manifested in the conduct of the tempter.

What a disposition was that which was exhibited in the seduction of our first parents from their obedience? From what a state of innocence and happiness did it plunge them and their posterity. At the same time no personal resentment operated, no revenge burned in his breast against them, for between him and them there had never been a controversy, nor even a connexion. They were ignorant that such a being as himself existed, and had never done nor wished him any evil whatever.

But he envied, he hated their virtue, their happiness, and their prospects. Under the influence of these infernal feelings he laboured to destroy them, and a world with them, and voluntarily entailed on countless millions of intelligent beings, sin, and wrath, and ruin. How vast, how wonderful, how dreadful is this malice? How hateful is he in whom it resided? Such is the true nature of all sin. In degree it may differ, in kind it is the same.

Let it be here remembered that every tempter is employed substantially in the same manner. Every tempter, in seducing a fellow-creature, is influenced by sin, and tempts to sin. The person tempted is induced to disobey God, to become guilty and odious, to incur his anger, and to expose himself to the miseries of the second death. What a dreadful employment is this! Yet how common! how evidently universal! No language seems sufficiently forcible to describe the turpitude of a murderer or a traitor; but how guiltless does the murder of the body seem when compared with the murder of the soul! What treachery can be named with that which cheats an immortal being out of heaven and deceives him into hell?

Nor is the mode in which temptations are usually conducted any other than that recited in the text. In

every temptation the truth of God is denied; his wisdom or goodness questioned; his conduct exhibited as strange, and his commands as unreasonable. Obedience is always represented as exposed to disadvantages, and sin as the true road to real and exquisite enjoyment. Jealousy is thus naturally kindled, discontent excited, and the man induced to repine at his lot, to murmur, in thought at least, against his Maker, and to covet and seek forbidden enjoyments.

In the meantime, the soul is flattered perpetually with the hope of safety in sin; is taught to expect exemption from punishment; and is boldly informed, that *it shall not surely die*. Thousands and millions of times has this story been told; and repeated through every age, from the apostacy to the present hour. Thousands and millions also, of foolish and unhappy wretches listen to the tale, because it is loved; and receive it on a tenth part of the evidence, which they would demand to enforce on their minds a single truth or a single duty: or rather they receive at first; and wait for the evidence till some future time. *Eve* is often censured for yielding to a tempter of finished cunning. How many of her descendants yield to fools and blockheads, to gross and blundering solicitations; unfurnished with even a plausible pretence, or that miserable consolation to sinners, an apology for the compliance. Let no one cast the first stone at our common parent, who is not conscious that he himself has not sinned in the same manner.

We learn from this story that the only time of successful resistance to temptation is the moment when it is presented.

Had our first parents promptly refused to listen they would in all probability have escaped the snare. What is true of them, is true of all their posterity,

Resist then the Devil, resist every tempter at first, at the moment of solicitation, and he will flee from you.

We are also taught by this passage of Scripture, that the ultimate safety of mankind, when they are tempted, lies in God only.

Had Eve sought the protection of God when she was assailed by the adversary ; she had never fallen. Had she remembered the character of God, she had never believed the declarations of the tempter. Had she admitted no jealousy, no suspicion of the divine wisdom and goodness, she had, in all probability kept her happy state.

The same dangers attend all her descendants. If we wish to overcome, or escape temptations, it is indispensable that we remember the presence, and acknowledge the character of God ; that we distrust in no degree his sincerity or kindness ; and that we go directly to him for the succour which we need. The closing petition in the prayer, taught by Christ to his disciples, is, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* : that is, *Suffer us not to be led into temptation ; but should this danger betide us at any time, deliver us from the evil to which we shall be then exposed.* Of six petitions only of which this prayer consists, a prayer taught by him, who knew all the dangers and necessities of man, this is one. So necessary did he determine this assistance and guardianship to be ; and so necessary our continual prayer, that it might be afforded.

In the first temptation, we see the doctrine strongly illustrated. Here, no prayer ascended for aid. Here, therefore, no aid was given ; and here left to themselves, the miserable victims were of course destroyed. Let us then learn wisdom, both from their example and their end, Let us avoid the one, that we may

escape the other. For protection from tempters, and temptations, both within us and without us, let our prayers unceasingly rise with fervent repetition. Especially, when the serpent approaches, when the charm is about to begin, and when his mouth is ready to open and swallow us up, let our cries for help ascend to heaven, that he, who is swift to hear, and always prepared to pity and relieve, may mercifully extend his arm and snatch us from the jaws of destruction.

THE SENTENCE PRONOUNCED ON MAN.

And the Lord God said, &c.—GENESIS iii. 14—19.

THE order in which this subject is exhibited to us is the same which existed in the temptation itself, and in the transgression also. The serpent first sinned in tempting the woman; the woman sinned next, in yielding to his solicitations and eating the forbidden fruit; and the man last, in yielding to the solicitations of the woman.

I. *The sentence passed on the serpent, claims a two-fold consideration; in its literal meaning, and in its principal meaning.*

In the literal meaning of this denunciation, the serpent is cursed beyond all other beasts, is doomed to creep on the ground, and to eat dust all the days of his life. Perpetual war, it is declared, shall exist between his seed and that of the woman; in which he shall bruise the heel of his adversary; while his adversary shall bruise his head.

The principal meaning of this sentence, or its application to the allegorical serpent, the real tempter, is however of infinitely more importance.

The *seed of the woman*, we know, was the *Lord Jesus Christ*: the Son of God, and the Redeemer of mankind. We are expressly taught, that he, although by the instigation of the original tempter nailed to the cross and *bruised* thus in *his heel*, his inferior part, his flesh, yet *triumphed and made an open shew of principalities and powers* in his crucifixion, and thoroughly *led captivity captive*, after he had effectually spoiled them of all their glory. In this great event, he not only vanquished death, but destroyed also him that had the power of death; that is the devil.

II. *The sentence pronounced on the woman, next demands our attention.*

This consisted of *two parts*; the *pain and sorrow* which were to attend her in bearing and bringing forth children; and her *subjection to her husband*. Neither of these would have had any being, had she resisted the temptation. She would have been a mother; but without pain and anguish: and she would have been a wife; but without any humiliating inferiority to her husband.

Now her state in both respects was entirely changed. Her life became *full of sorrow*, and largely acquainted with grief; and a great proportion of all her sufferings were to arise from these peculiar sources.

III. *The sentence on the man is the last proposed subject of consideration.*

This consists of four distinct parts; *toil, sorrow, humiliation and death.*

In this story is presented to us a glorious manifestation of the mercy of God.

Before God proceeded to utter the sentence of condemnation on the man and woman, and while he was declaring the punishment of the tempter, he disclosed the future designs of redeeming and forgiving love.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the person who here passed sentence on these offenders. As *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; as no man hath seen God the Father at any time, nor can see him and live*; it is certain that God as here spoken of was no other than the second person of the trinity, the Redeemer of mankind. This divine person even now began the work of Redemption, in the very moment when the first objects of it first existed; thus early showing, that *the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy*.

What a divinely amiable character does the Redeemer here exhibit! The first opportunity, the first moment of that opportunity he seizes, to make known to apostate man his design to *save his people from their sins*. As if he feared that the sentence would overwhelm the poor unhappy culprits, he prepared them to support the terms of it, by publishing their recovery before he declared their condemnation and ruin.

What instance of divine mercy can be conceived of more tender, more condescending, more like redeeming love than this? How much does the Saviour of mankind appear like himself! How early he began *to seek and to save, that which was lost!* He perfectly knew that he himself was to die on the cross, to accomplish this redemption; yet he utters the glad tidings to mankind with eagerness and haste; as if impatient to make known to them the salvation which he was to purchase with his blood.

As when he came in sight of Jerusalem, at the mount of Olives, *he wept over that guilty ruined city*; so here he may be naturally considered as taking a solemn and compassionate view of a ruined world, and all the lost myriads of the race of Adam; as weep-

ing over their destruction, and as saying, not, *How often would I gather, but I will gather you, falling and perishing sinners, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.* Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy. For unto you shall be born a Saviour, even Christ the Lord. Beautiful on the mountains shall he come, bringing good tidings, publishing peace, bringing good tidings of good, publishing salvation, and saying unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Lost as ye are, O ye children of Adam, unto you I call, I rejoice in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights are still with the sons of men. Glory still, shall be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will toward men. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. The heavens shall drop down from above, and the skies shall pour down righteousness; the earth also shall open and bring forth salvation.

UNIVERSALITY OF SIN PROVED FROM REVELATION AND FROM FACTS.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.—ROMANS v. 12.

In consequence of the apostacy of Adam, all men have sinned.

Perhaps no doctrine is more reluctantly received by the human mind, than that, which I have just now stated. Accordingly, it has been strenuously contended against, and resolutely rejected, not only by infidels,

but by a considerable part of the Christian world, ever since it became a topic of public debate. Nor, when we remember the present character of man, can we think it strange that such opposition should exist. The doctrine in question, more than any other, humbles the pride, awakens the fears, and lessens the happiness of every child of Adam. A common interest, therefore, naturally summons all men to oppose it; and not unfrequently bears down the evidence, by which it is supported. Christians feel this interest as truly as other men, and under the influence of this feeling resist, or forget the proof of the doctrine.

But it can never be wise, it can never be vindicable, to deny truth, or reject evidence. If the doctrine be true, it is our interest to know it: if it be clearly evinced, it is our duty to receive it; and that however reluctant *we* may be, and however mysterious *the doctrine*.

In proof of the doctrine, I allege *the following arguments, derived partly from fact, and partly from revelation.*

1st. *The text, is a decisive proof of this doctrine.*

This proof is *twofold*. First, *it is directly asserted, all have sinned*. Lest there should be any doubt, whether an absolute universality is intended in this place, the apostle has exhibited his intention in the most decisive manner. *So death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*. Here we are taught, that *all sin who die*. As therefore every child of *Adam* dies; so, according to the sentence of the apostle every child of *Adam* is a sinner. Secondly, *the apostle proves the doctrine by argument, and in my view unanswerably*. Death cannot be the reward, or allotment of virtuous beings. It is plainly a punishment, and a dreadful one; and can of course be in no possible sense, a

testimony of the Divine approbation. But the approbation of God is invariably given to obedience. If then, all men were obedient only, not one of them could suffer death or any other evil. Accordingly Adam, while obedient, was assured of immortal life. In the same manner also *the angels, who kept their first estate*, are immortal and happy.

But death befalls all the race of Adam, therefore every one is a sinner.

2dly. *After Adam had lost the image of God, we are informed, that he begat a son in his own likeness, i. e. in his moral likeness, and he was a sinner.*

3dly. *St. Paul, in the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, has argued this point at large, concerning both Jews and Gentiles.*

On this argument he himself is, undoubtedly, the best commentator; and his comment is given to us in the following terms. *What then? are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles?) No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4thly. *The same apostle declares, that by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.*

Of the same purport is the declaration of Christ to Nicodemus, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* The only use, or effect of the new birth is, that in it holiness is implanted in the mind. But if any man were sinless, he could not need regeneration, nor be regenerated. He would already perfectly possess that holiness, which is imperfectly communicated in regeneration, and, of course,

would see *the kingdom of God* as certainly, and easily at least, as those who possessed less holiness than himself.

What the Scriptures declare in so pointed and ample a manner, facts elucidate with such clearness and force, as to be, at least in my opinion, incapable of being rationally resisted.

1st. *The laws of all nations are a strong proof, that the human character is universally sinful.*

Human laws are made to repress and restrain sin only; are derived only from experience, and are forced upon mankind by iron-handed necessity. They exist in every country, and restrain sin of every kind which human laws can affect, or human tribunals can prove and punish. The penalties, by which they attempt this restraint, are various and dreadful; are the most efficacious which experience can suggest, or ingenuity devise, and are changed continually, as they are found to fail of their effect, by the substitution of others, which promise greater success. Still they have always fallen short of their purpose. The propensity to evil in the heart of man, has defied all their force and terror; and boldly ventured on the forbidden perpetration in the sight of the pillory and the prison, the gibbet and the rack. No ingenuity on the one hand, and no suffering on the other, has, in any country, been sufficient to overcome this propensity, and so far to change the character of man, as to exterminate even a single sin.

To this head ought to be referred, all the means furnished by law of safety to our persons and our property: the bolts, bars, and locks, by which we endeavour to defend our houses and their contents, our persons, and our families, especially in the night, against the inroads of theft and violence: the notes,

bonds, and deeds, by which we endeavour to secure our contracts, prevent the mischiefs of fraud, and compel dishonesty to fulfil its engagements: the gaols and dungeons, the chains and galleys, by which we endeavour to confine villains, and prevent them from disturbing by their crimes the peace of society: the post, the pillory, and the gibbet, by which we punish some culprits, and labour to deter others from repeating their perpetrations. All these, and the like things, are gloomy and dreadful proofs of the corruption of the world in which they exist. They exist wherever men are found of sufficient capacity, and in proper circumstances, to attempt a regular opposition to crimes, a continued preservation of peace, and a general establishment of personal safety. The sinfulness, therefore, which they intend to resist, is equally universal. In a world of virtue they could have no place; because they could not be of any possible use: the spirit of the inhabitants supplying, infinitely better, the peace and safety, which they so imperfectly secure.

2dly. *The religion of all nations is a forcible proof of the same doctrine.*

The religion of every nation has been *expiatory*; that is, it has been so formed, as intentionally to make satisfaction for sin, and to obtain reconciliation with a God acknowledged to be offended. Of this nature, obviously are *sacrifices*. The victim was always intended to be an offering for sin, and the means of regaining forfeited favour.

According to the same scheme, also were formed their *prayers, pilgrimages, ablutions, and penance*.

All these were regarded as essential duties of religion, and as indispensably demanded of every man. In performing them, every man confessed that he was

stained with the common guilt, and that he needed an expiation.

3dly. *The same doctrine is proved by the writings of all nations, among whom writings are found, and is clearly seen in the history both of nations and individuals.*

Man, as described by history, is undeniably, and always has been an evil, odious being; disobedient and ungrateful to his Maker; unjust, insincere, and unkind to his fellow man; and far removed from the character which the Scriptures demand, which conscience approves, or which even in our opinion, God can be supposed to love.

With history, *moral and philosophical writings* have abundantly concurred.

Poems, plays, novels, and other books of entertainment, written professedly only to amuse and please, are necessitated to unfold the same truth in a still clearer manner. All the characters almost, are characters mixed with sin; and the few unmixed ones which they have attempted are perceived by mere taste, unaccompanied with intellectual examination, to be dull, lifeless and unnatural. Accordingly, rational criticism has every where condemned them as improperly introduced because they have no originals in fact. The sentiments, also thrown out in these productions, are evidential of the same truth. In innumerable forms they declare and appeal to the universal corruption of mankind as the object about which they are extensively occupied; and the only source, in a great multitude of instances from which they are derived. Were not human nature corrupted, a great part of them could never have had either existence or meaning.

4thly. *The conversation of all men abundantly declares the same truth.*

All men continually ascribe sin to all men, except themselves, and few, very few, have ever dared to deny even themselves to be sinners. The best of mankind readily confess, and deeply lament their own sins, in terms of the greatest humiliation and sorrow. *Paul* declares himself to be encompassed with a *body of sin and death*. *Jacob, Job, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Peter, James, and John*, all acknowledged their own guilt without hesitation or concealment. Good men, in every succeeding age, have followed their steps, in this frankness and integrity, so suited to their general character, and have with a single voice declared their own share in the common corruption. Could this fact have taken place, if the corruption were not universal? If *Job, Daniel, Paul, and John*, were not sinless, we must seek in vain for persons of this character among men: for no men have by their conduct ever proved themselves to approximate nearer to this enviable character.

5thly. *No mere man has been ever yet produced as an example of complete holiness in the present world.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only person that ever appeared in this world *who knew no sin*.

6thly. *This doctrine is proved to every man who examines his own character by the state of his own heart and life; once more I observe that,*

THE REJECTION OF THE WORD OF GOD IS DECISIVE PROOF THAT THOSE WHO REJECT IT ARE DESTITUTE OF VIRTUE OR MORAL EXCELLENCE.

Illustration of this will be evidently derived from,

I. *The nature of the word which is rejected.*

It is the law or preceptive will of the Creator, and ruler of all things. This law in all its requisitions is perfectly reasonable and just, is good as well as just; profitable to those who obey, as well as honour-

able to him who is obeyed. To this obedience an endless and perfect reward is annexed. To disobedience a punishment is threatened which is also endless.

Happiness is not merely offered, but enjoined. All the authority of the eternal God is employed to enforce compliance. Nay he goes farther; and daily condescends to entreat us to be thus reconciled to him. But to all these we return a peremptory refusal, and a scornful, indignant rejection of this benevolent and glorious word of the Lord.

What reason can be assigned for this conduct? Not argument: for all arguments plead most powerfully for our compliance. Not common prudence, or a wise regard for our well-being: for we disregard and destroy it. Nothing but sin, and the love of sinning; mere corruption; mere depravity. No higher evidence can be given, that there is no wisdom or virtue in men.

II. *The manner in which the word of God is rejected by man, is another striking proof of his destitution of virtue.*

Particularly, *the word of God is rejected with unbelief.*

Unbelief is either speculative or practical. In speculative unbelief we deny the truth of the word of God: in practical unbelief we admit its truth, but reject its influence.

In the speculative unbelief of men the unworthy manner of rejecting the word of God is manifest in the following particulars.

1st. *It is rejected on the ground of vain and deceitful arguments, advanced by unbelievers, by infidels.*

2dly. *When these objections have been completely and often refuted, they still allege them again without taking any notice of the refutations.*

These refutations have been multiplied so much, so

openly, and so often alledged, and so triumphantly urged, that nothing but despair of replying with success could prevent unbelievers from attempting a reply.

3dly. *They rarely attempt to argue at all, but attack their antagonist and defend themselves, chiefly with contempt, sneers and ridicule.*

4thly. *Men have exhibited violent hatred to the Word of God in this rejection.*

III. *The truth is strongly illustrated by the doctrines, both speculative and practical, which those who have rejected the Scriptures have preferred to them.*

The four great classes of men who have openly rejected the word of God, are Jews and Mohammedans, Heathens and Infidels. Each of these reject the word of God in part or altogether, and substitute base falsehoods.

The Gospel has been published to a great part of the human race; and by a great proportion of these it has been rejected. So general has been this rejection, as entirely to determine the true nature of the human character: for it cannot be pretended, that there is one original nature in those who have heard and rejected the Gospel, and another in the rest of mankind.

The rejection of the Word of God, of the Law and the Gospel alike, is entirely inexplicable, unless we acknowledge, that the disposition by which it is rejected is a disposition directly opposed to that of a virtuous mind, wholly unlike that with which Adam was created, and the genuine moral likeness of Adam after his apostacy.

END OF VOL. I.

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