EXERCISES

[Text obscured due to degradation or handwriting]
Be sure to teach your children with all the sweetness and gentleness you can; lest if you should be severe, and over-talk them, religion should seem to them rather a burden than a blessing.

Bishop Ken.

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them. Moses.
PREFACE.

The author of the following sheets has always considered himself as being accountable both to God and his fellow-creatures for the use that he makes of his time, and of any slender powers he may be possessed of: and, if he be not much mistaken, always carries about with him a brotherly and cordial affection towards human kind. and it is upon this principle that he has ventured them abroad; hoping that they may possibly be of some use towards suggesting a method of catechetical instruction that may at least have its advantages among the rest for the improvement of younger minds. he would by no means depreciate from the well known performances of others in this department:

A 2

nor
nor even allows himself to imagine, that those which may perhaps seem to some to be too childish even for children themselves, must needs be without their use. He cannot however but be of opinion that in one period or another of early life this mode of instruction should be so conducted, as to be to the pupil himself an exercise of his own rational and mental powers, and not merely a declaration of what others have to say. This has too much the air of authoritie; and too great a tendencie towards leading the younger fort into an apprehension, that religion has no other foundation than that of venerable custom and parental discipline. And though it may serve to awe their minds for the present, it is well if afterwards it have not a very different effect. Especially if in the very manner of proceeding upon these occasions a certain severe and rigid form be too strictly adhered to. To prevent which, and in order to give to this
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this exercise a more chearful, manly and sociable appearance, it should be permitted sometimes at least, to intermingle itself with the other religious offices belonging to a family; and with some more general addresses upon a topic of this nature; and, as apt occasion may offer, in some sort, and in a more transient way, into freer conversation. By this means a way will be made for those other catechetical treatises not so immediately calculated for the initiatory discipline. Such I mean as those of Ostervald, Usher, Baxter, Hammond. Treatises of this kind have certainly their distinct use, all else being as nearly alike as may be, as at little intervals of leisure, or upon particular occasions they may more readily and profitably be consulted. Besides that in writings of this construction, there is a natural tendency to lead the reader into that most useful practice of soliloquy and self-examination, which, where there is any thing of
of a serious turn, will be apt in the perusal of them to steal upon him ere he is aware. in the mean while, some of our smaller catechisms may be made occasionally to accompany some such plan of instruction as that we have in the following lectures exhibited. and the author has only here to add, that he has such a thorough conviction of the high importance and sovereign excellency of religion, that should they but in the least degree contribute to the promoting of its influence, he shall think himself well rewarded for the publication.

ERRATA.
ERRATA.

Page 46, l. 14, for is, read are. p. 174, l. 23, dele the inverted comma. p. 188, l. 5, note, for eliscimus, read dissimus. p. 202, l. 24, after character, a full stop. p. 203, l. 1, dele now. p. 244, l. 20, after heightened, an interrogation. p. 251, l. 2, before seeking, read the. p. 267, l. 5, after contemplations, comma.
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LECTURE I.

WE are now in pursuance of a design, Lect. I. of which some general account has been already given, to enter upon such a consideration of the grounds and principles of religion, as may, it is hoped, be especially useful towards leading the younger part of our society into a just and becoming sense of it; and contribute at the same time towards impressing the minds of all with more affecting and lively apprehensions of it's nature and importance. A capacity for religion is the distinguishing excel-
'excellence of human nature, it is that by which we rise in eminence of being above the brute creation. Whatever other traces of reason may be thought apparent in any of these; it is man alone among all the inhabitants on this earthly globe, that has it in his power to be religious. Now to know and worship, to contemplate and rejoice in, to imitate and obey the great author of our being, this is religion. Such then the high and glorious employment, for which we are by nature fitted. Such the privileges even of our present being; which thankfully embraced and duly improved, will terminate ere long in the complete felicity of heaven itself. Yet how small and inconsiderable a share has religion in the education of our children and of our youth. If it makes any part at all of it, and be not absolutely discarded, with what carelessness and superfluous formalities is it treated, as if among all the branches of education it was by far the meanest and most insignificant. And then in after life that ignorance in every thing relative to religion, that is so justly to be imputed to the gross and shameful negligence of a parent, is usually ascribed to the stupidity, dullness.
dullness and perverseness of nature. So Lect. I.
readie are we in this, as in so many other
instances besides, rather to throw the blame
upon God than upon ourselves. But why
must it be thought a thing incredible, that
even children should be capable of under-
standing the principles and duties of reli-
gion? if it be a capacitie at all belonging
to man as such, it must needs be originally
inherent in our minds when children, and
wantonly to be properly cultivated and deduced
and in due time put upon it's natural exer-
cise and use. parents think their children
well enough capable of understanding the
dutie, which they are owing to themselves, Filial duty,
and are apt to be somewhat angry with
them, if they appear not to do so. why
then should they be thought unable to form
the proper notion or idea of that, which
is owing from them to their heavenly
father? it consists in the very same kind of
obligations, though infinitely heightened
according to the infinite transcendentie of
that sovereign being, who is the object of
it. and even the foundation of these duties
they may surely understand, were their
thoughts but properly directed that way in
the one case as well as in the other. a child
very
Lect. I. very soon comes to apprehend that he is in some manner or another indebted to a parent for his being. may he not be made sensible that in a much stricter sense he has derived it from God? he soon comes to know that his father and mother have an authority over him, and have a right to command him. would it not be easy for a parent to lay hold upon this conviction in such a manner as to lead him into the rational apprehension, that God must have a still higher authority over him, and a still superior right to his obedience? how soon does a child, that has not very early indeed been corrupted, come to be persuaded, that he ought to love his parents on account of the blessings and benefits he has received from them? and can it be a matter of any great difficulty to convince him that he is under far higher obligations to the goodness and care of that sovereign deity who made him? these reasonings and illustrations I have introduced as a kind of specimen of the manner in which the subject we have proposed to treat upon, may be adapted to the capacities of children; and yet this in perfect consistence with the rational grounds of religion in itself. for the
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the stronger and more forcible any reason—Lect. I.
ing, so much the more easily is it to be discerned by every capacity. So that reli-

gion being founded upon the plainest and most convincing arguments, upon the strongest and most demonstrative reason-
ings, must on that account be so much the more easily inculcated in the rational na-
ture of it, even upon the young and tender mind. You see what a copious subject we have undertaken; a subject in which those of all parties are alike concerned. Since it is by the first and fundamental principles of religion that all particular controversies are to be decided; and were there no sufficient foundation for religion in the general nature and idea of it, all our partie disputes must be at an end of course. But more particularly still, as to the subjects we propose to treat of; they are first, a deitie, his being, his attributes, his providence; and topics—

with respect to this last it's realitie, it's na-
ture as a plan of moral government, it's extent, it's views. Secondly, man, his origin, his nature, his connexions, the end of his creation, his happiness, his dutie, his present situation, natural and moral; and his character in general. Thirdly, a

B 3 future.
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LECT. I. future state; and the hope and expectations of mankind in relation to it. fourthly, the Christian religion, it's design, it's evidences, principles, usefulness and duties. in treating upon the several topics of religion as founded in reason and nature I shall take frequent occasion to illustrate them by the language and maxims of the scriptures, tho' their authoritie and evidence come not till afterwards distinctly to be considered. in the mean time by this manner of proceeding, we shall have as we go along, and before we touch directly upon that particular, one considerable argument in favor of the scriptures, namely, their harmony and agreement with natural religion; a point so considerable indeed, that were it wanting, nothing could be sufficient to establish their authoritie, nor any other reasonings whatsoever amount to a proper and satisfactorie evidence in favor of them. and as to the duties in particular of religion, I shall shew how they arise out of each truth or principle of it as I go along. and as one and the same dutie has oftentimes a foundation in several different truths or principles of religion, these distinct grounds of that particular dutie will be pointed out under
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under each, after which a summary of Lect. I. those duties, according to all the united force of obligation derived from these several principles, may we apprehend with the most propriety, and advantage be introduced.

As religion has such an ample and strong foundation in truth and nature, we cannot but conclude, that effects of a proportionable kind, and in the highest degree conducing to the good of mankind would arise from the profession of it, were such a profession attended with proper ideas, and distinct conceptions of its nature and importance in the mind. But here lies our grand defect; and the reason why we see so little either of the love, or of the fruits of religion; and why there is so little zeal among us either for its purity or its prevalence, is that we give so little attention to its fundamental principles, and to those reasons, which are with such force and evidence to be assigned in favor of it. But here, whilst we are talking of religion and making mention of that deity, whose being is the ground, and whose perfections are the object of it, some of those children perhaps, whose interest in this design I have so much at heart, may be ready to ask,
but where is the God you speak of, a God my maker? I have often heard of him with the hearing of the ear; I have heard my parents talk of such a being; and on a certain day of every week I hear much discoursed of concerning him: but methinks I should be extremely glad if mine eye could see him; and, if I cannot see him, how is it that I am to be made sensible that there is such a being? why, pray, my dear child, did you ever see the king? no. but you believe, I suppose, that there is a king of England? yes, sir, I have no doubt of that. why then, may you not reasonably believe that there is a God, though you have never seen him? I cannot say, sir, that I am altogether satisfied with your argument; because, tho’ I have not myself ever seen the king, I have heard of, and been in company of those that have seen him, but I never heard of, or have met with any one that has seen God. nay, I have been told that no body can see him; and I have read the same in the bible. but pray, did you ever hear of any body that had seen the wind, that often makes such a rustling
ruftling noise in the streets, that raises the dust of the ground aloft into the air, and sometimes shakes the very houses in which we sit; and yet you believe that there is such a thing as the wind, and that there are a great many events and accidents to be ascribed to it, tho' neither you nor any one else have seen it. Indeed, sir, I cannot say that I am quite satisfied yet. Why so? Because, tho' I never saw the wind, yet I often hear it; and that convinces me as much that there is such a thing, as if it were to be the object of my sight; but of God I must say, that I have not heard his voice at any time, any more than seen his shape. Why then, my dear child, let me ask you, did you ever think? O yes. I am always thinking about something or another. But do you apprehend that there is any man or woman in the world that can see you think, or hear you think? No; that is impossible. But yet you would look upon it to be very strange, if any bodie should deny that there was such a thinking being in the world as you, because they could neither see, nor hear your thoughts. Indeed, I should
should imagine him to be quite mad and "out of his wits. If you then can think "without being seen or heard to think, can "you not easily suppose, that there may be "some other thinking being, that neither "you nor any one else can see with the "bodily eye? For, tho' you have a body, "yet your thoughts are no more to be "seen, than if you had no body at all. (a) "your thoughts therefore, and your think- "ing power are quite distinct from your "bodie. you can then surely apprehend, "that there may be some thinking being "existing, that has not a bodie, because "you plainly perceive that it is not with "your bodie that you yourself do think. "as it is not therefore your bodie that "thinks, there may be some other think- "ing being that has no bodie; and, if a "thinking being may be without a bodie, "then

(a) Est, est profecto illa vis (scil. divina): neque in his corporibus atque in hae imbecilli-
tate nostra inest quiddam, quod vigeat & sen-
tiat, & non est in hoc tanto naturâ tam præ-
clo moro. nisi forte idcirco esse non putant, quia non apparat nec cernitur: perinde quasi
nostram ipsam mentem, qua sapimus, qua provi-
demus, qua ipsa hae agimus, ac dicimus, vi-
dere, aut plane, qualis aut ubi sit, sentire po-
limus. Ciceron. pro Milone.
then it can be no objection to your believing in such a being, that you cannot see him. but, tho' I cannot see God, yet should I not have some proof in one way or another given me of his being, before I admit that belief of it? why can you not take your parents word for it? have they not often told you, that God sees you and hears you, and knows you and made you, and can bless you? and is not that enough to induce you to believe these things? indeed, sir, I apprehend that my father and mother would not believe them, if they had not some argument or reason in their own minds, upon which they ground that belief. and as I am a being of the same nature with them, I think that I may be capable at least gradually and in time, and having it once and again proposed to me, to perceive the force of this argument. and I fancy too that I should be better satisfied in believing that there is a God, by discerning in my own mind, and by the exercise of my own thoughts, the reason of that belief, than by believing it merely upon the word of my parents. besides, tho' I might depend upon
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Lect. I. "upon what my parents say, yet perhaps every bodie will not. and methinks I should be quite ashamed, were any one to ask me, why I believed that there was a God, and I could give no other reason, than because my father and my mother told me there was such a being. why should you be ashamed of that? because I am a reasonable creature; and I think it must be a shame for a reasonable creature to believe any thing without a reason. I remember too to have read in the bible, that we should be readie to give an answer to every man that may ask of us a reason of the hope that is in us. that must mean, to be sure, a proper, that is, a rational answer, or some convincing argument upon which I build my hope; or my belief in God and the doctrines of religion. I think it is St. Peter that lays down this rule in one of his epistles. you seem, my child, to have a great regard for the scriptures, and to be a good deal acquainted with them; and I could give you many reasons for my being extremely glad that you are so. but now that we have mentioned the scriptures, pray could you not prove the point " we
we have been speaking of; the existence of a God or of a deitie out of these?
indeed, sir, I have met with many noble and charming descriptions of God and of his works in the scriptures. but then I am told that these scriptures are the word of God. now before I can believe any thing to be the word of God, I must know that there is a God; for if there be no God, there can be no word of God; so that I think I must prove by some other arguments, that there is a God, and then that the scriptures are the word of God. from whence then would you derive your arguments? I think, sir, it must be from what I have heard called the light of nature. the light of nature, child! why, what do you mean by that? I hope, sir, I shall be able to give you some account of it, when we meet again.
LECTURE II.

IN our former interview upon this occasion we endeavoured to shew you, that, as there is certainly such a thing as thought, tho' it be not the object of our bodily senses, it does from thence necessarily follow, that there may be a thinking being, who is not to be discerned by any of those senses. Since thought necessarily implies the existence of some thinking mind, in which it inheres, or of some thinking being, to whom it is belonging, and whose it is, and by this means we designed to obviate what may possibly be one of the first difficulties occurring to the mind of a child relating to the grand question, whether or no there be a God, who made him and the rest of the human species, and as much as we may be inclined to value ourselves upon being above such childish prejudices, yet many of riper years may not be altogether free from some such influence as this, and it is highly necessary for all to accustom themselves to such reflections, as may tend in the most effectual manner to impress their minds with...
with a sense of a really existing deitie, and of his presence with us, notwithstanding his invisibilitie. and having thus gone through the first and lowest step in this argument, by shewing that there may be such a being, and that the supposition carries in it no impossibilitie or contradiction to any natural notion or sentiment, it is now our purpose to proceed to the direct proof and demonstration, that there actually is such a being. this has been the common belief of all mankind in every age of the world, and throughout every region of it. the most uncultivated of human kind believe the existence of a God as firmly as the best philosophers; and that upon the same general ground, and from the force of the same kind of convictions; tho' they be not able to illustrate the argument by an equal copiousness and varietie of particulars. and from this universal consent of mankind some have seemed to think that a direct and formal proof of a divine being is to be deduced. but I cannot suppose that it amounts to more than this; that there must needs be some very strong and forcible, and at the same time very obvious reasons, upon which such a belief
belief is founded; and which has produced so universal a consent in reference to this particular, notwithstanding that almost infinite diversitie of opinion, which is in other instances so apparent. and indeed what reasoning can possibly be more forcible or evident, than that of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews: "every house is built by some man, and he that built all things, is God?" now this is the sum and substance of the argument in proof of a deitie, and in this single point it is, that all the illustrations of it arising from a particular and distinct survey of the works of nature must necessarily center. and surely this is an argument which no reasonable creature can justly plead an incapacity for understanding. is there any child, who does not in fact reason thus, upon seeing an house regularly built and divided into proper and convenient apartments; that there must needs have been some designing cause or agent, some thinking being like himself, tho' able to think more perfectly and wisely, that had been concerned in raising such an edifice? "and would not you, my child, at least be ready to laugh at any other child, and almost to call him fool or idiot,
idiot, who should pretend to say, that the house had rose exactly into that regular form and all those convenient divisions by chance, and without any ones knowing any thing of it, or thinking at all about it, or designing any such matter? but how much more ridiculous must it be, and how easy to discern that it is so, to imagine, that the whole universe itself, in which there is such a vastly more extensive and durable scene of perfect order and regularity, of happy contrivance and useful tendencies, should have come into being without any designing or conscious mind? what an amazingly useful and well-contrived fabric, for instance, is the human body? with what regularity and ease do we by means of it perform the various functions of life? eat, drink, move either ourselves or other bodies, see, taste and smell; and all with the greatest convenience imaginable, and in the same exact method and order from day to day? what a constant and beautiful appearance of the sun throughout each revolving year? what a stated order in the seasons of "summer and winter, seed-time and harvest," and in the production of the several fruits of the earth,
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Lect. II. earth, (a) so that every child knows when to expect the return of these seasons and the appearance of these fruits? these are general hints capable of being illustrated by an infinite variety of particulars: and many useful books there are of this sort, which young persons might to their greatest benefit imaginable be conversant with. books which, as they contain the fullest demonstration of the being and perfections of the deitie, so there cannot be the least objection made to them on account of any difficultie in

(a) Videmus quam certa sint leges motuum coelestium, certum numerum specierum, et propagari similia ex similibus, non promiscue alia ex aliis. videmus causas finales rerum: singula nascuntur ad aliquam utilitatem. est et mirabilis consentia superiorum et inferiorum corporum. motus coelestes certas vices aestatis et hyemis ad utilitatem viventium efficient. quid sotium et fluminum perennitas? quid in corpore humano partium singularum distribution? quid ipsa numeri et ordinis agnитio? nonne testantur clare hanc naturam non extitisse. casu, sed ab aliqua aeterna mente ortam esse imposibile est enim hae semper ita. fieri casu, imposibile est notitias numeri et ordinis casu aut ex materia tantum ortas esse. o caesum hominum mentes, quæ tam perspicuus argumentis, tam expressi veligiiis divinitatis non moventur: ut melius de deo sientiant et eum reverentur.

Melanct. in Epist. ad Rom. c. i. p. 166, 167.
in understanding them, they being in the general scope and tenor of them the most intelligible that can be. I speak of such books as Ray on the wisdom of God in the creation, Derham's Physico-Theology, Nieuentyt's Religious Philosopher, Nature displayed, and the like. what pity it is, that it is not a stated point to put some such books as these into the hands of children, or at least some well chosen extracts from them? it would give them a great deal of immediate light and information; and would gradually and after the most pleasing manner strengthen their reasoning powers, and enlarge their intellectual and moral views. Historie is generally thought to be a kind of reading that is best adapted to the capacities of children, and peculiarly proper for promoting the improvement of their minds, and of those of the younger sort. Now these books are no other than the historie of God's works in creation and providence; an historie altogether as intelligible as any other whatsoever; and at the same time infinitely greater consequences are depending upon the truth of it. by conversing intimately with such topics we shall come, not so much to know and to believe,
Lect. II. believe, as to see and feel, that there is a God. I might likewise have mentioned some good translation, if to be met with, of Cambray on the existence of God; or, if your children must needs learn French, some extracts out of that book might very properly be put into their hands upon this great subject altogether as intelligible surely as his fables. and the reading of such books would be still more profitable and conducive to the improvement, usefulness and comfort of after-life, if parents by their own personal address and application would in a proper manner endeavor to prepare, and as it were, to open the soil in which this precious seed is to be sown. Suppose for instance, as they so often hear others speak of God, and do often themselves make use of that name, you were to begin with asking them what they mean by the name, term, or appellation of God. to this it is natural to imagine, they would of themselves answer, that they meant by it the being, who made, and who preserves and who governs the world. they might: not perhaps express themselves exactly in these terms, but this would be the purport of their answer, and a better could not be given.
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given. in many writings, and I believe in most catechisms, all the attributes and perfections of God are enumerated, as explicatorie of the name or term itself, and as making a part of it. thus in one catechism, to the question what is God, I find the answer to be, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." in another, the answer which I find to be given to the same question is; "God is a spirit perfectly holy, infinite in wisdom and knowledge, in power and in presence, necessary and eternal in his existence, and unchangeable in his blessedness." Now this I apprehend is throwing too many ideas at once into the mind of a child. nor is it, I presume, a thing even so proper in itself, according to the very nature of the subject treated of. for the word God is a relative term, and, if there be a creator and governor of the world, there is a God, whatever be the moral character or other attributes of that being. these are a matter of after consideration; in the mean time, the answer which would naturally occur to the mind of a child in the first place, upon be-
ing asked what he meant by the word God, is the best; that he understood by it the being who made and preserves the world. And it is the same in effect with that explication, idea, or notion of it that has been given by the noble author of the characteristics: "whatsoever, as he ex-
presses it, is superior in any degree over "the world, or rules in nature with dis-
cernment and a mind, is what by uni-
versal agreement men call God." The next question then proper to be put to the child is, why he believes that there is such a being. "And here, my dear child, you "remember, that in the last conversation "we had together upon the subject, you "told me that the existence of a God "must be proved by the light of nature; "and you promised to inform me what "you meant by that expression; will you "now make that promise good? I will "endeavor it. What then do you mean by "the light of nature? By the light of "nature, sir, I mean all those conclusions "which I am led to make, or principles "which I am induced to embrace upon "the subject of religion by the reasoning "of my own mind from what I see or know.
know to exist, independently of any information that is given me by the Scriptures or the Bible. The light of nature then you say, is all that you can reasonably believe in matters of religion, without having recourse to the Bible; or it does not notes all the arguments and reasonings that you can make use of in support of your belief in these matters, without recurring to that book. and do you think that by this light of nature you can prove the being of a God? I am ready to think so; and if I am not mistaken, the Bible itself assures me that I may. where, I pray you, do you find any such declaration made? I think, sir, it is in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; where he says, that the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, by the invisible things of God, I suppose to be meant the realities of God's being or existence, even tho' we cannot discern him with our bodily eyes, and by the things that are made, the visible things of the creation or the works of nature, but among these things do you include yourself? yes. but why might
Lect. II. " Might not you have brought yourself into being? I think, sir, that must have been impossible: because to bring any thing into being is an act of power; and therefore I could not bring myself into being, because I could not perform any action or exert any power before I had a being. Besides, if I had brought myself into being, I could certainly prevent my being sick or dying; but I know I cannot do that, but might not your parents give you your being? I think if they had given me my being, they could keep me here in this world as long as they pleased. But I see that other children die, notwithstanding all that their parents can do for the preservation of their lives; and I suppose that might have been, or yet may be so with respect to myself; and therefore it seems very evident to me, that there must be some other being, that has more power over me than my parents, and over other children than theirs; nay, and over my parents themselves, for I find that none of my fellow-creatures, whether children or grown up to manhood, have it in their power to dispose of themselves and..."
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and their affairs as they please, or to Lect. II.

stay in this world as long as they like. —

in short, I plainly perceive that man-
kind have not either themselves or their
affairs at their own command here upon
earth, from whence I think it must
certainly follow, either that there is
some superior being, who made and
governs them, or else that there was no
creation, nor is now any government
of the world at all; but that it came
into being, and that all things happen
in it by chance. what do you mean by chance.

chance? I do not mean any real being
or cause by it, but only the coming to
pass of this or that without thought or
design, and without any cause at all.
and do you think it possible that the
world, the sun, the moon, the stars,
the earth, with all the productions and
inhabitants of it, the air, and the birds
that fly in it, the sea and the fish that
swim there, that all these could have
come into being without some thinking,
intelligent, and designing cause? no,
sir; I think it to be utterly impossible.

why so? because, sir, as you have but
just now been saying, I plainly perceive,

that.
that it requires a great deal of thought
and contrivance, of skill and dexterity,
to build even a single house, nay, to fit
up in a proper manner any one apart-
ment in it; and I am very certain that
without the express design, purpose, and
agencie of some thinking being, such a
thing could never be done. and tho' I
have some share of understanding and
degree of contrivance in my own mind,
yet I am very far, I am sure, from be-
ing capable of executing any such design.
as then the world is so vast and wide a
place, as it abounds with such a prodi-
gious number of conveniencies and ac-
commodations of all sorts both for man
and beast; as every thing is more per-
fectly and exactly adapted for our use
than we ourselves could have contrived
it; as this immensely wide, extended
scene of things is every where full of
order, beauty, regularitie and usefulness,
it seems to me, that it must needs be
infinitely more clear and evident that
there is a maker of the world, than that
an house must needs have a builder;
and yet of this latter I have no manner
of doubt. I perceive it then to be your
notion
"notion of divine creation, that this beauteous and regular system of things was at first framed and brought into being by some intelligent and designing mind. but this world, you know, has been in being, and has had the same regular and orderly appearance for a long succession of ages; can you account for this continuance by the original act of creation? or do you think a continued exertion of a divine providence, and of the same active intelligence that first gave being to it, to be necessarie in order to account for its continued sustenance and support? I think, that, if God did not continually govern the world, it could not continue in its present order, notwithstanding his first creation of it. what reason have you for thinking so? because I perceive, that in a family, my own father's, for instance, things would fall into great confusion, if he did not exercise a continual care and inspection over it, notwithstanding any wise provision that he might have made at first for it's order and good management. but I think that as the whole universe is so much more extensive than a family, and as
it must be much more dependant upon its maker than a family upon its head; it must necessarily follow, that as a single family cannot continue in its due order and regularity without a continued care and inspection exercised over it, the world could not have that regular and orderly appearance it now has, and which has from the beginning been the character, form and aspect of it, without the continued providence and government of that being who first created it; and as I cannot but believe that God made it with some design and end, and as that end cannot be answered without his continued preservation of it, there seems to me to be just the same reason for believing a providence as for the idea of creation. These two arguments, which we have thus briefly mentioned, are capable of, and highly deserving a more particular illustration. we may then, I say, certainly conclude that God governs the world, because he made it; for we must necessarily suppose that he made it with some view, and with regard to some determinate end. now whatever that was, the same view, the same reference and design must necessarily determine him to preserve
EXERCISES.

and to uphold it; otherwise that end cannot be answered. Just, for example, as in the making of a watch; it is not made merely for the sake of making of it, but with a view to some farther end and use; and therefore the maker or the owner of it has a continued care and inspection over it. And as it would be absurd to think that any man should make a watch, with a design when he had finished it, to let it lie by without any such care and inspection of it as would be absolutely necessary in order to its producing any effects suitable to its original formation; it would be vastly more absurd to imagine that God should create the world without a design of governing it. because without the exertion of his power in the support, as well as in the creation of it, what can we conclude, but that it must immediately sink again into nothing? consequently we must suppose, either that he had no end at all in creating it, or else, that the end has not been answered, both which are manifest absurdities. Again, secondly, a divine providence is most certainly to be inferred from the actual and present order of things; because present order does just as strongly demonstrate present:
present government, as the original order of the universe implies the original production of it by some designing mind. and of the two, there must, I think, be a greater absurdity in pretending to account for the continued regularity and order of the world from the beginning to the present time, without the continued agency of a designing mind, than in attempting to account for the first immediate existence of it without such a designing cause; the evidence apparently heightening in proportion to the permanency of the effect. So closely is the doctrine of a providence connected with the notion of creation, and so extremely foolish and ridiculous was that argument which some sceptics of old seem to have made use of against a providence; that "all things continued as they were from the beginning;" which is a demonstration that there is a providence. and it is an argument too that is continually growing upon our hands: we have the experience of our own to add to that of every preceding age; and the longer the world continues in the same regularity and order in which it now appears, so much the stronger will be the argument arising from that regularity and order.
order in favor of a divine providence and government in the universe. we should now proceed to consider the nature, qualities and properties of this divine providence and rule, and the attributes and perfections of the divine being himself, did the time allow. but we must needs refer it to the next opportunity.

LECTURE III.

IN prosecution of the several subjects which we proposed to treat upon in this our evening exercise, we endeavored at our last meeting upon the occasion, to give you a brief view and illustration of those great topics, the creation of the world and the providence of God. in respect to this latter point we observed that the realitie of a divine providence exercised over the world, was most certainly to be inferred even from the creation of it. for, as creation necessarily implies some end proposed by the creating deitie, whatever we imagine that end to have been, we cannot but sup-
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Lect. III. pose it to be an exactly equal motive for exercising a subsequent providence over the world as for the original production of it. we likewise observed that the same truth was most clearly to be deduced from the present actual order of the world, and that regularity of things that has subsisted for such a long succession of years and ages, since it is altogether as absurd to imagine, that the present order of the world should be the effect of chance, or not proceed from some designing mind, as that it could have been constituted at first in so regular and orderly a manner without some designing cause. these reasonings we endeavored to illustrate by the similitude of a watch, that which particularly led us to the making use of this comparison was not then specified, but we will mention it now. it is a comparison that has, as we apprehend, been sometimes applied in such a manner, as to weaken the argument in favor of a divine providence, instead of strengthening or illustrating it. it has been said, that, as a watch-maker can make a watch, so as that it shall perform it's regular movements without his future inspection or care of it, we cannot suppose, unless by imputing some kind
kind of imperfection to the divine being, that he could not in the original production of that system of things which we call the world, or nature, or the universe, impress such laws of motion and activity, such a force and energy upon its component parts, as that it should so long as he pleases, continue to answer the end of its creation by virtue of this originally impressed force, without standing in need of his immediate agency for the direction and government of it. But, tho' a watch-maker can make a watch that possibly may not require any farther care or inspection of his, yet this is only upon supposition that somebody else, the purchaser for instance, undertake to keep it in due order. And what, I pray, would a watch or any other mechanical production be good for, that nobody was to take care of? So that the similitude, instead of proving what it is generally brought to prove, that there is no necessity, namely, for any immediate agency of the deity in the preservation of the universe, but that this may be very well accounted for by the powers originally impressed upon the several parts of it; rather proves the direct contrary, and shews that a divine care and inspection...
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Lect. III. is altogether as needful for the support and continuation of the order and regularity of the world, as a divine power and energy to account for the first production of it, but still it may be said, that a watch will go, for some time at least, without any one's taking care of it. Why then may not the universe, the production of a divine power and energy, be supposed to continue answering the ends of it's original formation for a thousand years or any longer period in exact regularity and order by virtue of some original impressions, without needing the immediate superintendence and care of it's creator? But here again I must deny the truth of the assertion, that a watch can go even for a single moment without any one's taking care of it. For the art of man exerted in any of these mechanical operations, consists not in giving new laws of motion to matter, but only in accommodating those which naturally belong to it to such and such particular uses, so that every single movement of a watch depends as much upon a divine agency supporting and maintaining the general and natural laws of motion, as even the revolution of the planets. Nay, without this divine agency
EXERCISES.

Agencie the parts of which it is composed could not so much as adhere to one another; but, if they did not instantly sink into nothing, would however immediately fly asunder into an infinity of atoms. For cohesion is no essential property of matter. Cohesion this consists of particles infinitely divisible, those which compose a piece of metal are in themselves as distinct and separable, as those which make up a heap of sand; and their closer union the effect only of a divine and perpetually exerted power. In short, without this power you can no more account for the cohesion of the parts of matter, than you can for the motion of it, and every grain of sand is in fact a proof of a deitie. In every such grain there is an infinitie of particles of matter naturally divisible from one another. What then can be the cause of their coherence and juncture, but a power constantly impressed upon them by some voluntarie, designing agent? And having thus vindicated that representation of things which was laid before you in our last discourse, let us now proceed to what we proposed for being more directly the subject of this, and that was as you remember, the attributes of C 6 God.
God, and the qualities and properties of his providence. The divine attributes have generally been divided in speaking of them into those which are natural, and those which are moral. But I have sometimes wished, that the distinction intended, and for which there is a real foundation, could have been however in some other manner expressed. For by these terms of distinction some may be led to imagine, that the moral attributes of deity are not so essential to his being, as those which we denominate by calling them natural. Whereas in truth God is altogether as essentially holy and just and merciful and good as he is powerful, wise or incorporeal, his moral attributes are as truly natural (a) attributes, as those which we distinguish by

(a) It is very justly and accurately observed by Epiphanius, that "creation did not proceeds from mere will alone in deity, as if any kind of reasoning or deliberation had been for that purpose employed, but according to the essential goodness of his nature," agreeably to which all his attributes and properties are to be considered. 

ου ἀπὸ λογικῆς μορίας—αλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἀυτοθετεῖν—π. 959, Vol. I. and to the same purpose, ib. ἀυτοθετήσας ἤσσα καὶ ἀυτοθεία ἐπικειμενούσα τοῖς ὡς αὐτῷ ἐξ ἐν οἷς κτίσεισι—
EXERCISES.

by that appellation: but then they are moral too; whereas those other are not so. and this is the proper meaning of the distinction. There is no moral excellency in being eternal or almighty or self-existent, but in being holy and good there is. there is likewise a natural foundation for another distinction sometimes applied to the divine attributes; that I mean of communicable and incommunicable. yet we cannot properly make use of it in the room of the former. because some of those, which we call the natural attributes of the deitie are communicable, as well as those, which we so justly distinguish by the name of moral. and God has in fact communicated some degrees of power and knowledge, the image and resemblance of his own power and of his own knowledge, neither yet can we substitute in room of the distinction spoken of, so as fully to answer to the meaning of it, that of imitable and inimitable; because some of those we call

D. and says Mr. Baxter (Life of Faith) p. 179, all the good which God does, he doeth it from the goodness of his nature.
the natural attributes of the deity are imitable as well as his moral perfections. Thus we imitate the power of deity, by every exertion of that power, with which we ourselves are endued. And by all our improvements in knowledge we gain somewhat nearer, tho' still an infinitely distant, resemblance to his perfect knowledge. Retaining then the former distinction, let us be careful in remembering, that when we speak of the natural and moral attributes of the deity, there is no intention to intimate that the latter are not natural, but only that they are moral likewise. " and " now my little children, in whom I can " have no greater joy than to hear of your " walking in the truth as you advance in " years and to contribute anything that " is in my power towards your doing so; " can you tell me, which of the divine " attributes are to be called natural, and " which are to be distinguished by the " name of moral? Indeed, sir, I am afraid " I cannot. You remember, no doubt, often " to have heard of God as being eternal " and almighty and all-wise; and of his " being holy and pure and just and good " and merciful, now can you not tell me, " which
which of these are to be called his moral attributes, and which not, but only to be styled natural? I know, sir, you will not be displeased at my giving the best account I can of this matter, even tho' it should be a very mistaken one; and that where I am in the wrong you will inform me better. I will therefore venture, if you please, to tell you what my thoughts are concerning it. I think then those must be God's moral attributes, for which I love him, and why do you love God? I love him, because he is good and kind and merciful in preserving and in taking care of me and of all mankind; because he never wrongs or injures any of his creatures in the least degree whatsoever; and because I believe him to be so very good and kind, that I may depend upon it that nothing will ever take place in his dealings towards them but what is for their good. I think you have expressed yourself properly and justly. and according to the account you have given, I perceive that you look upon God's goodness, and mercy, holiness and justice as being his moral attributes; for these alone
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Lect. III. "alone are, I dare say, the things that
you approve of in any of your fellow-
creatures. and you say that these are the
qualities for which you love the deity.
but suppose that God had been a being
eternal, all-wise and infinitely powerful,
but yet had not provided for the welfare
and good of his creatures; but had em-
ployed his power and his wisdom in
making them unhappy and miserable;
just as tyrannical kings here on earth
exercise their power and use all their
dexterity and skill in doing things very
cruel and barbarous: you could not
perhaps in that case have loved him,
notwithstanding his being eternal and
all-wise and infinitely powerful. indeed
I think I could not; for then I might
likewise love a wicked, cruel tyrant,
that takes a pleasure in enslaving, tor-
menting and killing mankind. it should
seem then according to this account,
that, God's eternitie and omnipresence:
and infinite wisdom and power must be
those which we are to call his natural
(a) attributes. that is what I mean, sir,
and

(a) After all it is to be remembered that the
words nature, natural, and the like, must needs be
EXERCISES.

"and I shall be able I think for the future to recollect this distinction, and to form an idea of it, only by considering what it is for which I love the deitie. the omnipresence of God I think you just now spoke of, I do not remember that you mentioned it before; pray what is it that you mean by that expression? I mean by it that he is everywhere present; that there is nothing done or said, designed or thought of, that happens or comes to pass in this world of ours or in any part of the universe, which he does not immediately perceive, and is not most exactly acquainted with, so that he needs not to be informed of any thing by any other being, having by his own direct and immediate inspection and intuition a perfect knowledge of all things. O sir, there is I remember, a passage in the Psalms, which represents this matter, not only better than I can represent it, but according to my apprehension in a manner far better than any in which I have ever found it spoken of besides. I never be but very improperly applied to the deitie, necessarily carrying in them as they do the idea of derivation and production into being.
I never read that passage of scripture, but it seems some how or another to fill my mind with great ideas and conceptions, and to raise and elevate my understanding. You will oblige me very much, my dear child, if you will repeat the passage you refer to, and which seems by your manner of speaking of it very much to have affected you. It has indeed, sir, and I very well remember it is at the beginning of the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. I have been so much pleased with it and have read it over so often, that I have gotten it by heart. O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, o Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" This doctrine of the divine omnipresence, tho' in
the idea or notion of the thing itself some extent. what too mighty for the grasp or compass of our understanding, yet in the proof and certainty of it is extremely obvious. for no being can act where it is not. every exertion of power must necessarily suppose the presence of some being or another in that part of space where it is exerted. and therefore as God exercises a power over all nature, he must of necessity be actually and immediately present to every part of nature. we can indeed direct or order things to be done by another, where we are not; but then it is by substituting the presence of that other in the room of our own. and tho' numbers of inferior agents are no doubt employed in carrying on the affairs of divine providence, yet the presence of the first and supremely ruling cause in nature must be necessary in order to the support of these in being and in action, wherever it is that they act. so that the ministration of these inferior agents does no way exclude the necessity of supposing God's universal presence, in order to account for his universal providence; these very beings themselves standing in need of his providential sup-
Lect. III. Support and all-sustaining energy. "But to you younger ones let me once more address myself on this head. You have seen what is the just and rational account of God's omnipresence; his presence in all places, and with all men; his most exact and intimate acquaintance with all things and with all events. But might you not, think you, farther infer from it some observations and rules that may be useful for the regulation and government of your own temper and actions. When you are in company with some person of rank and figure in the world, are you not particularly careful not to be rude in your behavior? Suppose you were to be admitted into the presence of the king, would you not be very strictly upon your guard not to do any thing that should displease or appear to carry in it any slighting thoughts of him or disrespect to him? But God is always with you; and he is greater than the greatest of earthly kings. He is the king of kings and lord of lords. Besides, he is infinitely good; or rather indeed in this moral excellence of character must true great-
divine being is glorious in his holiness.
and with respect to human kind the
poet's maxim must ever stand confessed; that where virtue is wanting nobilitie
must be in vain pretended to (a). and
I suppose my dear child, that the higher
opinion you have of the goodness and
excellent character of any of your fel-
low-creatures, so much the more solici-
tous you are not to say or do any thing
amiss in their presence. especially, if
they are not only highly good and
virtuous in their own character, but
have also been very good and kind to
you. Should you not then be always
upon your guard against offending God,
and take the strictest care not to do so?
since he is always present with you. by
no means may you think yourself at
liberty to sin, to tell a lye for instance,
or to take into your possession any
thing that does not belong to you,
merely because no human being can hear
or see you. but I observe that in every
answer, which you give me to the ques-
tions that I propose to you upon this
head,

(a) — Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.
head, you speak only of one God. do you believe that there is but one? yes, sir, I believe in one only living and supreme God. and pray what is your reason for this belief? I find that without supposing the existence of one God I cannot give any rational account of the appearances of things. I cannot without this account for my own wonderful frame and constitution, nor for the order and regularity, which I see in every thing around me. but by this belief I can account for these things without supposing that there is more Gods than one. to believe therefore that there are more than one, would be to believe without having any reason to assign for the foundation of my faith. besides, were we to suppose two or more self-existing natures concerned in the creation of the universe, it should seem to follow from that puritie, equitie and justice, which we so naturally ascribe to divinitie, that each would determine not to defraud or injure any other, in relation to the equal honors that would on this account be owing to both or all of them. and upon this principle we may
may I think certainly conclude, that had there been any such pluralitie, the number of co-operating deities would have been by some natural, striking, indelible and universal signature notified to mankind. yet we see nothing in the real scene of nature but what is the reverse of this, and on all these accounts the unitie (a) of nature seems to be an Divine argument fully decisive for the belief of one only creating mind. "but does not the scripture say, that there are Gods many and Lords many? yes, sir, but the same scriptures say, that there is but one God and father of all. and hear, o Israel! the lord thy God is one lord, is a passage I remember to have read in the book of Deuteronomy. why then are other beings called Gods? I imagine it must be on account of some resemblance which they bear to the one supreme God, either in power or in wisdom or in goodness of character. besides I remember it is said in the scripture, worship him all ye Gods. which seems plainly to me to imply, that there is one supreme God, whom all other beings,

(a) See this particular very happily illustrated in Nature Displayed, Vol. III. p. 304—12.
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LECT. III. "ings that are called Gods are bound to worship and adore as being infinitely above them. Your notion then of the unitie of God is, that there is one single being, who is the origin and source of existence to all other beings, and who did himself derive his being from none? that is my opinion of it."

LECTURE IV.

LECT. IV. VERY closely connected with that doctrine of divine omnipresence, which we treated of in our last evening exercise, is that of the divine omniscience, or God's knowledge of all things. "For this I suppose my children, you know to be the meaning of omniscience. it is the knowledge of all things." this must certainly be the result of the divine omnipresence, for a being that is actually every where by an immediate, spiritual presence, must certainly have the most exact and intimate knowledge of whatever is passing or transacted, either in the external world
...and by thus grounding the omniscience of God upon his omnipresence, we are led into the most accurate idea or notion concerning it; at the same time that we have from hence arising the most undeniable proof and demonstration of it. of all that is passing without us, there is nothing which we ourselves know so perfectly as that, which is the object of our sight. and if we could with our bodily eye command the whole world itself, just in the same manner as we do the extent of such a place as this, most truly might we then say that the whole world was the object of our knowlege. now God in consequence of his omnipresence knows every thing as perfectly as we know any thing that is before our eyes; his knowlege of all things is not the effect of any investigation or application of mind, but of immediate intuition; in the same manner as external objects are fully subject to our visual organs without any intervening study or labor of our thoughts. thus it is that God is "not far from every one of us." all creatures lie "naked, open and manifest to his eye." because it is "in him that we and all creatures live and move..."
move and have our being.” but it is here by all means to be remembered, that the divine ubiquitie or omnipresence is alike predicable with respect to duration as to space. So that the divine nature or essence is, truely speaking, co-existent with eternity. and hence arises the true account of that which is perhaps somewhat improperly called the divine previence or fore-knowlege. that those events and transac-
ton which are future to us, are all of them most exactly and intimately known to deity, is a thing not to be questioned. but then in order to a clear conception upon this point, it is to be carefully recollected, that tho’ future to us, they are not so to deity, but that they are to him actually present (a). under

(a) “Strictly speaking, says Mr. Sturny, “fore-knowlege is a term which does not suit with the perfection of the divine understand- standing; but it is a condescensive expres- sion to our capacity; denoting God’s cer-
tain, instant and punctual knowlege of many actions and things, which are future to his creatures. For the knowlege of creatures is gradual; and to them the drama of provi-
dence is displayed by a broken succession of parts; the infinite understanding is not like a finite understanding, whose imperfect capa-
city obligeth it to divide duration into pas-
EXERCISES.

under this attribute too of omnipresence, Lect. IV. will very naturally be comprehended the divine

"present, and future. I say it is not thus with the understanding of God; there is no division in his duration; no process in his views; no progress in his knowledge: for all duration, actions, things and persons are equally present to the infinite mind: he sees not as man sees, nor knows as man knows: he grasps all objects with one continual view, distinctly without confusion and without distraction. historic and remembrance, prediction and event, faith, sight and science give us a different, nay sometimes an opposite representation of the same things: but God's ideas of all things are as one idea, simple and uniform, from everlasting to everlasting: he is the first and the last, and can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." See his Sermons, No. IV. p. 82, 83. "all things, says Mr. Tryon, whether past, present, or to come, appear present to the great eye of the eternal being."—and again, "the Lord sees and knows all things, for unto him there is neither time nor place, night nor day, but all is essentially present; for things in eternity go not by degrees or by progressions as they do in time." See his Discourse on Dreams and Visions, c. xii. p. 220, 221. To the same purpose Bishop Bramhall in his Castigations of Mr. Hobbes, p. 49. "every particular event that shall be unto the
Lect. IV. divine immensitie. the omnipresence of God is his immensitie. and the immensitie of God is his omnipresence or ubiquitie. but how, it may be asked by some of the younger class at least, can God be in all places at one and the same instant, or every where at once? I answer, it is evident that even we ourselves may be present in different parts of space at one and the same time. this very place for example, in which we are met, is divisible into an innumerable quantitie of distinct portions of space, yet we are present in the whole end of the world is foreknown, or to speak more properly, is known to God from all eternity. for in God’s knowledge there is neither before nor after, past nor to come. those things which are past or to come to us, are always present to God, whose infinite understanding (that is himself) doth encompass all times and events in one instant of eternity, and so doth prevent or anticipate all differences of time. time is the measure of all our acts; but God’s knowledge, being infinite, is not measured but by eternity; so that which is a prescience, or a before-hand knowledge (as he calleth it) to us, is a present intuition with God.” Temporalia movens (sc. Deus) temporaliter non movetur: nec aliter novit facienda quam facta: nec aliter invocantes exaudit, quam invocaturos videt. Augustin. de Civitat. Dei. L x. C. xii. p. 584.
whole of it, in one part of it as well as in another. what difficulty then can there be in conceiving that God may be present in the whole universe considered as one vast immensitude of extension, in every part of it perfectly clear and open to his all pervading eye? " but, my dear child, you have, I doubt not, heard of God as an eternal being, and may remember eternity to be ascribed to him, when his name is solemnly celebrated and adored in the assemblies of his saints. what, I pray you, may be the idea or notion that you form of this divine attribute? it means, sir, I think, that there was no beginning of God's being, and that eternity will never be an end of it. and this I suppose, sir, to be the reason why God is said in scripture to be the only being that has immortality; because, tho' there are other beings, whose existence will never have an end; such as angels and myself, my own soul, and all my fellow-creatures of the human race, yet we and all the angels had a beginning of existence. but I find it to be declared in the scriptures that God is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting. so that
that it appears to me according to the doctrine of scripture to be altogether as clear and certain, that God has been all ways, as that he will be for ever.” All actually existing natures must either be created or uncreated, derived or underived. nothing can be plainer than this. and is it not equally plain, that all cannot be created or derived, and that consequently there must be some one being, who is underived and uncreated, and independent for it’s existence upon any other, and the origin of existence to all other beings? were we to say of the being that made man, that he had derived his being from some other, the question would still remain, from whom did that other derive his existence; and so on, till we arrived in our reasoning to some first cause, or some being, who was himself derived from none. now it must be the very nature of such a being to exist, otherwise he could not exist at all; any prior cause of his existence being already excluded. but a being, whose very nature it is to exist, must needs have existed always, or from eternitie. for had he begun to exist, this could only have been by a power of existing inherent in his own nature, that
that is in other words, he must have existed before he began to exist. For were we to ascribe unto him a beginning of existence, we must necessarily impute that beginning to the exertion of some power which he had of bringing himself into being, but then this is contrary to the idea of his beginning to be. Because to have a power of beginning to be, implies some actually existing being possessed of that power. So that to suppose the self-existent being, or that being whose nature is to exist, to have had a beginning of existence, is a contradiction in terms. It is to ascribe to him in the very same instant of duration, both existence and non-existence. And as he has thus derived his being from none, it immediately follows that his existence must endure "to everlasting." For there is no other being that can deprive him of his existence, since he is not at all depending upon any other being for it. So that if he ceases to be, it must be in consequence of his own essential nature, which yet has been shewn to imply being, or actual existence in the very idea of it. To suppose therefore that a self-existent being should ever cease to exist, would be to suppose
pose existence and non-existence equally natural to one and the same being. As certain therefore as it is that God has derived his being from none, so certain is it that he can never cease to be; that is, his duration must be eternal. And upon the same principles is founded the absolute immutability of his nature. As none of his attributes or perfections, all of which must necessarily enter into the very idea itself of his nature or existence, are derived from any other being, no change or alteration can possibly take place in reference to them, because that would imply some being that was the cause of such an alteration, and upon which therefore he was depending for his existence. These sentiments, which arise not so much from any medium of reasoning or chain of argument, as from a comparison of our own ideas, are most naturally and forcibly expressed in the language and style of scripture. Of old, says the Psalmist, thou, o God, hast laid the foundations of the earth. They shall perish; but thou shalt endure. Yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment; stable and permanent as they now appear to be. But thou art the same; and thine years shall have no end. And this
this points out to us the meaning of that expression, *I am that I am*; which is said in scripture to be the name of God. Other beings may not be in all respects what they now are. They are liable to any change or alteration, which the supreme being, who created them, may think proper to make in their nature or quality, circumstances, situation or connexions. Or he has it in his power, whenever he pleases, totally to annihilate and destroy them. But God throughout the endless ages of duration is one permanent and stably existing nature; that is, he always was, and ever will be the same he now is, without the least *variableness or shadow of turning*. But what, it may be asked, are the practical uses to be made of such reflections as these? I answer in the first place, that the eternitie of God renders his moral perfections, his holiness, justice, goodness, veracity and mercy in the highest degree venerable. If we attend to the natural dictates and sentiments of our own minds, we shall find that a long continuance and habit of the virtuous, that is, the godlike temper in any of our fellow-creatures, a series of many years all spent in useful, honorable actions without...
IV. interruption or intermission, greatly exalts the idea we form of any one's character. It heightens our apprehension of the dignity and perfection of his virtue. Upon this principle is founded that maxim of Solomon; the hoarie head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. "when it is found in the way of righteousness," not when a man begins in his old age to think of the "way of righteousness," but when he is found in it having been long pursuing it; found in it as in his wonted track. And when this is the case, we cannot but form an higher idea of the virtue of such an one, on account of its permanencie and stabilitie, than of that which we discover in those of younger years. And when we rise in our thoughts from human virtue to that which is angelic, of this latter we still form a more elevated idea, when we consider that these angelic natures have for a so much longer period, for millions and millions of ages longer, been inured to the temper of virtue than any human creatures. But, if the case be so, how inexpressibly venerable and adorable must be the moral excellencies of that being who is "from everlasting to everlasting."
EXERCISES.

"everlasting;" who has been for endless ages past, and will to all eternitie be absolutely pure, holy, righteous, merciful and good? by considering eternitie as applicable to all these moral attributes of the deitie, and pursuing the reflexion with seriousness and devotion, we shall soon perceive them disclosing themselves to our intellectual and moral eye in far greater majestie and grandeur, than could possibly be the case without this concomitant idea. when therefore we would raise our minds to the highest admiration of the divine holines, let us remember that it is eternal holines; of the divine mercie, that it is everlasting mercie; of divine goodness, that it is immutable and ever-flowing, yet never to be exhausted goodness, and if so, what intense and ardent, what fixed and abiding love must it naturally call for at our hands? if God be unchanging in his love to us, ought not we to be so in our returns of praise and gratitude to him? thus it is that on the wing of these sublime and glorious truths, considered in their mutual connexion and reference to each other, we may soar and range in the devout contemplation of our minds throughout that seemingly dark and mysterious...
mysterious region even of eternitie itself.
and then farther in the second place in the
eternitie and immutabilitie of God, of the
divine nature and of the divine attributes,
we have the strongest foundation for our
absolute trust and confidence in deitie, and
it is a belief essentially necessary in order to
our placing this entire dependance upon
him. "I am the lord, he has declared by
" his prophet, I change not, therefore ye
" sons of Jacob are not consumed." among
our fellow-creatures we meet with great
flexibilitie and change of temper, those
who at one time seem to be all kindness,
sweetness and love, so that you might think
there was nothing too great to be expected
from their generousitie, are at another time,
and perhaps after a very small intervening
space, so rough and rugged, so severe and
boisterous in their manners and behavior,
that you would be apt to think on the
other hand, that there was nothing which
might not justly be feared from their dis-
pleasure. but how unspeakable the com-
sort to us the creatures of the sovereign
deitie, of him, who is the "father of
" lights, the author and giver of every
" good and perfect gift," that his goodness
cannot
cannot for so much as a single moment be intermitted; that there cannot in any instance whatsoever of his conduct towards his creatures be the smallest deviation from it. So that it is only in consequence of this immutabilitie of the divine nature that we have to say, *God is my rock and my fortress, my high tower, my buckler and my sure defence.* again; from the eternitie of God a very natural, easie and convincing argument may be drawn in proof of the immortalitie of our own souls, and of a never-ending existence ordained for man.

"you are not to wonder, my dear children, if what we have hitherto been saying should not in all particulars appear to you for the present so intelligible as you could wish. even the most exalted minds cannot fully comprehend the amazing glories of the divine and sovereign being; and it is a subject that will please and employ us to all eternitie. canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the almightie to perfection, are questions you know, that are addressed in scripture not to children only, but to men too of the most mature and ripened understandings; so that you are not to"
be discouraged by any thing which may be said, that at present you cannot so easily comprehend. But you are to follow on to know the Lord. And the more you desire and love to know of him, the better will you be acquainted with him. Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord. God, you have often heard it said is incomprehensible; and a great and most certain truth it is, that he is so. And this incomprehensibilitie of the divine nature is usually and very justly enumerated among the attributes of the divine being. And you, my child, believe, I doubt not, that God is incomprehensible. But give me leave to ask you what it is that you mean when you ascribe to him such an attribute. You do not, I presume, mean by this, that you can know nothing at all of God? No, sir, but only that I cannot know him fully; that I cannot now, nor in any farther period of my existence, know so much concerning God, but that still something more will remain to be known of him. You are not then you apprehend on account of the incomprehensibilitie of God to despise that knowledge of.
of him, which you can attain to, or Lecture IV.

to discourage yourself from pursuing it;
but only to learn humility, and to animate yourself in this inquiry, as you

grow up and improve in understanding,
and to increase your admiration of the
divine excellencies thus appearing too
bright, too illustrious, too perfect for you
to form a full and adequate idea of them.

I thank you, sir, for having expressed
my own meaning and apprehension in
this matter. But, my dear child, tho'
perhaps that particular topic we have
been speaking of, the eternitie of God,
may seem to be as much as any beyond
our comprehension; yet possibly by attending a little to it, you may perceive
that it gives you great encouragement to
think, that your own and the souls of
your fellow-creatures of mankind will
survive this present state of being, and
are immortal. For let me ask for what
end was it, do you imagine, that God
at first brought you into being? Indeed,
sir, I cannot conceive for what reason it
could be, unless it was that he might
make me happy. For I cannot by any
of my actions, or by any of the devotions

" that
that I pay to him, be profitable unto him, according to what I remember to have met with in the book of Job. you seem then to think that God is in his own nature a perfectly happy being. indeed, sir, this is what I have always thought concerning the deitie, since I have been able to think at all upon his great and awful nature. and pray what have been your reasons for entertaining a sentiment of this kind? I imagine, sir, that as all other beings are under the controle and government of the deitie, it must needs be impossible that any should have it in his power to disturb his felicitie. I think that as he has in himself a fullness of being, as he is himself the source and origin of all other beings or existing natures whatsoever, he either cannot want any thing to make him happy, or, if he could, has power in himself to produce it immediately. he that can make all other beings happy, must needs be himself infinitely happy. you suppose then that God could have no other design in creating you than to make you happy? and for the same reason, I pre-
EXERCISES.

"fume, no other design in making any..."

"other beings like yourself, than that..."

"they too might be happy? that is my..."

"opinion. but you have learned, that as..."

"God did at first make you, so he conti-

"nually preserves you. and why do you..."

"think he exercises all-this care for your..."

"preservation? I think it must be for the..."

"same reason for which he made me; that..."

"is, out of love. well then, if God cre-

"ated you in order to make you happy, ...

"and preserves you in being for the same..."

"end; and is, as you have just been told, ...

"eternal and unchangeable in all the perf-

"ections of his nature, you cannot but..."

"suppose that he will continue to all..."

"eternitie to have the same intention in..."

"reference to your happiness. I cannot..."

"but apprehend so; because if he should..."

"not, there must then, I think, be some..."

"change or alteration in his nature."
In the service of the last Monday evening we treated more distinctly of the divine eternitie, incomprehensibilitie and happiness. whether there be a God or not, we cannot but have the idea of an eternal duration both past and to come. but what a joyful and triumphant reflexion is it to think that this eternal duration has been, and will be occupied and possessed by an eternal deitie of infinite goodness, wisdom and power! and on the other hand, what a chilling imagination would it be, and how confounding to all the powers of the soul, to think that in this eternal duration there never had been, and consequently never can be, any such supremely designing, intelligent and gracious mind. for if this world and all the beings that inhabit it, might at first have come into existence by chance, as is by the atheist supposed, it may likewise continue by chance, and it may chance too that thro' all eternitie there may be such rational conscious beings as mankind, and yet no gracious
EXERCISES.

clous father or friend to be their guide and Lect.V. guardian, who could suppose only such an eternal state of things, or rather such eternal confusion and anarchie, without the utmost horror and distress of soul! but our prospect into futuritie, thanks to heaven, is quite the reverse. this we have endeavored distinctly to shew in our last discourse, and the sum of our argument was as follows. as every thing that has a beginning must have a cause; it seems to be equally evident that what has no cause can have no beginning. and to suppose that a being whose essential nature it is to exist, should ever have began to exist, is in reality to suppose him at once existing and non-existing; since that beginning could be owing to no other cause than to the exertion of a power inherent in this very being itself to bring itself into existence. but this is to suppose it to have existed before it began to exist. the more we reflect upon it, the more clearly shall we perceive that an uncaused being must have been an eternal one, and consequently must continue existing throughout an eternity of duration. since there is no superior being, who can have any power over an uncaused and essentially exist-
existing nature, so as to make the least alteration even in the manner of its existence, much less to destroy it. We shewed in particular of what great use, and of how pleasing a nature were these considerations of God's eternitie, when applied to the moral perfections and attributes of his nature, and we might have added that it is a consideration that should prodigiously heighten our gratitude for the privileges of our own being; for, tho' bestowed in time, yet have they been the matter of eternal counsels. And upon the foregoing principles in relation to the eternitie and immutability of the divine nature, it must needs be evident that God has from all eternitie had thoughts of love and kindness and mercy towards us. A reflexion that gives a kind of infinite value to every blessing we enjoy. But it is likewise equally true of the divine power and wisdom, which are the subjects now to be considered, as of the moral attributes of the deitie, that they are eternal, and it is only by considering the eternitie of all these attributes in conjunction, that our joy and triumph in God can be completed. Were he eternally benevolent, but not eternally powerful and wise.
wife, in that case his benevolence would be equally lovely and adorable, yet we could not, it is evident, have the same dependence upon it as now we may, for want of an equally extended and durable power and corresponding wisdom, by which it might execute its gracious purposes. But, when we reflect that it is one and the same being that is eternally benevolent, eternally wise and powerful, there is then nothing wanting to render our joy and confidence in God secure and complete. And with these convictions deeply possessing our minds, we may proceed with full satisfaction and inexpressible delight to the more distinct consideration and survey of these several attributes themselves. First then, in relation to the wisdom of God. "I need not, I suppose, my dear children, inform you what wisdom is. I doubt not but you have wisdom, often reflected with no small pleasure upon your own. Now, if you will only begin with that idea, which is so familiar to your minds, and carry on your thoughts upon the subject, you will soon come to form a prodigiously high and exalted notion of the wisdom of God; and at the same time will perceive that
that there is the greatest reason in truth and nature for your doing so. Thus for example, when you have carried the idea of your own wisdom as far as you can for shame, you will, I doubt not, be ready to acknowledge that God is a great deal wiser than you. I should not only think myself very prophan and arrogant, but also very foolish, if I did not because, whatever wisdom I have, or were it ten thousand times more than it is, I must have received it from God, and am entirely indebted to him for it. And he that gave me all the wisdom I have, must needs be himself wiser than I. Then, for the same reason, my dear child, God must be wiser than the wisest man upon earth; because, whoever that man may be, he has, as truly as yourself, received all the wisdom he possesses, from the same God, to whom you are indebted for yours. And were you to add to the wisdom of the wisest amongst men that of another who may be supposed to come the nearest to him in the share he enjoys of this qualitie, still the wisdom of God must for the same reason be greater than the wisdom of these two men.
EXERCISES.

"men put together. (could we indeed Lect. V. consider these respective qualities as being distinct aggregates, and were not rather led to look upon the wisdom of the one as being virtually comprehended in that of the other.) all of it, that is by either of them possessed being no other than a derivation or communication from him. upon the same principle the wisdom of God must needs surpass all the wisdom of all the men that have ever lived in the world, or that ever will live in it, of all that ever have or ever will inhabit any other planet, nay, and of all the angels of heaven, were the wisdom of all this immense number of beings put together, so as to form the accumulated endowment of one mind or conscious being, because all this wisdom has been in realitie derived from God. and it cannot be, but that he must himself have more wisdom than what in this kind he has communicated to any of his creatures, or to all of them in conjunction. by attending a little to such reflexions as these, you will be led to form a very high and elevated idea of the divine wisdom, and yet
yet an idea that is capable of being pro-
digiously increased by other reflexions
upon the same subject. thus, for in-
ce, you told me in the last confer-
ence we held, that God, you thought,
made you with a design that you should
be happy. but wisdom consists in pro-
secuting this or that design, which any
conscious and thinking being has in
view after such a manner as is best adapt-
ed for accomplishing such an end. now,
the more diligently you attend to the
frame of your own mind, the more evi-
dently you will perceive how exactly
the various powers and affections be-
longing to it, are in the nature and
tendencie of them fitted for the promoting
and advancing of your happiness. wis-
dom, or the capacitie for it, reason, is
far from being the only qualitie or en-
dowment belonging to your soul or
thinking part; of this I doubt not your-
selves are very sensible. you have a love
of knowlege, a desire of being ac-
quainted with persons, things and oc-
currences, and of being informed con-
cerning this or that. this is a natural
Curiositie. Curiositie belonging to your minds,
"which, tho' now it may be exercised[Lect. V.
"only in comparatively small and trifling
"matters, yet as you advance in years, if
"you advance in wisdom and goodness
"also, as I hope will be the case, will
"put you upon many inquiries of the
"highest moment, and will be the means
"of affording you a prodigious deal of
"satisfaction and delight. and how great
"must be the sum of pleasure arising from
"such a curiosity or love of knowledge and
"desire of improving it, as concomitant
"with your eternal existence! besides you
"have a natural inclination to love virtue, Virtue,
"as you will easily perceive by considering
"only why it is that you love one
"person better than another. you will
"always find it to be on account of some
"virtuous qualities, some good temper and
"disposition of mind, of which you suppose such an one to have a larger share
"than another, or in whom at least such
"qualities are to you more apparent. you
"have likewise a natural principle of gratitude belonging to you, of which you will
"be very sensible if you consider only how
"prodigiously you are shocked and have
"your indignation excited, and how you
are even struck into amazement, when you hear of any ill returns that have been made by one man to another, who has bestowed a great many favors upon him; and of mens using those very basely and ill, by whom they themselves have been treated with the greatest kindness and good-will. now this is a principle of great use in societie, and to you as a member of it, for you are to recollect that all mankind are endued with the same principles of nature as yourself; so that whatsoever you find to be a natural principle of your own mind, you may conclude to be in like manner belonging to every other human being. for God has fashioned the hearts of all men alike; as you know the scripture expresses it in the thirty-third Psalm. this principle of gratitude is likewise a natural foundation for religion, and for the worship and devout admiration of God, to whom we are under infinite obligations; who is our constant and unwearied benefactor, and whom therefore, gratitude alone, according to it's genuine tendencie and influence, could not but dispose us to serve and honor, to love
and obey (a). I suppose likewise, you will find yourself to be naturally endued with the desire of a future existence, with a fondness for your own being, and for the continuation of it in some future state, and that this even excites in your breast a strong apprehension and expectation that it really will be continued; even tho' after a while you must cease to be an inhabitant of the world you live in now. for if you had the least apprehension of ceasing to be, ask your own mind whether it would not be conceived of by you as a fate most deplorable and dreadful, and of all things to be deprecated and abhorred. now this desire and love of immortalitie and expectation of it, is not only very pleasing

(a) Etenim, judices, cum omnibus virtuti-bus me affectum esse cupiam, tamen nihil est quod malim, quam me et gratum esse et videri. hæc est enim una virtus, non solum maxima, sed etiam mater virtutum omnium reliquarum. quid est pietas, nisi voluntas grata in parentes? qui sunt boni cives? qui belli, qui domi de patria bene merentes, nisi qui patriæ beneficia meminerunt? qui sancti, qui religionem colentes, nisi qui meritam diis immortalibus gratiam justis honoribus & memoria mente perfolvunt? Cicer. pro Planc.
CATECHETICAL

Lect. V. "and delightful to you at present, it not
only gives you a very high sense of the
dignity and excellence of your nature,
but also tends to inspire you with the
desire of being happy in another world,
and consequently of pleasing God at
present, in order to that end. On all these
accounts then must you not immedi-
ately perceive that both your own and
the common nature of mankind is most
advantageously and suitably formed for
the pursuit and attainment of that hap-
piness, which you suppose to have been
the design and purpose of God in making
you and the rest of your fellow-crea-
tures. And if this be the case, then
have you, my dear child, in the frame
and constitution of your own mind, and
consequently in the general fabric and
constitution of human nature through-
out all the species, a farther proof of
the divine wisdom to be added to the
former one in order to strengthen, en-
large and heighten your notion of this
divine attribute. God designed you for
happiness. He has most admirably fitted
the powers and affections of your nature
for the attainment of it. You cannot
there-
therefore but ascribe wisdom to your creator. but of this you may be still farther and more effectually convinced by considering in conjunction with what has been already laid before you upon this subject, the state and order of the material world. matter has no in itself any wisdom or thought. it is quite an unmeaning, insensible thing. the sun itself has no consciousness of its own lustre and usefulness; and is altogether as incapable of a sentiment or a thought as is a clod of earth. there is not any part of your own body that would so much as have any feeling, so far is it from having any wisdom, were it not for the spirit, soul, or mind that animates it. and therefore it is, that when this soul or spirit is retired and withdrawn from it, the body becomes at that very instant motionless and insensible, even tho' all the limbs and organs be as yet remaining in the same form, contexture and position as before. but, tho' matter be in itself wholly insensible and destitute of all thought and wisdom, yet in the order and arrangement of its parts, and in the structure and formation of those
those several bodies which compose and constitute the external world or visible scene of nature are the highest possible marks of wisdom and design. Thus for example, our own bodies in particular are most wonderfully made and contrived for usefulness. With what ease and readiness, my dear child, do you move from one place to another? What a great variety of objects can you command with your eyes, without being put to the least trouble or fatigue in order to your seeing of them? With what readiness do you both see and hear, and feel and taste, and smell and converse with your friends, all at one and the same time; and all the while your blood is circulating, the digestion of your food is going on, and every part of your body is receiving nourishment and strength, and you yourselves growing up apace into men and women. Think you not that there must have been a great deal of wisdom and art and counsel in order to these effects? Did you ever hear of or see any instrument or machine, that performed so many different motions and operations at once, and with so much readiness and ease?
EXERCISES.

ease? do you think there is any man upon earth that can form any structure that for beautie and commodiousness shall be comparable to an human bodie? whose contrivance is it then? it is not yours. it is not that of any human being. it is not, according to what has just now been intimated, any art or skill belonging to inanimate nature itself, or to the clay that your bodies are made of. so again; if the sun, that vast and splendid luminarie, had been in any other position than what it is with respect to our earth, either you and all the world would have been set on fire, or else you must have been frozen to death. how comes it then to pass, that for so many thousand years together, day after day, it should so continually observe that exact regularitie and perfect order in its appearance, to which we are indebted under God for every blessing of our animal life and being? that it should with so much constancie and perseverance nourish the earth, cause the corn and the grass to grow for the refreshment of man and beast, beautifie the flowers of the field and bless the springing thereof;
invigorate our own bodies, and supply us in a regular succession of hours with its enlightening beams both for our pleasure and for our accommodation and convenience in carrying on whatever transactions we may be engaged in? how comes it to pass, that not so much as for one day, no, not for one hour, it should ever disappoint our dependance upon it; but that without the least failure his going forth should be from the end of the heaven, and his circuit to the ends of it; and that nothing should be hid from the heat thereof? upon the earth what a regular production of the same kind of vegetables and fruits fitted for the use and benefit of man? all appearing in the same order, in the same shape, form and season from year to year continually? all the same species of brute animals feeding upon, and nourished by these fruits of the earth? the bodies of these all of them exquisitely formed, and yet in the greatest variety of kinds? the air and the sea continually stocked with the same sort of inhabitants, all of them perfect, according to their respective natures; and exactly fitted to enjoy themselves in the elements to
"to which they are respectively belonging? do you think it possible that there
should be such a constant, regular succession and order in these things, were
there not some wise contrivance by
which it is effected, and to which it is
owing? if you see the same sort of business or affairs carried on in any family,
in that for instance of which any of you
may be a branch, or in any other; one
thing regularly done after another, one
person having this employment, and an-
other that, regularly belonging to him,
and going about it from day to day with-
out variation, you are very sure that all
this does not happen by chance, but that
there is some design, some meaning and
intention in it; and some wise man or
woman, one or more, that conduct these
affairs, and order them to be as they are.
but is there not a vast deal more of order
and regularitie in the operations of
nature than in any merely human schemes
or contrivances? the order of the best
regulated familie is no better than con-
fusion, when compared with the order of
the world itself. surely then there must
be some wise, intelligent being, that super-
5 " intends
CATECHETICAL

Lect. V. "intends and guides the affairs of it. or, "let me ask you, in order to a somewhat "different illustration of this matter, wheth-"er you do not think it a piece of very "exquisite skill, for any one to draw with "a lively, piercing likeness the picture of "a human bodie, or of any brute animal ? "or to exhibit in painting a representation "of the firmament or of the sea, or of any "particular scene in nature? Surely you "esteem it so: must it not then, I would "ask you, imply far greater skill to have "brought into being the very things them-"selves? and if you admire the art of a "man who can draw a few pictures, how "great must be the wisdom of that being, "who contrived the whole plan of the uni-"verse! For all the wisdom that is now "apparent in the beautie and order of pro-
vidence must needs originally and essen-
tially have resided in the mind that go-
erns all. What an amazing idea then "must it give you of the divine wisdom, "that it exceeds the wisdom of all rational "natures put together, with all that is "apparent in the exquisite symmetrie and "contrivance of the corporeal system; "for that mind which alone produced "these,
EXERCISES.

"these, must needs be superior in wisdom to all that these discover or possess. and from such a view of the wisdom of deitie, you cannot but collect, that it is so perfect, as that there must be an utter impossibilitie of it's being baffled, or in any of it's measures defeated by a superior skill. since there is no wisdom by any other being throughout universal nature possessed of which he is not himself the giver. it is farther evident from this view of it, that as the measures of divine wisdom cannot be frustrated or defeated by any opposing measures, it must needs likewise be in itself sufficient for directing the events of the whole universe in a manner completely answerable to the final ends and purposes of a divine government in nature; the whole universe being no other than the product and contrivance of that wisdom itself, which therefore it must needs be able with an infallible certaintie throughout all the parts of it to manage and direct. so that whatever be the designs and purposes of divine and heavenly love, nothing can possibly hinder the accomplishment of them by that wisdom which
which is also divine." Such then are the evident and undeniable proofs of a perfect, absolute and unerring wisdom essentially belonging to the supreme, eternal mind. And after what has now been offered upon this topic, we need not perhaps be very particular in insisting upon that other attribute of power, as alike belonging to the sovereign nature. The manner of proving it, and even the proofs or evidences themselves being in effect the very same with the proofs that have been adduced of the divine wisdom, and the manner in which we have endeavored to illustrate them. That which is wisdom in the contrivance being just so much power in the execution. And it being by the exertion of power only that the proofs of wisdom become apparent, just so many as we have of the divine wisdom, so many of necessity must there be occurring likewise of the divine power. So again, according to the purport and tenor of the preceding argument, the power of God must needs be greater than all human power, the power of the inhabitants of all the planets, the power of all the angels and arch-angels, greater, I say, than the power of all these...
collected, if it were possible, so as to con-
stitute in a proportionable amount, the
force or power of some one single and indi-
vidual being; because all this power is
originally and alone derived from him. all
which therefore in this united view of it,
the divine power must needs exceede. it is
therefore a power not to be controled by
any. whatever may be the malice of in-
fernal agents, and how great soever may
be their power, when compared with some
other created beings, yet have they no
more power against God than a worm of
the earth. “he ruleth for ever by his
might, and all nations;” the inhabitants
of every world, “are but as the small dust
of the balance before him.”
WE have now gone through the illustration of those which are called the natural attributes of the deitie, by way of distinction from such as are moral. Some account of which distinction has likewise been laid before you. The sources of proof and argument upon these several topics have been pointed out; and from what has been delivered in relation to them, many very interesting particulars may be collected in reference to the attributes and character, the qualities and properties of his providence; another topic, which we at first mentioned as designed to be insisted upon in this our evening exercise. Rather indeed, the proof upon these several subjects is one and the same. Thus for instance, it has been proved that God is a powerful and almighty being. And from hence, or rather from the proof that has been given of it, we cannot but conclude that his providence must be a powerful providence; power, as an attribute of his nature, being proved from the real appearances of actual power.
power in the productions of the visible creation, and in the regular course and
stated order of the world. So again we have shewn that the power of God must
needs be in the nature of it absolutely un-
controlable and irresistible. From hence it
follows that this must needs be a qualitie its
belonging to all the actual exertions of it.
A being that is in his nature above all con-
trole, must needs be so in his operations
too. Men are oftentimes forced to exert
even their own power in doing things,
which they had rather not do, being con-
troled by the superior power of others in
this or that particular project or pursuit.
In these cases, which very often happen,
they do, as we express the matter, as well
as they can; but God always does what he character
will. And from what we have been saying
likewise concerning his wisdom, as being
an essential attribute of his nature, it must
needs appear that in all the actual measures
of his providence he procedes in the man-
ner that is most exactly and completely
adapted for the accomplishment of those
designs and purposes, which he originally
had in view, and which depend upon those
moral attributes which yet remain to be con-
Lect. VI. considered. But whatever may be these ends, it appears from what has been already said, that they cannot but be wisely pursued; for God is a wise being, absolutely and infinitely wise. Now a wise being, "you my children will easily perceive," cannot deliberately act an absurd or a foolish part. And with respect to the sovereign mind, it is absolutely impossible that he should be induced by the force of temptation, as men often are, to act contrary to the dictates of his own wisdom and discernment. For temptations arise entirely from our own particular situation as creatures; and therefore cannot be supposed to have any existence at all with respect to the supreme and infinite creator. If God therefore be a wise being, all his productions, works, operations and measures must needs have the character of wisdom impressed upon them. Besides, in the very proof which has been given of his wisdom, as an attribute essentially belonging to his nature, we have in the same manner as was observed in relation to his power, a proof likewise of the wisdom of his providence, this proof being indeed no other than the signature, the expression, the most lively striking
EXERCISES.

ftriking appearance of wisdom in the conduct of that very providence itself. men are sometimes possessed of a wisdom which thro' inactivity and indolence they suffer to be in a great measure concealed from the view of others. but the wisdom of God is an actually exerted wisdom, a wisdom that is perpetually manifesting and displaying itself in the wonders of his providence, and in the admirable beautie, symmetrie and order of all his works, to his intelligent and rational creatures. from the immutabilitie likewise of the divine being, another of those we call the natural attributes of the deitie, it necessarily follows that all the properties as well as the designs of his providence must be ever uniform and the same. as no change can possibly be made in the power or in the wisdom of God, which are essenially belonging to his nature, his providence it directly follows must always be a wise and a powerful providence. and as the same marks of power and wisdom are apparent in every part of nature, from hence we collect another propertie or character of the divine providence; namely, that it is universal. since these appearances of power and wisdom can
can only be owing to the actual, present exertion by deitie of his inherent, essential power and wisdom, which is the very thing we mean by a providence; that which the term is intended to signify and denote.

but now if God be thus irresistibly powerful and infinitely wise; if there be no being in the universe that can either control his actions or defeat his purposes; if this power and wisdom are equally capable of being exerted in every part of the immense system of nature and over all rational agents whatsoever; and if such power and wisdom will remain essentially belonging to the deitie throughout all the endless ages of eternity, what can be of more importance or consequence to man than the consideration of his moral attributes, which alone must determine and direct the operations of this power and wisdom? "could you, my child, think of any thing that would appear more dreadful, than that there should be an almighty and all-wise being that presided over the world, who yet was wholly destitute of goodness; that had no love, no compassion, no forgiveness? would it not be inexpres-

sibly terrible to you, to think that you yourself,
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"yourself, that all your friends, your neighbors, your acquaintance, your kindred, the whole world itself and other worlds, worlds beyond worlds in infinite varietie, as it has been expressed, were all in the hands and absolutely at the disposal of a being thus destitute of mercie and of love? would not your blood be almost chilled in your veins, should you hear of a father, who is continually exercising the utmost crueltie and inhumanity towards his own children, exacting from them the most rigorous services, and denying them the necessarie sustenance of nature, needlessly exposing them to all manner of danger, and suffering them to undergoe all manner of losses, injuries and hardships, without the least concern or thought of preventing it? or when you hear of a tyrant, that employs all his power and abilities in nothing else but in acts of oppression, mischief and crueltie, do you not abhor him? and do you not shudder at the thought that any such man or being should be existing? but would it not, think you, be infinitely more dreadful and lamentable, were this the character of
Lect. VI. "of the sovereign mind? what could you then hope for at his hands? or what, on the contrary, might you not justly dread from such an ungracious being, armed with omnipotence? when some monster of a tyrant rages in the world, you know he is liable to death; he may very soon be cut off, or at most his reign cannot be very long, and after a while the world is for ever freed from so dreadful and enormous a plague, but if God were an implacable or a cruel being, he would remain so to all eternity, and throughout every period of duration. by all your entreaties and prayers you could not in any one instance prevail upon him to be otherwise." such would be the dreadful state and condition of the world, if the God who governs and presides over it were of an evil and malignant nature. and I have endeavored, my dear children, to heighten your apprehension upon the supposition of such a government in the universe, not for the sake of terrifying you, but only with a view of rendering the contrariest persuasion so much the more delightful and welcome to your hearts, when you hear of any child"
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that has a cruel and hard-hearted father, Lect. VI.

such an one as we have just now been speaking of, does not this make you the more thankful that yours is of a different temper, gentle, mild and gracious?

when you hear of subjects, of whole realms and nations, that are oppressed by the arbitrarie and tyrannic prince, does not this make you so much the more thankful for the freedom and happiness enjoyed among ourselves? in like manner as you could not but have the most terrible apprehensions concerning the fate of the world, of an universe, that was governed by an almighty and all-wise, but yet malignant being; this is a consideration, that should heighten in proportion the joy, the praise, the gratitude of your hearts, when you consider and have it proved to you that the case is indeed directly the reverse; and that the great governor of the world, your God and my God, and the God of all mankind, and of all the angels and arch-angels of heaven, is a being as merciful as he is wise, as kind as he is mightie. for when you know that he is thus good, you are sure, according to what
what has already been laid before you, that he will be eternally so, and can never in any instance whatsoever or in the least degree deviate from this character. you will likewise be satisfied from what has been said concerning his power and wisdom, that as such a being must necessarily in all the measures of his providence and government have some gracious intention in view, so he will always be able to put it in execution. so that when once you come to be firmly persuaded and satisfied of this divine and sovereign benevolence, you will have every thing to hope for, nothing to fear, and the strongest ground for a constant cheerfulness and content.” for these reasons how much should it be the matter of delight to us all, that the proofs of the divine goodness and benignitie are so abundantly strong and convincing, as upon a due consideration of them cannot but be apparent. indeed they are altogether as clear and as numerous, as those which we have of the divine power and wisdom. in the same appearances or phænomena of nature all these attributes are equally evident; goodness in the end, wisdom
EXERCISES.

wisdom in the means, and power in the execution. Indeed, with respect to wisdom, it is even absolutely impossible that we should be able to discover any marks or traces of it in the works of God, did we not plainly perceive some end to be aimed at in those works, because wisdom is relative to an end, and is to be judged of by it. It may be equally apparent in the prosecution of very different ends. Thus a torturing engine may be made with equal wisdom and contrivance, and as much skill and dexterity may be displayed in the formation of it, as in any piece of mechanism designed to answer the most benevolent and useful purposes. But it is evident that some end or another, either a kind or a mischievous one, or else a merely private and personal aim, must needs discover itself to our view, ere we can perceive the wisdom of this or that particular agent. And equal wisdom may appear in the prosecution, not only of different, but of directly contrary ends. Thus, if the supreme being had been as malevolent, as he is kind and gracious, we should have had equal proofs of his wisdom with what we have at present. But then it would have appeared, not
Lect. VI. in the production of happiness, but of misery; and the whole universe would have been a kind of inquisition filled with the engines, instruments and signs of misery; and every part of it accurately and with all possible skill and dexterity contrived for mischief. but now on the contrary, wherever we discover wisdom in the works of God, it is by their apparent tendencie to produce good, and to answer some kind and friendly end; to accommodate and make his creatures happy. the more his works are known, the more this appears to be the ultimate design and view of them. not one single instance in nature is there that comes within the compass of human observation, which does not thus display and manifest the goodness of its author. a few specimens more particularly and distinctly illustrated, will tend to clear and ascertain this truth. and indeed we cannot upon considering such specimens, and recollecting that the very same exactness, beautie, kind and friendly design is in every part of nature’s works observable, but entertain the highest idea of that goodness. and in such specimens we shall likewise have a farther illustration of some pre-
preceding topics; the power, for instance, \textit{Lect. VI.} and the wisdom of God. for as these attributes are essentially united in the divine nature with goodness, so the evidence of them is inseparable from the proof of it. in so close and compact a manner are these interesting truths discovered to us "by the "things that are seen;" and which so clearly demonstrate an "eternal power and "godhead." suppose then we take for our example the human eye, that so eminently useful part of our own bodily frame. in the external part of it what admirable and kind contrivance is apparent? such as these are things too generally overlooked, because they are common; but there is not the least of wisdom in them on this account; and yet vastly more of goodness, which therefore should recommend such reflexions to our attention. by the prominence of the nose the eye is very happily guarded from any external danger or injurie, which might otherways very often happen by means of a blow or a fall. the same end is likewise answered by that arch, which is erected over it. and by this arch and those coverings of it which form the brows, another very important end is served. by this means
the rays of light are prevented from darting so strongly and directly upon the eye, as instead of enabling us to see the better, would soon make us stark blind. Of this any one may be convinced only by lifting up his head aloft and looking steadfastly at the sun. We soon find the inconvenience, and why, but because by such a posture this use of the arch of the eye is wholly prevented and set aside, and had it not been for this, to so dreadful an inconvenience we should have been continually subjected, till after a while we should have been reduced to absolute blindness. By this arch likewise and its covering, as well as by the eye-lids, the sweat of the head and forehead are prevented from falling into the eye, which might otherways have proved extremely detrimental to it. The eye-lashes answer a very important purpose with respect to the safety and securitie of the eye; as by means of them the little flying particles of rubbish are prevented from falling into it. The inner part of the eye consists of various coats and humors, all regularly placed one under another; and had these been placed in any other order than that in which they really lie, the ends of vision must
must have been wholly frustrated. must

there not then be a perpetual goodness,

power and wisdom exerted in the regular

continuation of this exact order through-

out the whole species? even the very pain

we feel upon the falling into the eye of

some loose and wandering particle which

arises from the exquisite sensibilitie natu-

rally belonging to one of the coats of it,

answers a most admirably useful and bene-

volent purpose; for by this means the tears

are drawn out, and the thing offending

washed away, which, were it long to re-

main, would prove not only extremely

painful, but likewise a great obstruction to

the sight, if not in time totally destroy it.

among the several humors of the eye there

is one, which is called the aqueous; of

which from its nature and situation the

eye may by accident happen to be deprived,

but observe the benignitie of nature; there

is a provision in any such case for a supplie

cf it. Mr. Ray, in his Treatise upon the

wisdom of God in the creation, tells us of

an experiment to this purpose, that was

made upon the eye of a dog on the anato-
mical theatre at Leyden. " upon a wound

that had been given to his eye, the aque-
CATECHETICAL

Lect. VI. our humor flowed so plentifully from it, that its membranes and coats appeared quite lank, flaccid and dry; and yet in six hours space the eye was again filled with the same aqueous humor; and that without the application of any medicines.” With respect to that hollow of the eye, through which the rays pass to the retina, where the objects we see are painted, one might imagine it to be a matter of comparatively small importance, whether it were a little wider or a little narrower. Yet it appears in fact and from observations made, that upon the slightest alteration in this respect, either by the contraction or dilatation of it, the greatest inconvenience would ensue. “How most exact then in the words of the poet is nature's frame! how wise the eternal mind!” How kind and friendly the formation of the eye in this respect, that the most useful dimension of this part should be so exactly and accurately preserved throughout the whole species! it is likewise highly worthy of remark, that in the eyes of brute animals there is a peculiar provision made for the usefulness, ease, safety and defence of this organ, according to the par-
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particular manner in which they are destined to live, and their being to be supported. thus we are told that in a frog, whose habitation is chiefly in watry places abounding with sedges and other plants, that have sharp points or edges, among which this animal is to be continually hopping about, there is a particular cartilage or membrane, with which it can at pleasure cover over the eye, without obstructing the light of it; and thus defend itself from injury, this membrane being at once strong and transparent; and at pleasure too withdrawn, when there is no particular use or occasion for it. the same thing is observable in several sort of birds, who are destined to fly among plants and bushes, lest the prickles, twigs, leaves, or other parts, should wound or any way offend the eye. it is likewise very remarkable in horses and other animals, that are to feed for the most part on herbs and the grass of the field, and that they may the better choose their food, obliged to be long looking downward, that they are provided with what anatomists call the seventh muscle; a muscle not belonging to the eye of man, because there was no occasion for it; but with great
great wisdom and goodness made to be a part in the formation of the eye of these animals, that by means of it that weariness and fatigue of the eye, which must otherways have necessarily ensued from this downward posture, might be prevented. "you will not, I hope, my little children, "think that these things are to be overlooked or disregarded, because they are "illustrations drawn from the inferior part "of the creation, the mere animal tribe; "since God is the former of these animals "as well as of man, and many excellent "uses are to be drawn from that goodness "and wisdom of the divine being, which "are so apparent in the production, structure and preservation of these inferior "creatures, thus for instance, if God "takes care of oxen, of sheep, nay, of frogs, "as is so apparent in the continued agencie "of his providence, from thence, my dear "child, you may infer, that you ought "not to use these brute creatures with "crueltie. for if God be continually pro- "viding for their ease and safety, in so "doing you must needs act in contrarietie "to him, which cannot surely be pleasing "in his sight, nor at all honorable to your-"
"Self. and from hence you may infer, Lect. vi.
"that if you cannot without displeasing
"him and acting in contradiction to the
"views of his providence, be barbarous
"and cruel in your treatment of this
"brutal tribe, you must to be sure offend
"him still more highly by using ill and
"cruelly any of your brethren of man-
"kind. and then farther in the third
"place, if the kind providence of God
"is continually exercised in the preser-
"vation of these animals, you may cer-
tainly depend upon it that he will take
"care of you, and provide in the best
"manner for all your interests and con-
cerns. I hope you remember that this
"is an argument made use of by your
"beloved favour and redeemer himself.
"If God take care of oxen, yea, and of the
"grass of the field, which to day is, and to-
morrow is cast into the oven, how much
"more will he clothe you, 0 ye of little faith?"
of sight, should have concurred and met in so small a compass as the space that contains the eye, by chance or by necessary causes, without the least view or intention of a creating mind." but we have seen that there are not only the certain marks of design and intention in it, but equally strong and certain marks likewise of a kind and benevolent intention. In this single instance then, if we consider the constant preservation of the same form and construction throughout the whole human species and all the animal tribes, and that for a whole life; and that thus it has been for thousands of years past, if we reflect upon the innumerable benefits and advantages, pleasures and delights which we enjoy in consequence of this organ of vision or sense of seeing, what a prodigiously clear and satisfying proof have we of the divine benignity and goodness! But how much higher must this proof arise, if we consider that the same exquisite and friendly contrivance would appear upon an examination of all the other senses and organs; in those of hearing, taste, speaking and the like, and in every part of nature whatsoever! Upon such a survey it must
must appear altogether as absurd to deny the goodness of God as to deny his being. but as this is an attribute so essential to our happiness, as it is the foundation of all religion, and the only genuine ground of devotion, without the conviction of which devotion, possessing our minds, we could only dread omnipotence and be astonished at infinite wisdom. I propose to pursue my reflexions upon it, and to lay before you some different views of the argument upon which we found our belief of it as belonging to the sovereign mind.

LECTURE VII.

We are now treating upon the goodness of God. and it is observed in the scriptures that the earth is full of it. you remember I hope, my good children, the passage I refer to. yes, sir, it is in the thirty-third Psalm: the Lord loveth righteousness and judgement; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. and do you not think that by that expression...
the psalmist might mean, that in the constant, regular and plentiful productions of the earth God hath given to mankind a most visible display and clear demonstration of his goodness? or do you imagine his meaning in this expression to have been, that every thing which comes within the notice of the inhabitants of the earth, the whole structure and formation of the world, and all the stated and orderly appearances of it, are so many displays of that goodness? this latter is the more extensive idea, and will naturally include the other. I suppose then it is that which you would prefer. this however, I may venture to assure you of, that in that one particular comprehended under this general expression of the psalmist, which I have already hinted at, according to this more extensive interpretation of it, the production I mean of the fruits of the earth, and the provision that is made for the continual supplies and regular succession of them, is contained a very strong decisive illustration of the argument which we are now upon; the proof I mean of the divine goodness. you have been already
already told how curiously and wonder-Lect.VII.
fully the body of man, as well as that of
all the animals belonging to this earthly
or terraqueous globe has been formed.
a terraqueous globe this earth is some-
times called; because it consists of sea
and waters as well as land. and this so
admirable structure of our bodies we
have insisted upon as a most demonstra-
tive argument not only of design, but
of kind and gracious design, that is
to a creating and sovereign deitie to be
ascribed. but pray, my good children,
what would you have thought, supposing
man to have been made just in the same
manner he now is, endued with all the
same organs, limbs, senses, and animal
appetites, which he now possessess; and
that the structure of the mere animals,
the birds, the beasts and insects, had
been just what it is at present; but yet
that no provision had been made in the
system of nature for the support and
sustenance in these several classes of this
animal frame? indeed, upon that suppo-
sition, my idea of the divine goodness
would be very much obscured. because
I find upon my own perpetual experi-
ence,

F 6
Lect. VII. ""ence, that notwithstanding all the wonder
""ful formation of my body, it stands in need of daily support and refreshment,
"" and that the want of these would soon have subjected me to a great deal of
"" pain and misery, and at length have terminated in the destruction and disso-
"" lution of that animal constitution that is belonging to me. You seem then, my ""
dear child, to apprehend, unless I mistake your meaning, that man might have been formed just as he is, with all these wonderful contrivances and marks of skill in his bodily frame and con
ture, and yet that in this very frame and structure of him there might have been no proof at all of the goodness of his creator, but rather of some contrarie disposition in that being. Is it possible that the case could have been so? If you please, sir, I will venture to express my thoughts more fully upon that head; and then refer them wholly to your judgement, hoping, or rather indeed not doubting, but that you will be so kind as to correct my error, if you find me to have fallen into any. Well, you will proceed then upon that condition. I will.
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"will. I was much delighted with the account you gave me, upon the last opportunity I had of conversing with you upon this head, of the curious structure and fabric of the eye, but might not mine eye have been made just as it is, and yet the quantity of light have been far too great to have answered the ends of sight? nay, might it not have been so excessive as to have put me to the severest torture in consequence of that very construction of mine eye, which you were then insisting upon; and by this means I should not only have been destitute of all the pleasures of seeing, but likewise have lived in excessive torment and misery, or might not the objects with which I had been surrounded, and which by the light I had discovered, have been odious and hateful to my sight, troublesome and afflicting to the eye, and a continued source of terrifying and frightful ideas, and of uneasie and painful sensations? indeed, my child, I must own that there seems to be no direct and absolute impossibility in these suppositions. and you think that, had this been really the case, it would have
have appeared that your eye, instead of
being formed with any kind or benevo-
lent design, had been rather made and
contrived purely for the sake of render-
ing you liable to all this torture. indeed,
sir, I see not how I could have made any
other conclusion. you told me likewise
that my ear was very admirably formed
for hearing. but what, if all the sounds
that were presented to it, instead of be-
ing what they now are, had been contin-
ually terrifying and alarming, like so
many bursting claps of thunder, and
that by this means I had been almost
distracted and rendered incapable either
of attending to any of the concerns, or
enjoying any of the blessings of life?
indeed, child, I am ready to own with
you, that had this been the case, you
had better have been without this curi-
ous organ of hearing. and that it is
not, is only to be ascribed to the pure
and absolute benevolence of that sove-
reign mind which created all things.
in like manner, dear sir, as things are at
present, I am so far from being sorry
that my animal frame stands in need of
continual sustenance and refreshment,
that
that I find a great deal of present, and I hope innocent, satisfaction, in partaking of the food that is convenient for me, besides the many lasting blessings that accrue from it. And I am often very thankful to God, that there is such provision made in the structure of my body for the taking in and digestion of my food, and for promoting the nourishment of my body by it, that the necessary support of my nature, instead of being any burden, is on the contrary itself one of the gratifications belonging to my animal frame. I often think too that there is something very entertaining in that vast variety of methods by which my fellow-creatures all around me are continually employed in providing for themselves and their families these necessary refreshments of their being, and in the success, with which for the most part these labors are attended. But alas, how miserable would have been the case, if notwithstanding the wise formation of those particular parts and organs that minister to the uses and ends of nourishment, there had been no provision made in the scene of nature for a continual
and plentiful supply of that nourishment! what a dreadful thing must it have been to be able to eat, to be wanting to eat, and yet to have no food provided for us; to have had it wholly and absolutely out of our power to procure any; that all mankind should have been in this perishing condition, by some means or another continually starting up into the world with all these appetites about them, only to pine for a while in extreme misery, and then to expire. this surely would have shown cruelty and not goodness in the being that made them, if any such there were. that indeed must be allowed. but then if the direct contrarie to all this appears to be the real state of things; if the construction and order of the world around us is so admirably adapted to the formation of our own bodies, as to be a continual supply to them of nourishment, refreshment, gratification and pleasure, then I suppose you will readily allow, my child, that the proof of goodness in deitie is so far complete, and the argument in support of it prodigiously heightened and made to appear in a vastly stronger point
EXERCISES. 113

"of view." now this is indeed exactly LECT. VI. the case. as the eye is so admirably formed for seeing, so the light, with which we are continually surrounded, and which is perpetually presented to it, is exactly such for degree and quantity and continuance, as to be prodigiously refreshing and comfortable to the sight, instead of being in the least degree painful or disagreeable. and yet how easily might it have happened otherwise, had there not been some highly intelligent and kindly designing mind, who first placed the earth and the heavenly bodies in such an exact situation one towards another, and continually preserves that position that is best adapted for our comfort, ease and pleasure in this particular? how small a deviation from this order of nature would involve us in the most confounding perplexity and horror? and whence is it, think you, that such a deviation should never happen? how can we account for it but by a divine and continually presiding providence? perpetual light, even tho' it were in no greater a degree than that which we have at midday, would perhaps be as great an inconvenience as even total darkness itself, to which after a while it would probably reduce us by
by its too powerful and inceflant operation
upon the visual organ. darkness therefore
is a relief to the eye, as light is the comfort
and joy of it. it would likewise have been
an extreme detriment and prejudice to
vision, and must in a great measure have
defeated the design of it, if not wholly de-
stroyed it, had night been succeeded in an
instant by the fullest blaze of day. and it
is a most admirably kind contrivance in the
system of the world, that light both comes
and goes gradually, and not instantaneously.
and the same exactness of kind and benevo-
lent intention is equally observable in that
degree of heat which we receive from the
sun, and which invigorates the whole ani-
mal and vegetable system. Mr. Keil tells
us that the great comet which appeared in
the year 1680, had approched so near to
the sun, as to be made by the heat of it
three thousand times hotter than red-hot
iron. how small a degree of such an ac-
quired heat, additional to what the earth
statedly partakes of in consequence of its
exact position in the planetary system, would
be enough to throw the whole of our orb
into the most dreadful disorder and con-
fusion! what a benignantie and goodness
must
must then be apparent in that original con-

trivance and perpetual order, by virtue of

which we are so far from being subject to

any inconvenience of this kind, that we

constantly enjoy such a degree of heat from

the sun, as invigorates every part of nature,

and brings its various productions year

after year to their exactly wished-for ma-
turitie and perfection! but still notwith-

standing this exact position of the earth,

how dreadful would be our condition, were

it not for the air or atmosphere, thro' the

medium of which the rays of light are trans-
mited, and which is formed of the exactest

consistencie for that purpose? but the air

likewise, as it is of absolute necessitie for

the transition of light, and answers the most

kind and friendly intention of nature, or

rather I should say, and would be under-

stood to mean, of the great author of na-
ture in this respect, being in itself abso-
lutely necessary for the support of animal

life, what a perpetual goodness is apparent

in it's being so exactly adapted to the pur-

poses of respiration? for by experiments

made in the air-pump it has appeared, that

were the air we breathe, only in a small
degree more compressed or thicker than it
Lect. VII. is, or on the other hand, in a small degree only more rarified or thinner in its constitution, it would be so far from contributing to the support of animal life, that it would indeed destroy it. But yet, notwithstanding this admirable position of the earth with respect to the sun, and this exact aptitude in the density of the air for the transmission of its light and the purposes of respiration, all would be in vain, and man in this respect a miserable creature, or else very soon cease to be an inhabitant of this earthly globe, were there not some constant provision made in nature for keeping this latter in motion, in order to prevent its putrefaction. If this were not done, as an ingenious writer expresses it, "instead of refreshing and animating, it would suffocate and poison all the world." To this admirably serve the perpetual gales and frequent storms of wind, we value much and justly, the late invention of ventilators, and are very thankful to those who have favored the world with this ingenious and most useful invention for clearing ships and other crowded structures of the foul and noxious air that has been contracted, and introducing that which is fresh.
and wholesome. this however is only a very faint and shadowy imitation of nature.
a mere trifling and despicable benefit, great as it is in itself, when compared with the
grand provision in this respect made by the sovereign intelligence; by means of which
the whole system of air is at once with the greatest facilitie, and without the least trou-
ble to the inhabitants of the world continually cleansed and purified. and yet how apt
are we to employ our thoughts and conver-
sation in the admiration of these human inventions, the imperfect copies only of
nature, while we overlook the benevolent and wise intention of the supreme opificer,
who with such exuberant goodness has formed, contrived and adjusted every thing
for the benefit and good of man? "and " does it not, my children, give you a " very high and exalted idea of the divine " goodness, to think of the amazing, in-
" expressible number of mankind, and of " the inferior creatures, that have ever " since the creation been subsisting in con-
" sequence of these happily established " laws of nature continually upheld by the " never-ceasing exertion of the great cre-
" ator?" " the earth, as we have seen," says the
Lect. VII. the Psalmist, "is full of the goodness of the Lord." and if we do but consider the magnitude of this earth thus replete with goodness, what a large, extensive idea must we needs form of that goodness itself? the bulk or solid contents of our globe is no less than two hundred and sixty thousand millions of miles; and all this prodigiously wide extensive scene quite filled with "goodness;" an innumerable variété of birds, beasts, insects, reptiles, fishes, in every class of which, and in every individual of these classes the most exquisite workmanship and contrivance apparent for the accommodation of the animal according to his particular habitation and mode of living. add to all this the rich and plentiful productions of the earth in its minerals, vegetables and fruits, in the formation and growth of all which there are the most evident marks of a kind and benevolent intention. every thing is fitted for bringing them to their proper degree of perfection, and in all these productions there is nothing but what has it's admirable uses. this or that upon an hasty view may seem trifling or it may be noxious to us; but yet upon a nearer examination is found
the common thistle, which grows by the highway, is even more useful when reduced to ashes, than any other thistle whatsoever in the making of glass, from whence we derive such a number of conveniencies.

"Does a nettle sting," says one, "it is to secure so good a medicine from the rapes of children and cattle; does the bramble cumber a garden, it makes the better hedge, or if it chance to prick the owner, it will tear the thief; if hemlock be poison to man, it is physic to some animals, and food to another." Nay, even to man himself it sometimes proves extremely beneficial by a proper mode of preparation, and being taken in a certain quantitie only.

Even in the very color of the grass of the colors, earth, of the leaves of the trees, and the vegetables of the ground, we have an admirable and very convincing proof of the goodness of the creator; it being that very one which is most of all agreeable and pleasant to the eye, and which it longest endures; and, if any other than that of green had been the color of nature, we should soon have found the highest inconveniencies arising from it.

But
But then this earth is far from being the only scene of nature, in which the divine goodness exerts and displays itself. From the discoveries that have been made by astronomical observations, it seems very evident that the other planets belonging to the same solar system with our earth, are like it inhabited. Provision seems to have been made for that purpose according to their respective distances from the sun, and from a provision of this kind actually discovered to us, compared with what we see throughout the whole globe which we ourselves inhabit, we may justly upon the principles of analogy, and with the fairest probability, conclude that the same kind, gracious and benevolent order prevails throughout each of these distinct and separate worlds. And as according to the like observations the fixed stars are probably supposed to be so many suns having a planetary system belonging to each, how prodigiously, according to this just and natural reasoning or ground of analogy, is our idea of the divine goodness extended! However, by considering this earth of ours alone, and attending to that prodigious bulk of it, which has been already spoken of, and the
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the incessant proofs of goodness that have been apparent in it ever since the creation, and in every part of it, how can we properly express our idea of so much goodness actually proved and appearing throughout so vast an extent of space and duration, but by calling it infinite? thus from the actual effects of it are we taught to conceive of this goodness as being so great, so free, so permanent, so exuberant and overflowing, that it is impossible we should have too high a dependance upon it, or raise our notions and apprehensions too far concerning it. it must needs appear from these considerations, only to be a goodness calling for our most elevated and fervent praises, and laying a foundation for our everlasting triumphs. surrounded as we are with demonstrations of a goodness like this, it is not enough to say that downright atheism must needs be the grossest stupidity. but a very lamentable degree of indolence and lethargy must it imply in our intellectual and moral powers, not to have our souls most deeply impressed with an affecting, lively sense of this divine and all-sustaining love. we are to judge, we say, of the goodness of a man by his actions

G and
and conduct. in the divine actions and
conduct then, what full and satisfying proof
have we of that goodness, which is divine?
of the degree of a fellow-creature’s good-
ness we judge by the number and im-
portance of his beneficent actions. accord-
ing to this manner of determining, what
language can be too strong, or rather what
words suffice, to express the true idea of
the benignity and beneficence of that God,
who is good to all, and whose tender mercies
are over all his works? o then praise the
Lord with me, and let us exalt his name toge-
ther. let us not look upon our acknow-
legements of the divine goodness only as a
decent compliment paid to the author of
our natures; but let us offer them cordi-
ally and affectionately, and with a devotion
corresponding as nearly as possible to the
incontestable evidence we have of it.

A SERMON.
A SERMON.

I Tim. iii. 16.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

"LET no man, says bishop Hall, go about to entertain the thought of the great mystery of godliness, but with a ravished heart, an heart filled with a gracious composition of love and joy and wonder." tho' therefore much has been said in the world, and this too with great heat and eagerness, concerning the meaning of the word mystery, yet it is far from being
being my design to enter upon any examination of that debate, or any considerations of that kind at present. in reference to our text, in which you perceive the word to occur, I shall leave every one to understand by it almost what he pleases. nor do I apprehend the critical meaning of the word to be a matter of any great importance here, so long as we rightly understand the thing that is denominated by it; namely, the system of christianity. here is something called a mysterie. now whatever be the meaning of this word, yet the apostle immediately proceeds to give you a very particular description of that which he calls so. and this description we may be very well able to understand, without determining why he calls it so, or being able precisely to adjust the signification of such a word. some by the word mysterie seem to intend that which is totally incomprehensible, or a mere collection of words, which have no meaning at all in them. but it is plain this cannot be the interpretation of it here; on account of that clear, explicit and very intelligible description, given of what is called a mysterie. by this term, however, may well enough be denoted some-
something of which we know a great deal, but concerning which there is a great deal more that still remains to be known. And in this sense christianity may very justly be called a mystery, without at all derogating from the excellency of it. Nay, the expression does indeed imply such a superior and consummate excellency in it, as is not to be at once, but only in the gradual advance and progress of the understanding fully comprehended by the mind of man. Under this notion of christianity the apostle himself has given us a very exact and lively representation of it in another of his epistles; that I mean to the Ephesians. He there informs them of its being his tender affectionate prayer to God in their behalf, that "he would grant unto them "according to the riches of his glory, to "be strengthened with might by his spirit "in the inner man, that Christ might "dwell in their hearts by faith, that they "being rooted and grounded in love, may "be able to comprehend with all saints "what is the breadth and length and depth "and height, and to know the love of "Christ, which passeth knowledge." Here you see the apostle supposes that there is a great
great deal to be known concerning Christianitie, even "the breadth and length and " depth and height" of it, and yet that on another account it "passeth know-
lege." that is to say, there is so much to be known concerning it, that we cannot even by the most diligent studie attain to the whole of that knowllege in the present life. it passeth the limits of our present powers, but this is very far from being a reason against the studie of the gospel. on the contrarie, it gives us a very pleasing view of this employment. it points out Christianitie to us as a copious, inexhaustible subject, in our contemplation of which we shall always be sure to meet with something, that will be still farther entertaining and satisfactorie to the mind, beyond the amount of that we have already discovered in relation to it. we can never grow wearie of contemplating a subject, which is so great and noble as to exceed the full comprehension even of the most improved and cultivated understanding during this state of mortalitie. on this account then Christianitie may justly by St. Paul in our text be called a mysterie. that likewise is very naturally styled a mysterie, which ap-
pears even by what we do know and most clearly perceive concerning it, to carry in it such an eminent degree of dignitie, excellency, usefulness, worth and importance, as cannot but excite our highest admiration, surpassing, as it may seem to do, all that has ever yet been discovered in the kind, or that imagination itself could have suggested. and on this farther account how justly may christianitie be said to be mysterious? what an astonishing scene of love does it exhibit? how does it surprize and amaze our faculties by that exuberance of goodness to which we owe it! and with what consummante and admirable wisdom is it as a religious institution or moral structure contrived and modeled for promoting the everlasting interests of mankind! "o the depths both of the wis-
"dom and of the knowledge of God! how "unsearchable are his judgments, and his "ways past finding out!" the grandeur and excellency of this religious system are never enough to be admired; never can they be sufficiently extolled in our praises, thanksgivings and adorations on account of them. well then, for these two reasons in conjunction, may christianitie not only be styled a mysterie, but a great one too. it
is a system that furnishes us with a copious and inexhaustible fund of contemplation, and at the same time presents to our view in the several particulars of it, objects the most surprizing, full of dignitie, excellency and beautie, and beyond all comparison or adequate conception, interesting, great and illustrious. but what does the apostle mean by saying, "without con- " traceverse great is the mysterie of godli-
" nefs?" by the connexion to which I refer you, as well as by the import of the original word here made use of, it should seem to have been his intention in this expression to remind both Timothy and us of that high degree of clear and unexceptionable evidence, with which the publication of the gospel as a divinely authorised system of religion was accompanied; that " de- " monftration of the spirit" which attended it, and in consequence of which it came after a while to be established over all the world as a doctrine, not only apparently interesting and important, but confessedly true and well-attested. but by no means are we to pass over that other character, which the apostle gives us of " this great " mysterie," it is a "mysterie of godliness." far
far is he from speaking of it in this language—as if it were a thing at all surprising that godliness should be the design of christianity, or the great end that was aimed at by the publication and establishment of it in the world. From the essential perfections indeed of the divine being, we may most safely conclude on the other hand, that this only could be the ultimate view of it. But the apostle’s intention here is to impress our minds with the sentiment, that as godliness is, and necessarily must be the great end and ultimate design of the gospel, so it is in the whole fabric and construction of it most admirably fitted to answer this end; that it is a dispensation in the nature and tendencie of it most highly efficacious for this purpose; a scheme in the best manner possible, and with the most exquisite skil contrived for promoting the interest of pietie in the heart and in the world.

But let us now proceed to the particulars of it as here specified by the apostle. “great then,” he says, “is the mysterie of godliness: God was manifeft in the flesh;” or, as we might with greater emphasis and a more exact conformitie to the original read, a “God was manifest in the flesh,” justified
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Sermon. "justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glorie." "a God," says the apostle, in the first place, was manifest in the flesh." it was not God the sovereign father. "him no man hath seen or can see." it is one of the peculiar attributes of his nature to be invisible to mortal eye. but the God here spoken of was "manifest in the flesh." he was "seen" of men as well as by angels. it was not then the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ that is here said to have been "manifested in the flesh." nor yet was it on the other hand any of those inferior beings the angels, any one of which might nevertheless upon becoming incarnate, in order to deliver some special message of grace and mercy to mankind, and giving authentic attestations of his heavenly mission, have been naturally enough styled "a God," since beings much below them, even magistrates and earthly princes, are in scripture so characterized and denominated. but it is not, I say, any one of this sublime, angelical order that is spoken of here in our text; but a being inconceivably exalted above them, even God the son, or the God
God Christ. he it is, he that “in the be-
gining was with God, and” from the
begining “was God.” he it is that “was
manifest in the flesh, but justified” the
apostle adds “in the spirit,” by way of
contrast to the former expression, and so
both clauses are to be taken in conjunction,
in order to our entering fully into the sense
and meaning of them. “a God manifest
“in the flesh,” might some be ready to
ask; how can that be! how could divinitie
and humanitie thus coincide and meet to-
gether! why truly, says the apostle, “in
“the flesh,” in the external circumstances
and mere worldly condition of the person I
am here speaking of, so little was there of
this divinitie apparent, that he was on the
contrarie numbered amongst the meanest of
the people. he was not only “in the
“flesh,” but manifested also in the lowest
circumstances of humanitie. he was not
only a man, “but a man of sorrow, and
“acquainted with grief.” others of man-
kind, as it was declared concerning him in
prophecy, “hid their faces from him” in
contempt, far from “seeing any form or
“comeliness in him, “ or any beautie,”
that they “should desire him;” they
G 6 “despised
"despised and rejected him." so little appearance or manifestation was there of any inhabiting divinitie in the external circumstances of him, who was thus "manifest in the flesh." nevertheless, "by the spirit," by that spirit of infallible truth with which he spoke, and that spirit of power by which this truth was attested, was his claim to divinitie, and our ascriptions of it to him fully justified." by "this spirit" likewise was he "justified," or his character asserted, not only as being in the original honors of his nature exalted above angels and arch-angels, and the most glorious, elevated beings of all the heavenly hierarchie, but also as the prophet of God, and as the appointed teacher, instructor and savior of mankind. these are so many characters, which he himself assumed, whilst here upon earth, and which his apostles afterwards did in the most solemn and public manner insist upon as belonging to him. for this reason it was that "his name was called Jesus, because he should save his people," the people among whom he was born, as likewise all who should profess themselves his disciples, and make the proper improvement of his religion, of whatever
ever age or country, "from their sins." and in conformitie to a name at once so interesting, so honorable and so endearing, he declared himself to be come into the world that he might be "the light of it," and that God had "anointed him to preach "the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives," the captives of sin and the slaves of vice, and recovering of sight "to "the blind," the ignorant and deluded in matters of religion, and in relation to the true happiness of man. to "set at libertie "them that are bruised, to preach the ac-"ceptable year of the Lord." and in prophecie it had been said of him most suitably to such a name, that in consequence of his appearance, "the people, who sat in dark-
"ness should see great light, and that to "them who sat in the region and shadow 
"of death, light should spring up;" of so much estimation is light in the account which the scriptures give us of the gospel-
salvation. a plain sign, that we ourselves have not a right apprehension of it, when we can allow ourselves in despising the light of divine truth, and can be content to live in almost the grossest ignorance of it, rather
than be at the pains required in order to our being acquainted with it. In correspondence likewise to this name or character, with which even at his birth he had been invested, he declares that when he should "be lifted up on the cross," this should be in order to "draw all men unto "him," and that he might by expiring upon it "give his life a ransom for many;" and that the blood, which there flowed from his pierced hands and feet and side, was "shed for many for the remission of "sins." Accordingly he elsewhere assumes to himself the power or authority of giving eternal life. "I give," he says, "unto my "sheep eternal life, and they shall never "perish, neither shall any pluck them out "of mine hand. my father, who gave "them me, is greater than all; and none "is able to pluck them out of my father's "hand. I and my father are one." As it is he that gave them to me, we are in this respect one. And the promised salvation of my sheep is secure in mine hands, because it is so in the hands of that sovereign deitie, who has committed them to my care; and who is too good, too wise, too mightie, ever to permit that trust to be defeated.
defeated. such are the powers laid claim to even by him, who, when he took upon him our nature, appeared in "the form of a servant:" but yet in all these claims has he been "justified by the spirit;" that is, by those "signs and wonders and divers gifts of the holy ghost," from which is arising so ample a testimony to the truth of his mission, and consequently of these claims. our savior likewise, tho' according to his appearance or manifestation "in the flesh," he "made himself of no reputation," yet how fully was he "justified" to the impartial and discerning eye by that spirit of pietie and love, which animated all his conduct, in which we have exhibited to our view a character not only justified from reproche, not only raised above contempt, but appearing in the highest degree venerable, fair and lovely. well may he be said to have been justified in the spirit, in whose spirit there was absolutely "no guile." not the least defect in point of moral temper, but every thing that was perfective of it. in the character likewise, which he assumed as the prophet of the most high God, how amply did he justify his claim, not only by the miraculous powers
powers which he exerted, but likewise by the very spirit itself and genius of that religion, which they were intended to confirm. a religion so worthy of God, in the highest degree honorable to all his perfections, and in the most direct, immediate and efficacious manner conducing to the welfare and supreme felicite of man, and thus by its native spirit and intrinsic excellence recommending itself and its divine author to our warmest approbation and most cordial acceptance. it is added, "seen of angels." but where, it may be asked, lies the wonder of that? had he not been seen of them before? yes; but never "in flesh." it was a new and astonishing sight to these angelic beings to see this God "manifested in the flesh;" him, whose heavenly dignity so far superior to their own, they had been wont to gaze at with so much wonder and holy admiration; this very being they now with equal astonishment see taking up his abode amongst mortal men, despised, reviled, persecuted, afflicted, exposed to all manner of labors, fatigues, pains and tortures. and here, as it should seem, lies the force and emphasis of this clause in our text, it is said indeed, only "seen of angels."
but the apostle knew that every reader must immediately add in his own reflections; seen with wonder, seen with admiration and surprise. and the sentiment was probably introduced in order to heighten and aggrandize our ideas of the condescension of the Son of God in becoming incarnate. nor could any thing have been more naturally adapted to this purpose than the pointing it out as being the object of wondering contemplation to these high angelic orders. but he was also in the fourth place, "preached " unto the Gentiles." his manifestation " in the flesh" was intended to be a general diffusive good; and to carry in it a most lively display, specimen, emblem and proof of that sovereign, divine and universal goodness to which we are indebted for it. and this, tho' it cannot but appear to us as being in the highest degree agreeable to all our natural notions and most obvious reasonings concerning the divine perfections, was matter of no little astonishment to the Jews, they were strangely limited and confined in their affections towards mankind, and were therefore disposed to ascribe the like limitations even to the divine benevolence itself; to look upon the Gentiles, all men but
but themselves, as being in a manner abandoned and forsaken of God, and their own nation only, as being his favorites and the objects of his delight; insomuch that they never once thought that the Messiah was to be the savior of any besides the Jews. and it was one of their greatest objections to his gospel, that he professed to come into the world that he might be the redeemer of all; and for this reason it is expressly spoken of in another part of this apostle’s writings as a mysterie; that “the Gentiles should “be fellow heirs and of the same bodie” with the Jews, “and partakers” as well as they “of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” a mysterie, which, how unwelcome soever it might be to Jewish prejudices, partialitie, selfishness and bigotry, we ourselves have the highest reason to rejoice in, and with the devoutest affection to be thankful for. since it is in consequence of this very dispensation that we now enjoy such inestimable and glorious privileges; and have Christ amongst us in order to the having “Christ within us as the hope of “glorie.” but farther fifthly, he was not only “preached unto the Gentiles,” but in consequence of this actually “believed on “in
"in the world." we call that amidst the 

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Sermon.

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"in the world." we call that amidst the events and occurrences in life "a myfterie," which, according to all human appearance and probabilities, was very unlikely to have happened. this particular clause of our text therefore is most naturally introduced by the apostle when speaking of christianitie under the notion in general or idea of a mysterie. it was a scheme or dispensation that carried in it one entire contradiction to all the prevailing customs and established modes of the world. "to the Jews it was a stumbling-block, and "to the Greeks foolishness." all the wisdom and power, all the passions and prejudices of mankind were armed against it. so that according to all human appearances, "God manifest in the flesh" might have been "preached to the Gentiles," but could scarce have been "believed on in the world." yet mightie was the power of God to the "pulling down of these strong holds." and therefore was he not only "preached unto the Gentiles," but likewise "believed on in the world." he that during his abode upon earth was called in contempt "the son of a carpenter," reviled as a "glutton and a wine-biber, accused
as a blasphemer, treated as a madman," and charged with "having a devil," and at length put to death thro' the prevalence of enraged and virulent malice as a malefactor, was afterwards "believed on in the world," and that not in some small part of it only, but throughout every region, territory and quarter of the earth, as "a God manifest in the flesh;" had everywhere churches founded in his name, solemnities appointed to his honor, and hearts devoted to his service. "so mightily did the word of God prevail." with so much reason may we say, "this is the lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes," but to heighten and complete the grand idea, which it was the apostle's design in this passage to give us of the splendor and dignity of the gospel-scheme, and of the amazing glories that centered in the person of its adorable author; he adds in the sixth and last place, "received up into glorie." once he was manifested "in the flesh," appeared in the lowest form of humanitie, and "being found in fashion as a man, he "humbled himself." humiliation indeed! for he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." but behold how soon
soon the scene is changed. direct your wondering eyes and astonished hearts to the honors with which he is now invested. he has been long since " received into glory. " God has highly exalted him, and given " him a name above every name, that at " the name of Jesus every knee should " bow." he that was " despised and re- " jected of men," is now adored by angels, and feared at the " right hand" of the sove- reign father's throne." that, said our savior once, while here on earth, which is highly esteemed " amongst men, is abomination in " the sight of God." here we see with what abundant reason we may reverse the maxim, and say, that which is despised and of no reputation in the sight of men, carries in it the highest value, merit and accept- ableness in the sight of God. reflecting methinks upon those heavenly glories, with which the savior of the world is now in- vested, our gratitude for all the condescen- sions of his wonderful incarnation and dying love should instantly break forth into songs of congratulation. blessed Jesus, we rejoice in these thy triumphs, in these thy splendid honors, in that illustrious crown thou wearest, and which commands the reverence
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Sermon. reverence and subjection of all the angelic hosts. we join their songs. we gladly take our part in their hosanna's, and say with them: "worthy art thou, the lamb that was slain, to receive riches and blessing " and honor and glorie and power." we adore the divine munificence and love, which has thus gloriously rewarded that unwearied compassion of thine, which was exerted for our fakes. and by these rejoicing, grateful sentiments we feel ourselves, indulge thou condescending favor, indulge us in the thought, we feel ourselves to become partakers in thy renown. but yet after another sort, not exclusive of this our present kind of joy, but additional to it, and perfective of it, we hope ere long to be sharing in thy bliss and honors. for by the gracious promises of thy word we are taught to believe that thou art " entered within the veil as our forerunner." this " hope thou haft set before us," that " it might be the anchor of our souls both " sure and steadfast." and in thy life-time here on earth thou waft pleased to pray for us in these encouraging, animating terms ; that we " might be with thee, where thou " art, to behold the glorie which thou " hadst
"hadst with the father before the world" Sermon.
"was." blessed Jesus, our souls are aspiring after and longing for it." "come " Lord Jesus, come quickly." and as an earnest of this our promised inheritance, o that thou mayest now be manifested to each one of us by the efficacious influence of thy gospel upon our hearts. "take " unto thyself thy great power" and reign within us. let us not content ourselves with hearing this blessed gospel "preached," as thro' the indulgent grace of heaven is still the privilege enjoyed among us of the Gentile stock. but may its vital influences be felt by every power and affection of our natures. and as we are now professing in the sight of God and by the solemnities of his worship, to rejoice that thy name is "believed on in the world," let us manifest the sinceritie of these our solemn professions, by suffering this faith to "work" in our hearts "by love." never, never let it be said, to the astonishment of the whole angelic world, that the only-begotten of the most high did "manifest himself in flesh" purely and alone for our sakes, and that yet we have despised the offers even of such condescending love, and have chosen rather
rather to renounce our savior than our lusts! and as we profess to emulate the angelic host in the celebration of thy praises, and to make it our ambition to be hereafter like them, may it be the matter of our most diligent and attentive studie to be like to them, and like to thee in puritie and innocence of soul even now; knowing as we do, that for this end thou "gavest thyself for us, to redeem us from all iniquitie, and to purifie unto thyself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and that "without holines no man shall see the Lord."
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LECTURE VIII.

We have already endeavored to give you some account of those proofs, which we have of the divine goodness in the visible works of the creation; their order and their general tendency to utility and happiness. And I think these proofs must needs appear to those, who duly, diligently and impartially attend to them, to amount to a strict and proper demonstration of such a goodness in the deity, as we and the rest of our fellow-creatures of mankind may safely confide in with joyful respect to all our highest interests, and by the exertion of which we may firmly believe these will be in the most effectual manner provided for. But there are still other arguments to be insisted upon, which afford a very high degree of additional evidence in the point before us. And surely we cannot have too much; or be content that any thing tending to heighten the proof should be omitted. It is here, properly speaking, that our all is at stake. If God be indeed infinitely and unchangeably good,
and to you in particular, my good children; and assure you that all things are yours. whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, any of your fellow-creatures, with whom you may have particular connexions; or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours. that is, by this presiding and all-directing goodness of the deity, they will be made to turn to your account.

and you may be, as St. Paul declares he was, fully persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from this love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;

having by this great and most illustrious messenger of peace and mercy been so amply displayed and so signally ratified and confirmed. I will therefore proceed in my endeavor to corroborate the belief of this divine goodness by such other arguments as I just now referred to, and which have not as yet been insisted upon in this our stated inquirie, relative to that and other subjects naturally connected with it.
something like what is called an argument \textit{\textit{a priori}} that may be produced to this pur-
pose; that is, there is an argument to be
drawn in proof of the divine goodness in-
dependent of any actual effects of it, as
discerned by us, and which is wholly
founded upon those other attributes, which
we cannot but ascribe to the divine and
sovereign nature. Such for instance as the
divine power and wisdom, and the inde-
pendent happiness of the divine being. the
latter of these we shall immediately see to
follow upon the former two. our present
argument therefore, we will, if you please,
state as follows: in consequence of this
originate, self-derived and independent
happiness of the divine being, and the
having it in his power with the utmost
ease and in the highest perfection to accom-
plish all his views and purposes, it is mani-
fest that all those occasions and sources of
evil dispositions that we know of towards
other beings are excluded. "my dear
" children, you have, I dare say, so good
" an opinion of the rest of your fellow-
" creatures, as to imagine there is none of
" them that would do either you or any
" man any harm purely for the harm fake,"
LECT. VIII. **or were there not some temptation or seducement inclining him to it; or were it not for some preceding perverseness and corruptness of temper.** rashness, revenge, envy, ambition, pride, the love of shining in the world, of exercising power and appearing to be possessed of it, care and the fretfulness it occasions, opposition of interests, inordinate desires, losses and disappointments creating regret and disgusts; these and the like are the sources of evil dispositions and actions among men. nor do we ever suppose any one to be malignant by nature. even the devils became so out of pride and envy; and were so far from being originally malicious or evil in their nature, that they were indeed as we know in their first station the innocent, pure and holy angels of God. and would it not be very strange that the creator of the world should be the only exception to this rule? yet must this needs be the case if he be not good. because none of those sources of malevolence, which we just now mentioned, can have any place with respect to the deitie on account of his infinite power and wisdom and independent happiness. the deitie must either be a benevolent being, or else
else malevolent and ill-designing. and ifL*c. viu.
none of the several causes and sources of
malevolence or ill-will which we can possi-
bly conceive of, or imagine, can with respect
to the deitie have any place at all; and if
on the contrarie there be nothing that we
know of which in like manner excludes
the idea of goodness as an attribute belong-
ing to his nature; this surely we are to
ascribe to him. these however are consi-
derations, which naturally tend to heighten
and confirm our idea of this divine good-
ness; supposing it to have been already in
the general proved, as in fact it has been,
from the actual effects of it. for a self-
existent being, that is continually and
every where doing good, must needs be by
nature good. now what is it that hinders
the goodness of great numbers among our
fellow-creatures, of which we are witnes-
es, from rising to an inconceivably higher
degree than human goodness ever yet at-
tained to, but one or another among those
things, which have been mentioned as the
sources of a malignant and evil disposi-
tion. hence those defects and blemishes
that we observe even in the best of human
characters, in some of which benevolence
and
and good-will would appear with a most astonishing lustre, were it not for the opposition it meets with, the depression it is subject to, and the impediments that lie in the way of it, arising from the evil tempers of others, and the disturbances which these occasion in their own breasts. But every thing of this kind being absolutely and of necessity excluded from our idea or notion of deitie, it being absolutely impossible that any the least impediment whatsoever should interrupt the free, exuberant flow of divine benevolence, this naturally tends to give us the largest apprehensions of its extensiveness and permanencie. It is not unusually observed that men are then most disposed to communicate happiness, when they are most of all easie, happie and contented in themselves; and in the preceding reflexions we see some ground for an observation like this. God then must be infinitely and immutably good, because he is infinitely happie.

But secondly, a very strong argument may be drawn in proof of the divine goodness from that which is actually existing among other beings, in the same manner as we proved the divine power and the divine wisdom,
wisdom, from the actual existence of power and wisdom as the qualities of other beings.

"I hope, my children, you have not forgotten that argument. It was shewn, you know, that God must needs have more power than any one man, because every man's power is derived from him; and for the same reason he must have more power than the power of all mankind put together; and for the same reason still more than all the power of angels added to this entire sum or aggregate of human power, because of all angelic power as well as human, he alone is the source." In like manner it was argued with respect to the divine wisdom. Nor can anything more directly tend to fix and ascertain our ideas of the greatness of the divine power and of the extent of the divine wisdom, than the attending to and revolving in our minds proofs of some such reflections as these. But now in the very same manner may the goodness of God be proved, not only to be a real attribute of his nature, but likewise to be inexpressibly large, free, copious, and in the highest degree perfect. "You, my dear children, I dare say, would do every thing that lies in your power to make another
another being happy. and you have, I doubt not, the same opinion of your fellow-children, of your parents, and of vast numbers of your acquaintance." now, if all this goodness were, as it were, laid together, and supposed to constitute the temper and disposition of some one among mankind, and to it were added in order to constitute still the temper of some one being, the goodness of all the most sublimely generous souls that ever lived upon earth, the goodness of all the angels and hosts of heaven; in short, every degree of goodness from the highest to the lowest, that was ever possessed by any rational or moral agent whatsoever, would it not form a most amazingly perfect character of goodness; a goodness which could never be exhausted, never fail or disappoint our expectations? now nothing can be more evident than that the divine and sovereign being must be possessed of a degree of goodness beyond what this whole aggregate of love and benevolence would amount to; this whole sum of goodness belonging to all other natures whatsoever, being in fact derived from and communicated by him, for he is the author and giver of every good.
"good and perfect gift." the very quantity therefore or sum of goodness actually subsisting among other beings is a direct and of itself sufficient proof of his perfect goodness. and indeed what more naturally to be imagined, than that the supreme creator should make the rational and moral agents, which he produces, in the image of himself? if the devil, for instance, had it in his power to make other beings, where would be the wonder, if he should fill their hearts with spite and malice in his original formation of them? as God therefore in his creation "has written the contrary law of love upon our hearts," we may from hence certainly conclude that his own moral nature is the direct contrary to that of malevolence, namely kind and gracious. even the inanimate creation bears the image of God's goodness by its universal tendency to good, which would be altogether accountable, if the author of it were not good. but man is the still nearer and more exact image of deity, by having the very disposition itself of goodness infused into his nature, and the "law of kindness" inscribed upon his heart.
But there is, thirdly, another thing remarkable in the constitution and frame of man, which seems strongly to evince the goodness of his creator, and that is, that we are not only so formed as to be disposed to do good ourselves, and to be in our inclinations kind and benevolent, but likewise to love and admire goodness in others, and to hate its contrarie. Now this is a strong proof of the goodness of our creator in two different views. First, as it has so apparent and powerful a tendencie to the production of general happiness, by encouraging goodness in others, and animating the temper in ourselves. And then, secondly, if God were not good but the reverse, and one or other he must be, he would, by this constitution of us, have made us with a disposition to hate himself; which it is not surely to be imagined he would do. Again, fourthly, in the moral order of things relative to mankind, it is observable that they are not only so constituted as to produce goodness and the love of goodness, but also to reward and honorably to distinguish it. "Tho' the just and the unjust, "the unthankful, as well as the good," share in the common mercies of providence, yet
yet are the good in proportion to their goodness distinguished by peace of conscience, by reputation, by well ordered and prosperous affairs, (a) by lively expectations and animating prospects. now what can be more unlikely than that a being, who was not himself good, who did not love and delight in goodness, should so plan and regulate his own constitution of things, as that in the series and order of them this quality should be so perpetually rewarded in others? I here take it for granted that such is the constitution of man as we have now been representing it to be. the proof of these things will naturally come to be treated of in that other part of our intended series of discourse, of which man himself is to be the subject. and I think from all that has been said concerning his inward constitution and moral frame, from his bodily structure and organization, from the harmonie and friendly tendencies so visible

(a) Take this for a truth, to which oracles are fables; that never any man commits a sin to shun an inconvenience, but one way or other, soon or late, he plunges himself by that act into a far worse inconvenience than that he would decline, Boyle on Customary Swearing, p. 45.
and conspicuous in every part of the animal creation, "the heavens above, the earth beneath," and the waters of the mighty ocean, it must needs be evident, that there cannot be any truth more clearly and firmly established than this of the divine benevolence. and I have been the larger in treating upon this particular attribute of the deitie, not only on account of its transcendent moment and importance according to its own immediate nature, being the great center of all our hopes, that without which all the seeming loveliness of nature would be but rudeness and deformity; but likewise because this being once clearly established, the other moral attributes of the divine nature are proved of course, being indeed necessarily involved in the true idea or notion of this; so that it will be even altogether needless to produce any distinct arguments in confirmation of them. nor indeed should we be able to produce any to this purpose, but what would have their foundation in that goodness already proved, and be derived from the supposition of it. all therefore that we have here to do, is to shew briefly, how it is that these other attributes do all of them flow out of this;
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constituting as it were so many parts or branches of it. thus for example, if God be infinitely and immutably good, he must of necessity be infinitely and immutably holy. “for I suppose, my good children, your idea of holiness is this; that it consists in the approbation and love of goodness both in our own character and in that of other beings, and in an answerable dislike of its contrarie; an aversion to every thing that would taint or corrupt the moral character, and make it to degenerate towards the temper of malignitie or ill-will.” the more firmly likewise the temper of goodness is established in any moral agent, and the less likelyhood there is of his ever deviating from it, so much the more holy do we esteem him. now on all these accounts, if God be an infinitely good and gracious being, it cannot but follow, that he is an infinitely pure and holy being. because we see that goodness among men in proportion to its prevalency in the mind and temper naturally and unavoidably excites a love of and complacency in the like character, wherever we behold it; an hatred of its contrarie, and a generous indignation at the
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The observed indulgence of malignitie and ill-will. "God therefore must, as you know, my dear children, the scripture expresses it, be a being, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquitie, that is, with approbation, or otherwise than with the higheft abhorrence and displeasure, and on the contrary he must be a being who loves righteousness and righteous persons. so that to all good people there is the greatest comfort to be derived from the consideration of the divine holines, as we shall hereafter have occasion to shew you more particularly." and then lastly, as nothing can be more evident, agreeably to what has just now been insisted upon, than that the more firmly any one is rooted and grounded in love, so much the less likelihood there is of his ever deviating into the contrary temper; that being who "is love" itself, pure and infinite love, and the origin both of all that happiness and of all that benevolence, that is any-where existing throughout the whole scene of nature, must needs be at an infinite remove and distance from all moral depravation; that is to say, he must be infinitely holy, so that there cannot be a possibilitie of the least
least deflection in his nature from what is purely and consummately good. (a) and then again, as to the justice of God, "if you are satisfyed and convinced, as my dear children I hope you are, that he is infinitely good, you may be very sure that his justice does not mean crueltie and revenge, or the punishing offenders with the utmost rigor and extremitie of power; for all this is directly contrary to the plain, essential idea or notion of goodness and therefore, if this were the meaning of God’s justice, you would by ascribing it to him, deprive him of his goodness. but God is good as well as just; and therefore we are to form such a notion of his justice as is compatible and consistent with his goodness. nay, from his goodness we shall be certainly able to infer his justice according to the genuine and true idea of it. thus for instance, a good king that loves his subjects, will for that very reason, and because he is so, and for no other reason, take care that justice shall (a) "The holiness of God," Dr. Clarke defines to be "in general, that disposition of the divine nature, by which he is infinitely re-moved from all moral evil whatsoever." See his Sermons, Vol. II. Serm. VIII. p. 178.
shall be duly administered throughout his kingdom, and that wholesome laws shall be well and faithfully executed. In like manner the laws of God's moral government are calculated for the good of those who are the subjects of it, to which, in consequence of his goodness, he had a sole view in the original establishment of it. And for the same reason he will be just, that is, he will inviolably adhere to those laws in his continued government of the universe. They are calculated for the good of the universe, to depart from them therefore would not be goodness but the contrary. Besides, mercy or forgiveness, "my good children, you know, is another attribute of the deity. You must therefore needs form such an idea of the divine justice as shall be consistent with mercy, that is, with the forgiveness of offenders upon their repentance. And that mercy is indeed in this sense a real attribute of deity, you cannot but be sensible must immediately follow from his goodness. You know very well, that the higher opinion you have of any one's goodness, the more certainly and joyfully you can depend upon receiving forgiveness from him, if ever
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"ever you happen to offend him, upon

signifying a suitable and just concern for

having done so. you take it for granted

that he must be merciful and forgiving,

because you know him to be good. if

then the divine being be supremely and

immutably good, he must for that reason

alone, and you cannot want any other to

be assigned; he must, I say, for that rea-

son alone be considered as being in the

highest degree merciful and propitious."

And now from what has thus far been
delivered concerning the several attributes
deitie, concerning his goodness itself, as
well as in relation to the divine wisdom and
power, "we shall, I hope, my good chil-
dren, be prepared for answering without
any difficultie, those objections, which
have sometimes been insifted upon in re-
lation to this now mentioned moral attri-
bute of his nature. you may perhaps
be almost ready to think that, if the
goodness of God be so plain and clear a
point as has now by us been alleged, it
must needs be very strange that any ob-
jections at all should ever have been
made to the belief or supposition of it;
and to imagine that such objections actu-
ally advanced against the principle, must
alone be sufficient to shew, that it is not
indeed so clear and evident as we have
been saying, but you are to consider that
there is nothing so plain or evident but
what may by some means or another
come to be denied, and on the other
hand it is observed by one that was him-
self famous for philosophizing, that there
was never any thing so foolish or absurd,
which had not by some philosopher or
other been asserted, and in the present
subject, what men of candid and modest
dispositions have at most considered only
as difficulties, those of more forward
and presumptuous spirits have formed
into direct objections against this divine
attribute, and it would increase their
opinion still of the force of these objec-
tions, and dispose them the more to tri-
umph in this particular, were those who
asserted the divine goodness to decline
the consideration of them; nor is the
consequence at all to be feared. I am
not for my own part, the least appre-
hensive of any force in these objections,
that can at all impair the strength of
those arguments that we have been fo
briefly
"briefly touching upon in proof of this great Lie. nay, I am not without hope of being able to shew you, that the very things objected to are in reality confirmations of the divine goodness, and not repugnancies to the idea or notion of it." however they may, I doubt not, be so obviated and cleared up, as to leave the mind entirely satisfied in the belief of it. but the discussion of these particulars, together with the inferences that are to be deduced from the consideration of this divine attribute, the duties founded upon it in its connexion with the other attributes of the divine nature, and the conclusion of this particular subject, we must refer to the next opportunitie.
KNOW, says the admirable Epictetus, that the principal point of religion consists in having right sentiments of the Gods. As for instance, to believe that they really are, that they govern the world with goodness and justice, that they are to be obeyed, that men ought to acquiesce in what they do, and indisputably follow their orders, as proceeding from a most excellent and accomplished intelligence; for thus principled you will never charge them with ought, and you will not complain that they have deserted you." This, allowing only for that particular expression the Gods, which however was far from being meant in this author in contrarietie to the notion of one supreme and eternal Deitie, is language exceeding just and interesting. I therefore reflect with pleasure upon my having endeavored in several of these our evening exercises, to establish your minds in a firm and rational belief of the divine goodness. by this means, far
far from being terrified at the thought of the divine power, or having any formidable apprehensions of the wisdom, eternity, omnipresence or immensity of deity, or of his absolute knowledge of all hearts and of all events, you will be led to look upon all these divine attributes as being only the residence and seat, or else the instruments and agents of a benevolence that is infinite and unchangeable, and to triumph in them all, as affording you the firmest securitie in conjunction with this amiably presiding principle, that all the events of nature shall conspire to the most happy and glorious result; and that "no labor of love" in fulfilling the duties of life, or of patience in bearing the sorrows of it, shall be without its ample reward from that God, "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraids not." all that is farther wanting to complete our design so far as relates to this particular branch of our originally intended series or order of discourse, is to consider on the one side the objections that have been made to this doctrine of the divine goodness, and on the other the duties which naturally result from our acknowledgement of it. as to the former of these particulars, or
or the objections that have been insisted upon to the prejudice and disparagement of this all-cheering doctrine, they have been founded partly upon the evils of the present life, and partly upon the apprehended torments of that which is to come, and there is still a farther division of those belonging to the former class, into the evil which is natural and that which is moral. The latter of these has been generally thought to carry in it much the greatest difficulty with respect to the reconcileableness of it to the perfection of the divine attributes. But for my own part I cannot see the matter altogether in this light. Mischief or natural evil has all the same seeming repugnance in it to the idea of benevolence as vice or moral evil has to holiness or moral purity, so far as that is to be distinguished from this very goodness itself. Nay, the very turpitude and malignity of sin itself consists in its being a temper or disposition of mind that alienates a man's affections from a just concern for the happiness of his fellow-men. So that why an infinitely benevolent being should make a creature capable of falling into mischief, seems to be a question altogether as intricate as why
an infinitely holy being should make a creature capable of sinning. nor can it be at all more difficult for the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of deity to produce a preponderance of good out of the sins of mankind, and to make them subserve the purposes of his own benevolence, than to do the same in relation to the calamities and afflictions which befall us.

And this leads me to mention it in the first place as a consideration that gives great relief to the mind under the apprehension of the ills of life, that from our natural conceptions concerning the greatness of the divine power, nothing can be more reasonable than to conclude, that those things which in the great affairs of divine providence carry in them the most threatening and formidable aspect, and seemingly the most contrarie to the intentions of benevolence, may by that power be so controlled and managed in relation to the consequences and effects of them, as even to subserve the designs of this very benevolence itself. the power of God is, as we have seen, a power exceeding all the united force and energie of nature, and of all the thinking active beings in the universe combined.
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it is a power therefore that must
necessarily be able to govern and have
under its management all these distinct
and separate energies. besides, that all
other power is in fact according to the
purport of the proof alleged in support of
that other sentiment, an effect produced by
this. and the potter surely has "power
" over his own clay." and God therefore
for certain over his own creatures, so as to
effectuate by their means whatever views
his benevolence shall dictate. now what
more easie than to conceive that by a power
like this effects may be made to arise out of
the ills of life, and such a turn given to
them, if I may so express it, of which our
own scantie and limited views can at pre-
sent afford us no idea; but which may be
altogether as pleasing to us, when we come
to discern it, as any of the most amiable
and inviting appearances of nature whatso-
ever. we oftentimes do this or that, and
when we begin to see what is likely to be
the consequence, say that, if we had thought
of that, we would not have done so. and
why, but because it is not in our power to
controle or set aside this consequence? but it
is not thus in relation to the deitie. by the
abso-
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Absolute perfection and plenitude of his power, he can with infinite ease prevent any of the natural evils of life from terminating in a greater quantity of trouble and affliction to his creatures than he sees to be necessary for their good. And whatever apparent or natural tendency there may be in this or another vicious action of any of them, as in itself alone considered, towards the production of mischief and misery upon the whole, he can by introducing other natural tendencies of a different kind, and that shall be of superior force, entirely prevent that mischief, and avert the threatening and apprehended ill. The like manner of reasoning is applicable in the second place to the wisdom of God, as by his power he can control any event, so as that it shall in fact minister to the purposes and views of his own benevolence, how contrary soever may be its present aspect; so likewise his wisdom being complete and boundless, what wonder if in innumerable instances, where we can see nothing but calamity and distress, he should be able most clearly and certainly to discern some highly benefial purposes that may be served by the apparent ill? Thus
the ingenious artificer out of a rude and shapeless mass of metal, in which another can see nothing but deformity, and concerning which he might be apt to conclude that it can be good for little or nothing, can by the exertion of his skill and application of his art produce a most elegant and beautiful statue, which, for want of the like skill and abilities, we could never have effected, and which would be to the last degree surprising and astonishing to one who had seen such a shapeless mass of metal, but had never seen or heard of a statue that had been produced from it. In like manner shall we hereafter be surprised by innumerable beauties, blessings and joys which we shall see to have arisen, in consequence of the mightie power and infinite wisdom of the deitie, out of what may now appear to us in the highest degree foreign to any such effect. (a) but this indeed I would chuse to

(a) And here, though in a place less proper than I might have chosen, if I had timely remembered it, I shall both in reference to the extraordinary accidents that sometimes happen in crises's, and more generally to the seemingly irregular phænomena of the universe, venture to offer to you a notion, that perhaps you will not dislike.
to make a distinct observation upon the present topic, namely in the third place, that in the eternitie of God's duration we may find the highest satisfaction in relation to those various ills of life, which have been so much the theme and subject of com-
dislike. I think then that, when we consider the world and the physical changes that happen in it with reference to the divine wisdom and providence; the arguments for the affirmative ought, in their kind, to have more force than those for the negative. for it seems more allowable, to argue a providence from the exquisite structure and symmetry of the mundane bodies and the apt subordination and train of causes, than to infer from some physical anomalies, that things are not framed and administered by a wise author and rector. For the characters and impressions of wisdom that are conspicuous in the curious fabric and orderly train of things, can with no probability be referred to blind chance, but must be to a most intelligent and designing agent. whereas on the other hand, besides that the anomalies we speak of are incomparably fewer than those things which are regular and are produced in an orderly way; besides this, I say the divine maker of the universe being a most free agent, and having an intellect infinitely superior to ours, may in the production of seemingly irregular phenomena, have ends unknown to us, which even the anomalies may be very fit to compass. Boyle's Inquiry into the Notion of Nature, p. 244, 245.
complaint, the power, the wisdom, the goodness of God are all eternal, and surely in the eternal exercise of these attributes there must needs be room and opportunitie abundantly sufficient for educing the most happie consequences out of those various evils which are at present appearing, but which nevertheless in comparison of eternity are but of a moment's duration. our light affliction, as the apostle most excellently and charmingly observes, our light affliction whether arising out of what we call natural evils, or out of the evil actions of men and their mischievous intentions towards ourselves, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glorie. "my good children, remember this maxim, imbibe this truth, establish it in the thought of your hearts; and you will never think of repining against providence, or of looking upon any of its dealings towards you, as being any ways harsh or severe. for, can it think you be natural, can it be just or decent to insist upon a moment's pain as an objection against the good-ness of that God, who is designing you for an eternitie of happiness, and who will
"will make even this momentarie pain contribute to the completion of that happiness?" and then farther, fourthly, not only is God eternal, but his providence likewise as to the objects about which it is conversant, is immense and boundless in the extent of it. So that in the objective scene of divine government, as well as in the duration of it, there is room for a prodigious degree of preponderating good to take place and to arise even out of those very evils, that you or I may be complaining of. It is easy for us to conceive, in general, tho' it be not easy for us exactly and minutely to discern at present, how that which we call our affliction may be operating to the good and happiness of some other beings. Frequent instances of this kind we actually see; and from hence we may naturally conclude that there are others of the like sort in the great plan of providence, not as yet perceived by us. So that the afflictions of life may have this double good in them, however grievous they may seem to us at present, that, whilst they are contributing to the final and everlasting happiness of those who labor under them, they may be the means of no slight
Lect. IX. or inconsiderable blessing to those who do not. and thus you see that in all the other attributes of deity there is abundant ground of consolation with respect to the evils of life, and that they all conspire in enabling us to reconcile with ease these evils to the perfection of his goodness.

But perhaps it may not be amiss to illustrate these reflections by an instance or two in fact. "I doubt not, my good children, but you have read, and found it to be an high entertainment to you, the historie of Joseph. you remember, to be sure, how his brethren envied him on account of his appearing to be happier and more deserving than themselves, and they were resolved, if their own spite and ill-nature could effect it, to make him otherwise. they studied by all the means they could think of to provoke and incense, to plague and torment him. and, as for poor Jacob his father, he was almost at his wits' end for the loss of this his son, whom he supposed to be dead. here was a scene of great crueltie, and seemingly very afflicting and calamitous; and yet you remember how it turned out at last."
this very Joseph came afterwards by means of this very persecution to be a great man in Egypt. by which I do not mean only that he came to be in a very high station in the court of Pharaoh, tho' that be true. but yet it is not high station alone that makes a great man. but Joseph was good and therefore great. he employed that influence which by this means he became possessed of for the good of others. and it is surprizing to reflect upon the innumerable good consequences which followed upon his being sold by his brethren. by means of it the whole land of Egypt was saved from a famine. and not only so, but his father Jacob and his family, and even his brethren, who thus evilly entreated him, were by this means supplied with the necessary provisions of life. so that had it not been for this very event, of which amongst other unwelcome scenes the good old man so bitterly complained, saying, "all these things are against me," he and all his family must have been starved. and by this event likewise a way was made for his settlement with them in the land of Goshen, a part of Egypt, where they became a prosperous and a flourishing people.
among whom after their departure out of Egypt the true God was signally known and worshiped amidst the surrounding idolatrie of the heathen world. Here then we have one most apparent and conspicuous instance of God's bringing good, a prodigious, amazing, inexpressible quantitie of good out of one single occurrence seemingly not a little calamitous, and actually proceeding from a very high degree of real guilt and iniquitie.

And why may it not be thus in the universal and everlasting government of God with respect to every evil event, and to all the calamities of human life? I might likewise mention to you another most eminent and striking illustration of this particular, and that is the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Could any thing ever exceed or equal the malignitie of that spite and envy with which his enemies persecuted this meek and holy "lamb of God, in whose mouth there was no guile?" Could any thing be more enormously wicked, or have a greater appearance of calamitie in human affairs, than that he who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and who was continually "doing good," should be cut off in the very prime
prime of life by the rage of his enemies, and put to death as if he had been the worst of malefactors? yet so great, so infinitely great were the benefits and advantages to arise from hence, all well and most exactly known to the divine all-seeing mind, for which reason the malice of these enemies of our Lord was suffered by divine providence to take its own way; so great, I say, were the benefits and blessings to arise from this event, that our Saviour is said in Scripture to have been "delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God." It was by this very crucifixion of the Lord of life, that he became the Saviour of the world, and the very blood their malice spilt was designed to wash away the sins of the world, to be a propitiatorie, atoning sacrifice for them; and by this means to be the ground and foundation of eternal happiness to all who in holy faith and humble penitence apply its saving benefits to themselves. Had it not been for the shedding of this most precious blood upon the cross, there had been no such thing as the Christian name or Christian religion now among mankind, with these instances before our eyes, how can we think any
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any longer of insisting upon the evils of life as objections to the goodness of God? have we not in consequences and effects like these, some of the most signal and illustrious proofs of it? " and indeed do you not " observe, my good children, what tem- " pests we sometimes have in summer, and " what severe and pinching cold often- " times in winter? I do, sir. but perhaps " you may be ready to wish that nought " like this might happen; and that you " were never more to feel the blustering " winds or piercing cold. " you would, " however, my child, act very foolishly " and too much like a child in doing so. " for you know storms and tempests, as I " have already told you, cleanse and puri- " fie the air and prevent plagues, pestil- " ence and death. and by the operations " of a winter-season that vegetative power " is communicated to the earth, without " which the corn, notwithstanding all the " invigorating beams of the sun, would " never grow in summer. now afflictions " answer the very same purposes in the moral " world, as do storms and tempests and the " blasting winter cold in the visible and " external scene of nature. they are salu-" tarie
"tarie and needful punishments and ret-
straits to the bad. they are fatherly
chastisements and gracious discipline to
the good. the scripture always speaks
of them as being so intended: and thou-
sands there are who have found them so
to be. they are one natural means of
promoting virtue and goodness, and con-
sequently happiness; and therefore could
not but have a part (a) in the plan of
God's unerring and most gracious pro-
vidence; as having an highly beneficial
use and reference upon the whole, and
being at the same time in themselves of
a very transient nature. and they answer
these ends in a manner altogether di-
rect, peculiar and wholly appropriate.
never therefore look upon them as ob-
jections to God's providence. you have
a kind, indulgent father, it may be,
who, as you yourselves are ready to ac-
knowl edge, is in all his actions consult-
ing your good, excepting perhaps in one
single instance or two of a discipline that
may be somewhat severe, which you

(a) See Discourses on the Parables of our
blessed Savior and the Miracles of his holy Gos-
pel, Vol. III. Serm. VIII. p. 189, 190.
know not at present how to account for,
and are at a loss how to reconcile to the
main and general bent of his conduct
towards you. would it not, think you,
be both very ungrateful and very absurd
in you to deny his goodness on account
of a single instance or two of seeming
severitie? and do you not rather still
believe him to be a perfectly good and
every way gracious father, and that he
has some good end to answer by this
severitie, which bye-and-bye you your-
self shall perceive? now all the evils
of this life are infinitely less in compari-
son with those lasting good effects, which
by the power and wisdom of the love-
reign deitie they will be made to pro-
duce, than even the slightest imaginable
instance of severitie in a parent, who in
every other action you yourself would
confess appeared to your fullest satisfac-
tion gracious and benign. remember
eternitie, I say again, remember eternitie,
and you will not then suspect the good-
ness of your heavenly father."

And now as to the apprehended torments
of the world to come; these likewise have
been thought inconsistent with the good-
ness
ness of God. Some would not have God to punish the wicked at all hereafter, but I am sure it would be no proof of his goodness not to do it; but rather of indifference at least to the happiness of his creatures, if not of a design to involve them in universal ruin. "Should you, my child, think it any mark of goodness in king George, were he to open all those prisons, where so many of his wicked subjects are confined, and punished for their crimes, and give them the libertie to go where they would and do what they pleaded; and then signify by public proclamation, that for the future no man should be punished, let him commit never so many disorders; rob, steal, plunder and kill." Some future punishments then there must be, and very terrible they may prove without at all exceeding in degree what goodness itself will dictate, and this you may be sure will be the measure of them. God will punish hereafter as a being "who hates iniquitie." But he will punish too as a being "who remembers mercie, and whose compassions are infinite, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he should return and live, "who
who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth; and who can do all his pleasure.” (a)

(a) Justice is the justice of goodness, and so cannot delight to punish; it aims at nothing more than the maintaining and promoting the laws of goodness, and hath always some good end before it, and therefore would never punish except some farther good were in view. Smith's Select Discourses, p. 153. and Plato in his Protagoras observes that no well-advised man ever punishes another for having done wickedly, but only that he may not do so for the time to come, and in order to prevent others from doing the like.—§ τῷ ταρελυθότος ὑπὲρ αἰθίκυματος— ἀλλὰ τῷ μέλλοντος χάριν. Op. p. 288.
LECTURE X.

We have been insisting of late upon the being, nature and attributes of God distinctly. In particular we have treated at large and somewhat copiously upon his goodness, have pointed out the several clear and convincing proofs we have of it, have endeavored to illustrate, to explain and to enforce them; and to answer such objections as have been made to it. These are topics of infinitely higher importance than any other that can possibly come under our investigation or review. Religion is the noblest subject of human contemplation, and these are the noblest subjects in religion. "But yet, my good children, it is of the greatest importance for you to be informed and to remember it as long as you live; that it is not the highest degree that you can in the best use of your own reason and exercise of your own judgment and understanding attain to of knowledge in matters of religion, that will be sufficient for your obtaining the divine favor, which is to be the
the grand and most earnest desire of your heart, it being not only that which alone can make you happy, but as it is likewise your indispensable and essential duty by choosing God for your portion and your sovereign good, to be ascribing to him that honor which his perfections naturally demand from us. It is not, I must remind you, my dear children, even such knowledge as this, however perfect in its kind, without your reducing it into practice, and making it the rule of your temper and guide of your life, that can constitute your happiness, or put you in possession of that truest and highest good, of which your nature is capable. To think rightly of God's goodness, to conceive of it as large, diffusive, universal, boundless, unchangeable, everlasting; this is thinking very honorably of him. These are at once the most lovely and the most accurate sentiments that you can form concerning him. But still he will not accept or be pleased with you on this account alone, for it is possible that you may have all these worthy apprehensions of him, and yet be very negligent in respect to
to that duty, which you are owing to him. and if so, then the better thoughts you have of God, the greater must be your guilt in not acting this obedient part towards him. if a rebel were to Rebel acknowledge upon all occasions that his sovereign was a good and a gracious prince, that he himself had experienced his lenity and kindness, and had long enjoyed the benefits of his protection and care, and had possessed many great and precious privileges under his auspicious reign, would not this, think you, greatly heighten and increase the guilt of his rebellion? just so it is in religion.
to know God and to believe in him, according to the account or representation that has been laid before you in relation to his being and perfections, but yet to pay no regard to his precepts and laws, must needs be at once the most horrid guilt and the deepest misery to beings of our rank and nature, capable as we are of paying a voluntary obedience to the great ruler of the world, and accountable for not doing so. you know and can recollect, I doubt not, what our Savior says to his own disciples; if ye know
know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. now this plainly implies, that if they did not do or practise these things, their knowledge of them alone would not suffice for their happiness. you will therefore now, I hope, be glad to hear of those duties which are owing from you to that great and good being, who made you and all mankind, and who continually supports both you and all your fellow-creatures in being, life and happiness, and be not discouraged at the having such duties mentioned to you. do not think that there are any hardships to be imposed upon you by religion. it is no pain or uneasiness to a good and well-disposed child to be dutiful and obedient to an indulgent parent; but on the contrary he finds it to be his highest satisfaction and delight, and may you not, think you, most safely and certainly conclude from hence, that the service of God can never be a burden to you? for is he not your heavenly father that has made you? and for this reason it is that your dear savior has taught you in that prayer of his, which I hope you often repeat with seriousness, and with a due
EXERCISES.

"consideration of God's knowing your Lect. X. 
"thoughts, to say, our father, who art in "in heaven; that by thus addressing your- 
"selves to God under the title or appel- 
"lation of father, you might be encou- 
"raged to think that your obedience to 
"him must needs be not an heavie, tire- 
"some, tedious task, but a pleasant and 
"delightful service; for no good father 
"ever made his childrens dutie to be a 
"burden to them. and from what you 
"have already heard concerning the divine 
"being, you see why it is that our savior 
"teaches you to say our father, and not 
"my father, namely, because God is not 
"only your creator, preserver and bene- 
"factor, but the maker likewise and pre- 
"server of all; and the lord, who is good 
"to all, and whose tender mercies are over all 
"his works; and this is a sentiment which 
"you should be highly pleased and de- 
"lighted with, as well as with the thought 
"of his being your own benefactor; other- 
"ways you must come under the charge 
"of having a narrow and selfish spirit. 
"but by always thinking of God as being 
"the kind and gracious father of all ra- 
"tional beings, as well as your own, you 
"will
will be continually enlarging by degrees the benevolence of your own disposition, and so become more like God; you will come to look upon all mankind as your brethren, and by this means be induced to love them more heartily. and this is one of the duties which you owe to God; solemnly and seriously, frequently, privately and publicly to pray to him as your heavenly father, and the creator and most merciful preserver of all mankind and of all rational beings. and this you are to do not with any imagination, that the saying of such and such words, or the entertaining such and such thoughts in your minds, will of itself alone be any way available towards recommending you to the divine favor and love. but you are to do it in order to the having your own minds, (a) your hearts.

(a) Quicquid autem horum fit in orando ad nos pertinent non ad Deum. nec enim Deus delinitur audiendo laudes suas, quemadmodum homines, sed nos laudantes illum magis ac magis eliscimus ac suspicimus illius magnitudinem. commemorandis autem & exaggerandis malis nostris non hoc agitur ut in diversum mutatus oratione nostra ex irato fiat propitius, sed ut
EXERCISES.

hearts, your affections impressed with a more lively sense of God's presence with you,

Dum melius magnitudinem nostræ calamitatis agnosceimus, vehementius expetamus illius misericordiam. Itidem cum ea dicuntur, quæ pariunt attentionem, non hoc proficiscitur, ut Deus ante dormitans excitatur, cum illum nihil fugiat eorum quæ latent in cordibus hominum; sed ut nos instantius ac vehementius petamus, quod non promerentur recipere, nisi qui vehementer ambierint. Erasmi Modus Orandi, p. 123, 124. Dieu n'attend pas toujours que les justes le prient: il leur donne souvent des secours qu'ils ne lui demandent pas; & s'il leur ordonne de les lui demander, c'est qu'il veut en être aimé & adoré. Dieu sçait mieux nos besoins que nous-mêmes; & s'il nous commande de le prier, c'est afin de nous obliger de penser à lui, & de le regarder comme celui qui seul est capable de nous combler de biens: c'est afin d'exciter notre amour vers lui; & non pas pour apprendre de nous ni nos besoins, ni les motifs qu'il a de nous secourir. il est résolu de nous faire grace à cause de son fils; & s'il veut que nous l'en prions au nom de son fils, c'est afin que nous l'aimions lui & son fils. c'est la foi & l'amour de Dieu qui prient: c'est la disposition de l'esprit & du cœur qui prie. on ne peut prier Dieu sans croire actuellement beaucoup des choses de lui & de nous; sans reconnaître sa propre foibleâtre, sans espérer actuellement en Dieu, & sans l'aimer actuellement. mais les actes réveillent & produisent mêmes les habi-
tudes.
you, of your intire and absolute depend-
ance upon him for life and breath and
all things, and of his great and never-
ceasing goodness to you. you are to do
it that you may be the better able to
take the comfort of such reflexions as
these when you come to meet with any
of the afflictions and troubles of life,
and that in the multitude of your thoughts
within you on account of them these
consolations may delight your souls; and
that the thought of God and of his gra-
ciously presiding providence may be so
habitual to you, and so deeply rooted in
your

C A T E C H E T I C A L

Lect. X.

tudes. c'est donc principalement pour reveiller
en nous notre foi, notre esperance, & notre
charité, & nous conserver dans l'humilité,
que Dieu nous commande de le prier. Con-
versations Chretiennes du Malebranche, Entr. IV.
p. 339, 340. and again, ibid. p. 341.—la
priere est la nourriture de l'ame. c'est par
elle qu'elle reçoit de nouvelles forces ; c'est par
elle qu'elle pense à Dieu, qu'elle se met en sa
présence, qu'elle se unit à celui qui est toute sa
force. ce't même par elle qu'elle reçoit de Dieu
par JESUS CHRIST la délectation de la grace
pour contrebalsancer les plaisirs prevenans
qu'elle reçoit aussi de Dieu (car il n'y a que
Dieu qui agisse en elle) mais qui sont involon-
taires & rebelles à cause de la desobéissance
d'Adam.
EXERCISES.

"your minds, as that the peace and com-
"fort arising from it may be always at
"hand, and you are to do it, that by
"having such apprehensions as these of
"God always present to your mind, you
"may be the more fearful of sinning against
"and offending him, and be more shocked
"at the thought of complying with any
"temptation to do so." but perhaps you
"will be ready to say; "I am, sir, very
"well satisfied in my apprehensions of the
"divine goodness. I firmly believe it;
"and am, I hope, better settled in my
"judgment upon that point by what you
"have been saying concerning it. but, pray
"sir, what expectations may I build upon it Expecta-
"tions.
"with respect to myself, and my own con-
"cerns and interests? this seems, sir, a
"point very necessarie to be determined
"in order to the regulation of my prayers.
"for how can I tell what I ought to make
"the matter of my prayer to God, if I
"know not what in reason I may expect
"from him? In answer to this question,
"my good children, I must tell you in the
"first place that you are not, because God
"is infinitely good, to imagine or to expect
"that he will do every thing for you that
"you
you may happen to desire." "why, sir, does not the psalmist say, that if I delight myself in the lord, which surely I do when I pray to him, if I pray aright, that he will give me the desires of mine heart?" indeed he does say so. but the meaning of that is, God is always ready to make you happy; and that is the desire of your heart; is it not? it is only for the sake of this supreme and ultimate desire that you wish for this or that particular enjoyment, supposing that it will contribute to your happiness, but if in fact it is not likely to do so, then I suppose you would rather be without it; and it would not be agreeable to the main and leading desire of your heart, which is happiness upon the whole, that it should be bestowed upon you. and yet in the wishing for this or that particular enjoyment you may be often mistaken in thinking that it would make you happier by the possession of it than you now are; and therefore it can be no way inconsistent with the goodness of God to deny it to you. so the same psalmist, as you remember, says, the lord will give grace and glorie, and no good thing will be with-
"hold from them that walk uprightly. but then, my dear child, you will, I suppose, be very ready to allow that God knows what is good for you better than you do yourself, and will be content therefore to leave it to him to judge for you. there are however many things which you may expect and certainly conclude that God will do for you, if you be careful to love and please him. thus in the first place, you may conclude from his goodness that he will bless your industrious and honest endeavors in providing for the things of this life, when you come to have that care upon you. not indeed if you mean by this the "growing rich and great in the world; for that is not always a blessing. it is not necessary to your happiness. many good men there have been in the world that have been extremely happy though very poor. but I mean that if you are not yourself slothful in business; but on the contrarie active and industrious, you will in the course of his providence be supplied with food convenient for you. and Agur, you know, prefered this not only to povertie but even to riches. give me neither
neither poverty nor riches, was his prayer to God; and you cannot offer up in this respect a better for yourself. In this or that particular design too you may be disappointed, and yet God's blessing attend your industrious if you may be disappointed, and yet God's blessing attend your industrious upon the whole in prospering and establishing the work of your hands. Even these very disappointments themselves may contribute to it in the end, by making you more serious, more patient, more circumspetic, and more indifferent to worldly good. and if you can be content with a little, that is altogether as good as having a great deal. Secondly, you may conclude from God's goodness, that he will not suffer you to want any necessarie direction in the path of virtue; so that if you are ignorant in this point, the fault must be altogether your own. God has put the means of knowledge into your hands; that knowledge that is necessarie to your salvation. *the word is nigh unto you*, it is in your heart, and it is in your bibles, and the more you consult it the wiser you will grow. and you may depend upon it that God will continually enlighten your minds more and more in
"the knowledge of his truth, if you do but diligently apply yourselves to the search of it. If thou searchest for her, that is, wisdom, as silver, and seekest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord, it is added, giveth wisdom. This is the very reasoning which I have been pointing out to you, and I am glad that I can enforce it upon you by the authority of Solomon, whose, you know, are the words that have just now been recited. Wisdom is the gift of God, from him it proceedeth; and you may be sure that he is too good to deny it to any who sincerely seek after and desire it. Again, thirdly, upon this head, you may be assured that God will fortify you against the power of temptation so as not to suffer you to be overcome by it, unless you yourself are so careless as not to make a proper use of the gracious aids and influences he affords you. He will not suffer you, as the apostle expresses it, to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. Innocence and virtue
Lect. X. "virtue are necessarie to your happiness. and therefore you may certainly con-
clude that God will never suffer you to lose the one, unless through your own 
remissness, or leave it out of your power even by your best endeavors in resisting 
the force of temptation to obtain the other. and then in the fourth place, 
from the goodness of God you may na-
turally conclude that he will not destroy 
your being, but that death will only be 
your removal into some other world, 
where you will see and discern that goodness much more clearly than now 
you do, and yourself experience much 
more of the effects of it, notwithstanding 
all the bright and glorious evidences of it that are even now presenting themselves 
to your view. for this life is very short, 
and the more you are convinced of the shortness of it, the less likely will it ap-
pear to you that it should be the only 
period or scene of being allotted for us by 
so good and kind a creator, who can as easily continue our being in another 
world as he has preserved it in this. 
but, pray sir, what may I expect from the goodness of God in relation to 
" others?"
"others? for I cannot but interest myself in their happiness as well as mine own. why, you may expect in the first place, that he will continue to govern the whole world, as well as to direct the particular events of his providence that relate to yourself, in righteousness, and with the highest benignitie and kindness. and therefore when any public calamities happen, or some deep and dreadful distress befalls whole nations and kingdoms at once, you may conclude that this is in mercie intended for the chastisement of a wicked people, and for the correction of their depraved manners; and that if they repent, God will turn away his anger from them that they perish not. you may expect, secondly, that it shall be well with the righteous, and that they shall find happiness and peace, satisfaction and joy in pursuing the paths of virtue. this, as I have already hinted to you in your own case, may be very true, even tho' they should meet with many afflictions. numbers there have been, who, notwithstanding these have spoken highly of the goodness of God, have been very fervent in their acknowledgments.
Lect. X. "Ments and celebrations of it, have been very well satisfied with his dealings towards them, and very happy in the enjoyment of themselves. You may likewise conclude, thirdly, from the goodness of God, that he will never suffer any of his human creatures to be miserable hereafter, except through their own wilfulness and folly; and that he will never oblige any man to be eternally damned by the power of his own decree. You yourself would never do such a cruel thing. You would detest and abhor the thought of it, and you may be sure that God is kinder than you. Such then are the inferences which you may draw from God's goodness, and the expectations that you may ground upon it both in your own case, and in reference to the happiness and good of others.

But now let me, my dear child, remind you, that from the very account which I have been giving you of the nature and design of prayer, you may infer that there are yet other duties owing from you to the great Lord and governor of the universe. And it is by the exercise of this that you are to be made
made more sensible of, and attentive to them. I shall think myself, sir, very happy in having some brief account of them laid before me. well then, my dear child, in the first place, you must undoubtedly be under the highest obli-
gations to love God, and to cherish in your heart the most fervent gratitude towards him. your own kind father upon earth you are thankful to, and think it your duty to be so, I doubt not, for the care he is continually taking of you, and the tenderness he daily ex-
presses for you. and you would, I dare say, think it very base in you not to love him better than any man in the world. but now for the very same reason you ought to love God better than any being in the universe; that is, with all your heart and soul, and might and strength, because he surpasses all other beings in goodness and in goodness to you. but pray, sir, what is the difference between gratitude to God, and the loving of him? for I observe that you mention these as distinct. why, to love God is to esteem and de-
light in him on account of his goodness in general, the goodness of his nature,
and his benevolence to all his creatures. and gratitude is the loving him on ac-
count of his goodness towards ourselves.
but secondly, from what has been said
concerning the being and attributes of
God, you must needs perceive, my good
children, that it cannot but be your
duty to resign yourselves wholly and
cheerfully to his will; and to the dis-
penations of his providence whatever
they are or may be. for as he is not
only supremely good, but possessed of all
power, and endued with unerring wis-
dom, nothing can be more clear and evi-
dent than that all he does, all the events
of his providence and designs of his uni-
versal government are for the highest
good of his creatures; so that not to
be resigned to his providence, and acqui-
escing in the disposals of it, must needs
be in the highest degree foolish, pro-
phane, and ungenerous. why foolish?
because it is to be dissatisfied with that
which is best for ourselves. why pro-
phane and impious? because not to be
pleased with the measures that are pur-
sued by divine and infinite goodness,
must needs imply and carry in it at best
" some
some defect in our love of that goodness. Lect. X.
and why is it ungenerous? because it is
repining at the dealings of that providence which in all its dispensations has
in view the common and most extensive good of the whole intelligent and moral creation. thirdly, you ought undoubtedly to be very fearful of offending God by breaking any of his commandments.
for to do so must needs be very ungrateful. and if you do in any instance transgress them, you may be very sure that he is acquainted with your disobedience and with the ingratitude of your hearts.
and you know that in consequence of his own infinitely pure and holy nature he cannot but look upon every thing of this kind with the greatest abhorrence and displeasure. but then if you would discharge aright your duty towards God, you must not only be fearful of offending, but willing to obey him. this surely, as well as the other, is what gratitude must needs demand from you. we cannot be truly grateful to him, unless we are willing to obey him in every thing that he has signified to be his will or law with respect to our conduct and his
Lect. X. "injunction upon us. and whatever it be, and however revealed or made known, you may be assured that it is both for your own, and for the general good of all whom such a law or injunction may any way affect, and to refuse your obedience must needs be the height of insobriety and prophaneness, not to obey with all possible cheerfulness and alacrity, very inconsistent with those constant acknowledgements we are making of our perpetual obligations to the goodness of that sovereign being who commands it. again, it is our duty to imitate God. if you ask me why? or should you be inclined to think that this is a duty too high for your attainment; let me ask you, are you not capable of loving your fellow-creatures? now, to love them is to imitate God, who is love; and the more you love them, the more nearly do you resemble him, in the high and infinite perfection of his nature; the transcendent excellency of his moral character this you profess to admire, and to look upon as being in the highest degree amiable. now observe, whatever in the conduct and character of any of your fellow-
creatures you admire, and that you now think excellent and agreeable, you are desirous and fond of imitating it yourself as far as you are able. and it is natural that you should be so. for which reason, by the way, you ought to be very careful what it is in this kind that you do admire. but to proceed; if the representation and reasoning that has now been insisted upon be just, then certainly you must be obliged to imitate God, because you are obliged to love him. and if you do not desire to be like him, you may with too much reason suspect that you are far from loving him as you ought. and you may well believe that God cannot take any complacence in those beings that are not like him, and yet are capable of being so; for they are wilfully defective in that which is his chief delight; holiness and goodness. and not to imitate his perfections is in effect to despise them. how great and horrid an affront offered to the glorious majesty of heaven and earth! but there is still another duty mentioned in the holy scriptures as what we are owing to the divine and sovereign being; and that
that is the glorifying of him. and you may perhaps be still more surprized at the mention of this, than at that of resembling him. for how, you may be ready to ask, can we glorifie God? how! why can you not honor God? does not a son honor his father? now, to glorifie God is to honor him: and this you do in the most acceptable manner, by fulfilling the several duties that we have just now been speaking of. to love God, to submit to his will, to obey, and to imitate him, is most strictly and truly to honor him. you honor God likewise by being very desirous that all men should have honorable and worthy notions concerning him; and by doing the utmoft that lies in your power, and within the sphere of your acquaintance and influence, towards promoting such apprehensions of him in the world. in a word, you honor him by shewing in the whole course and tenor of your actions, that you are well pleased with being his creature, with your intire de- pendance upon him; and that you are the subject of his moral government. and this is what the apostle means when
"he says, that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. by the general course and constant tenor of our actions we are to declare and shew forth to all the world, that we think well and honorably of the great creator of heaven and earth, and believe him to be in his nature and providence the most worthy object of our highest affection, complacency, and esteem." and thus we have, by the blessing of heaven, gone thro' the first part of our design in this evening exercise, which was to discourse concerning God, his being, his nature, his attributes; his providence, its reality, properties and extent. the subject which lies next before us is man; his origin, his nature, his connexions, the end of his creation, his happiness, his duty, or the particulars of that obedience of which we have just now been speaking as essentially owing from him to God his maker.
LECTURE XI.

Next in importance to the knowledge of God, is that of ourselves. It is a duty that has been founded high in all antiquity, and the precept enjoining it was supposed in an especial manner to have come down from heaven. It is a duty which we owe more immediately to God, for man being the first and principal of his workmanship here upon earth, to contemplate ourselves, to know our own frame, to survey its wonders, to acquaint ourselves with its goodly order and exquisite contrivance, must certainly be such an instance of deference and respect paid to the works of the almighty, which we cannot be negligent of, or omit, without manifest contempt and impiety. To be curious in searching out the nature and economical order of inferior beings, and to overlook ourselves, the noblest fabric of God here upon earth; what is it but in effect to deprive the supreme being of the honor that is due to his name on account of it? For how can we justly celebrate his praises as the creator of man,
man, if we know not the nature of man? Lect. XI.
and on the other hand, were we but well
acquainted with ourselves, there is no sub-
ject whatsoever within the compass of hu-
man knowlege, that could give stronger
accent to our praises, or more elevate and
enliven our songs of devotion. the studie
of ourselves likewise is of the highest im-
portance in order to the right discharge of
the duties of social life, or those obliga-
tions which we lie under to one another.
how should we know what these are but
by acquainting ourselves with our own
frame and make both outward and internal?
the better we are acquainted with ourselves,
the better of course shall we know our fel-
low-creatures. and the better we know
them, the better shall we know how to be-
have towards them. this likewise is a
dutie of the highest importance with respect
to ourselves. we cannot discern wherein
our own true happiness lies without under-
standing our own nature. that which is
the happiness of a man must be mine and
yours. to know therefore what kind of
happiness man in general is made for, must
be to understand our own highest good.
and it is for want of being familiarly and
duly
duly acquainted with our own necessities, and of distinguishing between those which are imaginary and those which are real, those that relate only to the better accommodation of our present being, and those which are essential to the happiness of our natures, that we betray ourselves into endless vanities, and become subject to perpetual disquietudes and disappointments. Did we but know ourselves aright, the world and the things that happen in it could never make so many fatal impressions upon the mind as we are daily perceiving them to do, both with respect to ourselves and others. We should then know what things we might pursue with the greatest prospect of success; what things were least in our power, and what the most so; and how to regulate our aims and measures accordingly. Now that which naturally presents itself first to our reflection concerning man, according to what has hitherto been so largely insisted upon, is that he is the creature of God. If there be any thing in this world that has derived its being from God, this must needs be equally true of man. For is he conscious to himself of any self-supporting power belonging to him more than
than to the meanest reptile? he "feels no virtue of this kind going out of him." he stands in the closest connexion with other dependent beings, and must therefore needs look upon himself as ranking under that denomination too. he finds, he knows, that he cannot continue himself here in being one single moment. nor can he with all his own care, had he nothing else to depend upon, provide himself with any one necessary article of life. he may procure seed to sow, and he may prepare the earth for its reception, and throw it in and cherish it; but what will all this effect without refreshing dews and rains, the ripening sun and vegetative power of the earth? over all which man has no more command than a worm. and even after he has eaten the bread that God has provided for him, does he not know that the digestion of it and distribution of its nourishing juices through the several parts of the body, and the circulation of its several different qualities into the corresponding receptacles, is a thing totally independent upon himself, and over which he has no power or command? "this, my good children, is what the scriptures mean in saying that man

"liveth
Liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. That is; it is not man's care alone in providing any of the conveniencies or accommodations of life for himself, but the divine blessing upon his industrié; not the bread which he eats by any independent power or virtue of its own, but the continued agencie of a divine providence in the support and preservation of its qualities, that is the true source and origin of life to man. Can we command the circulation of our own blood? and yet how regularly does it flow? This must needs be owing to some presiding and directing mind, and as we are conscious that it is not our own, it must needs be the divine, eternal mind; that sovereign deitie, by whom we were not only at first created, but are continually upheld and supported in our existence. "You often talk, my good children, of such a one's relations, and of your own relations. And you know in general what the term imports, but it will be happy for you to extend your views both with respect to yourselves and to mankind in general as to this particular, according to what
EXERCISES.

"we have just now been saying. you see Lect. XI.
"what an important relation there is sub-
"fiftint between you and the sovereign,
"eternal deitie. he is your creator, your
"preserver, your benefactor, your friend.
"and as it is he only that has made you
"happie hitherto, so it is he only that can
"accomplish all your wishes. this there-
"fore must needs be the most important of
"all your connexions; and one that you can-
"not be too frequently or seriously mind-
"ful of. and from this consideration, my
"good children, you will learn to be hum-
"ble." man is a very noble creature. he Man.

has power, and he has reason. he has wis-
dom, skill and dexteritie. a fancy and ima-
gination that can take prodigious flights, expatiate at large in the region of ideas; and form to itself a thousand pleasing and airie conceits. by means of these several faculties he can wonderfully entertain both himself and others, hit upon numerous in-
ventions that may be of the greatest utilitie both in the prosecution of his own affairs and with respect to the concerns and inter-
est of others, cultivate the knowlege of many noble sciences, acquire an high de-
gree of facilitie in many curious and pro-
fitable
many of our species are apt to be not a little proud and arrogant, and to think highly, vainly and insolently of themselves, and very contemptibly of others, whom they imagine to be in any of these particulars their inferiors. " but, do you think, my good children, that there is in any of these endowments a sufficient reason for being proud? no, sir, I think from what you have been saying, it plainly appears that there is not, because, how great and eminent forever may be my endowments and qualifications, I have received them all from God, and depend intirely and every moment upon him for the continuance and enjoyment of them. so that I cannot but apprehend that were my powers and faculties, and the several excellencies of my being a thousand times greater than they really are, I should still have no more reason to be proud than I have at present; because it would be equally true in relation to these more distinguishing and superior excellencies of nature, that I had received them from God, and was intirely dependent upon him for the preservation " and
imagine then, I suppose, that there is no such being as a proud angel in heaven? I cannot but conclude so. must not pride then be to the last degree unnatural and insufferable in man? indeed, sir, I cannot but think it must. it is a matter of great consequence, my good children, in regard to your moral temper, to connect these things in some such manner as I have now been intensing, because I would by no means wish you to entertain a mean and groveling opinion of your own natures; but on the contrary to think honorably of yourselves in this respect. because by this means you are more likely to think honorably of your maker, to be excited to noble aims and pursuits, and to look upon vice and wickedness as what would be a shame and disgrace to you; and to abhor every thing of this kind as wholly repugnant to the nature and constitution of your own minds. but then it is at the same time a matter of the greatest importance to you; to your usefulness, to your character in the world, to your own ease, quietness and self-satisfaction, with
CATECHETICAL

Lect. XI. "with respect to the improvement of your mind in virtue, and to your acceptable-ness in the sight of God; that you be of an humble temper and disposition. And you see how easy a matter it is to reconcile these two things; this humilitie of temper with an honorable opinion of your own natures, only by considering that you have nothing but what you have received, and that you are nothing with respect to the prerogatives of your being, but what God has made you to be. You see, in short, that an arch-angel has no more reason to be proud than a worm, because the former is as truly the creature of God and dependent upon him for being as the latter. And this naturally suggests another particular in relation to the nature and constitution of man, which amidst the high prerogatives and honors of your intellectual and moral frame may justly serve to keep you humble. And you will, I hope, be gladly reminded of it. What I mean is this; that, though by the intellectual and moral powers belonging to your natures, you are indeed allied even to the very angels of heaven, they being like you, reason-
reasonable creatures and moral agents, Lect. XI.

only of a prodigiously higher class and order in this kind than man; yet by means of another part of your formation you are made to have something in common likewise with the mere animals of the earth. you are like them dependent upon the fruits of the earth for sustenance. you have a body like them, which stands in need of continual refreshment and supply, and you are liable like them to bodily fatigue, and under the necessity of bodily labor. and to your bodie and theirs there are many of the same materials belonging. whenever therefore you are disposed to entertain any proud and arrogant conceit of yourself on account of your mental endowments, or the capacities and powers of your soul, or of the beautie of your outward form, which, whatever it be, however exquisite and captivating, you are wholly indebted to God for it; to God, who made you out of the dust of the earth, and framed the entire fabric of your bodie; you may very naturally check, restrain and bear down such fond and airy conceits, by reflecting upon this
Lect. XI. "this affinity, that there is, great and exalted as you are on other accounts in rank and dignitie of nature, between you and the brute creation." this then is the first truth that naturally presents itself to our reflection concerning man, that whatever be his endowments, whether as a rational and moral being, or as an inhabitant of this inferior world, he is wholly the dependant and the creature of God. "you perceive, my good children, that in speaking of man as a rational creature, we have described him as a being that is capable of forming a great many designs, and of hitting upon various apt and well-adjusted means for the execution of them, of acquiring the knowledge of a great varietie of objects, of perceiving the differences and relations of things around him, and of discovering a great number of truths in reference to them. "but are there not, think you, some methods of employing this general facultie much more excellent and important than others; some truths which by means of it are to be discovered that are of much greater consequence with relation to his happiness than others? yes, sir, I cannot "but
but apprehend that there must be a very great difference in this respect. what then do you suppose to be that kind of knowledge, or those particular discoveries about which the reason of man was principally designed to be employed, and to which he may most honorably apply it? I apprehend, sir, that it must be the discoveries and the knowledge of God, for which I find by what we have been so lately considering upon that head, man is by the reasoning powers of his mind very naturally qualified. and as he is so, I must needs look upon this to be the highest and noblest exercise and object of his reason, and in all respects the most interesting and important. you suppose it then to be the distinguishing honor of man as a reasonable creature, that by being so he is fitted for the knowledge of God (a). but did we not sometimes in

(a) Q. 8. How must God's creation be sanctified? When we look on or think of the incomprehensible glory of the sun, its wonderful greatness, motion, light and quickening heat, of the multitude and magnitude of the glorious stars, of the vast heavenly regions, the incomprehensible, invisible spirits or powers, that
some of our former conferences speak of man, not only as being a rational creature, but likewise as a being endowed with moral powers, and as being constituted a moral agent; pray what is it that actuate and rule them all; when we come downward and think of the air and its inhabitants, and of this earth, a vast body to us, but as one inch or point in the whole creation; of the many nations, animals, plants of wonderful varietie, the terrible depths of the ocean and its numerous inhabitants, &c. all these must be to us but as the glass, which sheweth somewhat of the face of God, or as the letters of this great book, of which God is the sense; or as the actions of a living body, by which the invisible soul is known. and as we study arts for our corporal use, we must study the whole world, even the works of God, to this purposed use, that we may see, love, reverence and admire God in all: and this is the only true philosophy, astronomy, cosmography, &c. Q. 9. What is the sin which is contrary to this? Prophaneness; that is, using God's name as a common thing: and in this instance, to study philosophy, astronomy, or any science, or any creature whatsoever, only to know the thing itself, to delight our mind with the creature-knowledge, and to be able to talk as knowing men, or the better to serve our worldly ends, and not to know and glorifie God, is to prophan the works of God. and alas then how common is prophaneness in the world! Baxter's Catechizing of Families, c. xxv. p. 184, 185.
that you suppose to be more distinctly meant by this kind of language? I think, sir, I can separate in my imagination the idea of knowing God from that of loving him, and worshiping, obeying and resembling him. And here, sir, I apprehend, lies the difference between a rational and a moral creature: man as a rational creature is capable of knowing God; but it is only as a morally constituted being that he is capable of loving and adoring him, and of submitting himself in the spirit of volunatary obedience to his laws. You have made a very just and natural distinction. For the brute creatures can discern by their senses the outward objects of nature, but they can make no inferences, they can draw no conclusions from these objects with reference to the existence of a creating mind as you can do; and are therefore not rational creatures as man is. In like manner we may suppose it to have been possible, that man might, as a reasonable creature, have had the power of discovering and knowing his maker, or of believing in God; but yet for want of moral powers, not have been capable.
Lect. XI. "capable of loving him, or paying any act of adoration or obedience to him. Our moral capacitie or constitution then is an advance in the excellencie and prerogatives of our nature, and what renders man a vastly nobler and more important being, than if he had been merely rational. But for what reasons, and upon what grounds do you suppose man to be not only a rational but likewise a morally reflecting being? I think, sir, I have been led very easily, very clearly and very certainly to deduce this truth from what I remember you to have already insisted upon in proving the being of a God, from the constitution and frame of man, and by those home-appeals which you have sometimes made to mine own heart, and of which I could not but feel the force. Upon these appeals I could not but find that there was a charm and a loveliness in goodness and in doing good, that was in the highest degree attractive of my esteem and veneration, and that could not but confer the highest honor upon those to whom such a character was belonging. Now from hence I cannot but infer that such persons
persons must be the proper objects of lett. xi.
my love and approbation, on account of
their being possessed of so amiable a qua-
litie. and from hence again, that God
must needs be the just and most worthy
object of my highest love, because he is a
being of the highest goodness. I think
likewise that I cannot but be bound to
imitate in my own conduct that which
I thus inwardly and naturally approve in
another; and that therefore by this prin-
ciple of moral approbation belonging to
my frame, I must have been made and
constituted under an obligation to do
good myself, and to cultivate the princi-
ple of kindness and benevolence in mine
own heart, as well as to love goodness in
another. and could you not think of
urging something farther still by which
to shew that you yourself, and the rest of
mankind are beings made for the love
and practice of moral virtue? yes, sir,
I am apt to flatter myself that I can.
will you let me know how you would
procede? I perceive, sir, that besides
my being inclined by nature to approve
of and to admire benevolence and doing
good, I have something within me that
prompts
Lect. XI. "prompts me to be doing good myself, which leads me to take an instant pleasure in performing an act of kindness to my neighbor, or in relieving his wants. I am shocked immediately, and without any farther reflection, and ere I can have time to recur in my thoughts to that moral sense (a) which we have just now been

(a) "There is ingrafted in the mind of man an intellectual sense, a discernment of what is good and evil; as in the eye a sensible one of white and black; in the palate a taste of bitter and sweet; in the ear a power to discriminate harmonies and discords; in all a sense of pleasure and pain. what is harmonious, equal, congruous, and consequently pleasing and agreeable unto practice reason, and accordingly approved by it, which it honours with a dictate, that it ought to be pursued or effected, that is called morally good; and what is disharmonious, unequal and incongruous, and consequently painful and disagreeable, and accordingly disallowed, of which the understanding dictates that it ought to be avoided, that is morally evil. to be morally good or evil, is to be good or evil in point of manners; good and evil in manners are the objects of the practice understanding; there are things agreeable or disagreeable to the mind and practice understanding, as well as to "other" senses. there are things good and things evil to this "high
"been speaking of, at the sight of misery, \textit{Lect. XI.} and run to its relief. now, as I am endued with these benevolent and compassionate principles, instigating and prompting me to correspondent actions, and at the same time have another principle in my frame that disposes me to approve of them, I cannot I think but from hence infer that the very reason of my being endued with these principles, was, that I should cultivate and exert them, and that I should look upon it as my duty to do so. not to do it would be acting contrarie to the will of my maker discovered in my frame, and therefore im-

"high and racy sense, as well as to inferior ones." \textit{Burthogge's Apology, p. 398–400.}—Hyl.—" were that quicker sense revived in us whereby we discern moral good and evil, adultery, drunkennes, murther, fraud, extortion, perfidiousness, and the like; all these would have infinitely a worse scent to our souls, than this which you say is so stinkingly evil can have to our noses." \textit{More's Divine Dialogues, Vol. I. p. 285.} " there is a sense in a man, if it were awakened, to which these moral incongruities are as harsh and displeasing, as any incongruous object, be it never so nauseous, is to the outward senses." \textit{Ibid. p. 286, 287.}

L 4 " pietie."
besides, I find myself so connected with mankind, and all mankind with one another, that it is only by mutual offices of love and friendship that society or the body of mankind in general originally designed for happiness by the creating deitie, can in peace and comfort subsist, and by the universal exchange of such offices all would become extremely happy and be well pleased with themselves and with their condition here. And this, methinks, is another consideration, that jointly with what I have already ventured to mention, strongly intimates what we were made for, and points out the end of our being, that which should be our aim in life; the proper business and the natural duties of it. And the evidence, I think, sir, rises thus: I am so made and constituted as to approve good actions. I am naturally prompted to the doing of them. The exercise and practice of goodness is necessary to the well-being of society. It effectually secures it. Benevolence therefore, love or goodness, must needs be the law of our maker, and the naturally incumbent duty of our situation here.
EXERCISES.

"here, but among other things, which you find to be affirmed concerning man, you have no doubt heard him spoken of as being a social creature; what is the idea or notion that in your own mind you affix to that term or character given of him? it seems, sir, in a great measure to coincide or to express the same sense with that character of him already discussed, or the moral principles belonging to his frame and nature. he is a social creature, because he is by his nature fitted for and obliged to social as well as religious duties; the love of man as well as the love of God; doing good himself, as well as admiring goodness in another; and exerting himself in behalf of his fellow-creatures, as well as praying for them to God. besides, he is a social being on this account, that he is made to take pleasure and satisfaction in the company of others, and in discourse and conversation with them. but I observe you speak of benevolence only and love, as being the duties of man considered strictly as a moral agent, and by way of distinction from his religious character and relation. are there
Lect. XI. "no other duties incumbent upon you as a moral agent, or as a subject of God's moral government, even according to this more limited idea of it? do you not think that man is bound likewise to be temperate and just, and to be true to his word and promises, and to the trust reposed in him? o sir, I am fully convinced that he is so. but then I apprehend that all these will follow of course from that of love, or are comprehended in it. so that by proving that to be his duty, I do by necessary consequence prove these likewise to be incumbent upon him. why, my dear child, this seems to be a very comprehensive and compendious method indeed of ascertaining the several duties of moralitie which you have hit upon. but pray how will you make it good? indeed, sir, I think nothing can be plainer than that if a man be obliged to do all the good he can in the world, he must necessarily be obliged to preserve himself in the best capacitie for exerting the powers and abilities belonging to him in such a view; and this can only be by being temperate in all things. if I am obliged to contribute all
all I can to the welfare and happiness of Lect. XI, another, I must needs be under an equal obligation at least not to do him any wrong; and that is to be just. if I am to aim at promoting the peace and welfare of mankind, I must needs be bound to pursue this aim by methods that are most likely to answer such an end, and to make me in fact useful to others. and this seems to me, sir, to be the same with prudence. and as by breaking my word, violating my promise, or betraying my trust, I manifestly do an injurie, I can neither be just nor benevolent, if I allow myself in any such practices. but are there not some of your fellow creatures whose welfare you are more obliged to consult than that of others? I imagine, sir, that there are. and who are they? my benefactors. and why so? because gratitude does in this case concur with the general law of benevolence to excite and instigate my kind and loving affection towards them; and the circulation of friendly offices is greatly promoted and encouraged by the return of one good action for another. and are there no others to whom you are obliged?
in a peculiar manner to be kind and friendly? yes, sir; those of my own kindred and family. and why? because, generally speaking, these are our greatest benefactors; and providence has placed me in a closer and more intimate connexion with them, which is a plain signification given to me that I am to consider their happiness in the first place. and the general interest of society would greatly suffer, if those to whom we are most nearly and closely allied had not the chief and principal share in our kind and generous affections in preference to any equal number of other individuals. and it would be worse for all in general, if these were not by each one in particular more especially to be regarded in our acts of kindness and love. but I suppose you may sometimes likewise have heard it said of man that he is a free being. o! yes, sir, very often. and what do you suppose to be meant by that expression? I imagine, sir, it is intended to denote that he is a voluntary and designing agent, capable of acting from his own choice, and not by constraint merely; with a meaning
and an aim, and not blindly and by rote only, or by the guidance and direction of another solely, like a machine; and that he has a power of chusing or refusing, as things appear to him. he is likewise I suppose called a free being, because of the right that he has to govern his own actions, and not be the slave of any of his fellow-creatures; to enjoy his own propertie without molestation, and to exercise his own reason and judgment in matters of religion without controle. (a) So then it appears

(a) It is a man's self-governing reason and will which causeth him to obey another: nor can a child perform any act of proper obedience differing from a brute's, unless by a self-governing act. but parents government is the next to self-government, and the government of husbands, princes, and masters, which are by contract, is next to that. every subject therefore being first a subject of God, and next a self-governor, is to obey as a reasonable creature, and to understand what is his duty, and what not; and because all is our duty which God commandeth, but not all that man commandeth, God's power being absolute, and all mens limited, therefore we have nothing to do with the laws of God but to know them, and love them, and obey them. But as to man's commands, we must know also that they are not con-
pears that man is by his nature a derived, dependant, rational being, made for the know-

contrary to God's laws, and that they belong to the office of the commander. If a parent or prince command you to blaspheme God, or worship idols, or deny Christ, or renounce heaven, or not to pray, &c. you must obey God by disobeying him. and if a king command you not to obey your parents, or will chuse for you your wife, your diet, your physick, the words you shall say to God in your secret prayers, &c. these are things which belong not to his office, no more than to a captain's to become judge of the Common Pleas. Baxter's Catechizing of Families, c. xxxviii. p. 292, 293. Wo unto the world because of offences! for what an abominable and horrible sin is it for a man to give occasion to others of falling into [this] sinful fear, and thereby to hinder their conversion? but yet this is not sufficient to excuse those, who fear man more than the living God. would to God the magistrates might here open their eyes to see the sad effects of their over-forwardness in determining and regulating divine matters, by which they very much obstruct the edification of others, and pinch it within such narrow bounds, by tying it up to their manner and form, though no such limitations are to be found in the word of God, and bind the consciences of men, where God has not bound them, and take upon them the judgment which God has reserved to himself! true it is, that by this means they make themselves to be feared
EXERCISES.

knowledge of God, and a moral agent, constituted the subject of God's moral government, fitted and designed for the exercise both of religious and of social duties, and for the pleasures arising hence, endued with a libertie of directing his own actions and of forming a judgment for himself in all matters of inquiry and speculation, and for the present actuating or animating a bodie. Such his rank and nature. of his actual condition and character here on earth, and of his hopes and expectations, in our next.

feared by men, and are an occasion of turning aside many that were in a fair way to repentance, to dissimulation and hypocrisy. but they will once to their great sorrow be made sensible who they be that are concerned in that of our lord; wo unto them that shall offend one of these little ones. See a striking treatise, intitled Nicodemus, by Aug. Herman. Franck. p. 26, 27.
We have already, and upon the last occasion of this kind, treated of the nature of man, and considered him according to the several properties and characteristics of it as he is a derived, dependent, rational being, made for the knowledge of God, and as a moral agent constituted the subject of God’s moral government, fitted for the exercise both of religious and social duties, as likewise for the enjoyment of religious, moral, and social pleasures; endued with a liberty of directing his own views and actions, and of forming his own judgment in all matters of inquiry and investigation, and for the present connected with and animating a body. We are now next to treat of his actual condition and character here on earth, and of his hopes and expectations respecting futurity. Many hopes and expectations in relation to the “life that now is,” we have entertained and cherished in our minds after a very sanguine manner; have built much upon them, and formed to ourselves an imaginari
scene of most exquisite satisfaction and de-Lect. XII.
light to be enjoyed, when we should come
to be in possession of the object of these
hopes. but alas we have found them dis-
appointed! either we have never attained
the desired good, or if so, we have found it
to be only a fancied one: nay, that we
have by means of it been betrayed into
much vexation and mischief. such in many
instances at least has been the case with
respect to the hopes and expectations that
we have hitherto entertained, and which
one way or another we “have seen an end
of.” and such may be the case with
respect to a thousand more of the like kind
that we may be now entertaining and che-
rishing in our breasts, or may hereafter in-
dulge. and yet is not this owing so much
to the uncertainties of our present situation
or the precarious issue of human affairs as
to the irregularities and vanities of our own
affections in fixing upon those objects
which we make to be the matter of our
hope and eager expectation. were we but
in this respect a little wiser, we might hope
even in relation to the matters of this pre-
sent life with much greater probability,
and with no small success. thus the hus-
bandman
bandman plows and sows, not indeed with
the certainty or absolute assurance of a
crop, but yet with the rational expectation
of it, and for the most part throughout
all the different regions of the world he
finds his expectations gratified and answer-
ed. and thus has it been for a long suc-
cession of years, and in the general course
and order of this world’s affairs. though
the gratification may at some seasons per-
haps have been a little delayed, and some
circumstances of a discouraging nature, and
that seemed to bear a contrary aspect, may
have intervened. and in any other rational
and honest pursuit industriously applied to,
we may in like manner entertain the hope
of having our labor recompensed with the
desired success. thus we find in general
that those who undertake the care of a
family with the hope of providing for it,
and exert themselves in a proper manner
for that purpose, rarely fail of meeting with
that success, which if they be moderate and
regular in their views, may abundantly con-
tent and satisfy them. there are then with
respect to the things of the present life,
hopes or expectations of two different kinds,
such as are vain, romantic, visionary and
fruit-
fruitless, and those other that being found, ed upon probable grounds and well considered reasons, and upon the natural appearances, order and state of things, are generally accomplished. and it is these latter, I presume, that will be found to be the true emblem or model of those expectations which we are all with so much satisfaction and joy entertaining in relation to a future existence, in which we shall be far more happy, infinitely more exalted in dignity and blessedness, than any thing that by any means we can attain to here can enable us to conceive of; and that this hope is of the solid and rational kind, not chimerical and visionary. and if with respect to so great a varietie of other things we may hope with reason and success, why not in this? St. James, as perhaps, my good children, you may remember, instances in that very case of the husbandman, which we have just now been specifying, to the very same purpose, and as being the natural emblem of human hope and expectation with respect to a future state. be patient, he says, therefore brethren, and it is a passage, which as you grow up you may have frequent occasion of meditating upon.
upon, and may find great comfort and satisfaction to arise from the revolving of it in your thoughts. be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the lord. behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. be ye also patient; establish your hearts. for the coming of the lord draweth nigh. thus it is that he speaks concerning our hope of blessedness hereafter, as being altogether as rationally founded as that which is entertained by the honest, industrious and skilful husbandman of a plentiful crop. but before we enter more directly upon our proposed illustration of this particular, we are to consider, according to the method that has been intimated, of the present actual condition of mankind. and we shall briefly touch under this head, upon his external, his religious, and his moral condition or state. as to the first of these, it has often been observed that those of the infant state, human species come into the world in a much more infirm and helpless state than is the case with respect to many of the mere animal class; so that for a considerable time after our birth we are wholly unable either
either to provide for ourselves, or to be of service to others, and yet upon the whole it is very evident that the infant condition of man is so far from being worse than the situation and state of the mere animal tribe when newly entered upon their lower state of being, that it is in all respects incomparably more eligible. What may seem to be defective in the helpless condition of the infant, is abundantly made up by the tenderness, reason and wisdom of the parent. So that helpless as we then are in ourselves, there is in the gracious order of a divine and heavenly providence, an ample provision made for our being nourished and brought up, and by that entire dependence which we have upon our parents in this our infant-Season of life, and that care and tenderness, which during the period of it, if not perfect monsters indeed; (a) they do not.

(a) Nothing can more strongly or beautifully point out the reality and force of this principle than the application made of it by the supreme being in the language of his prophet, in order to illustrate the infinite compassion and mercifulness of his own eternal nature. *Isaiah* xlvi. 15. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion of the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."
fail to exercise towards us, the bond of mutual love, of gratitude and social affection, is rendered much more firm and solid for the future. And thus the most valuable purposes of a social kind are, by this particular dispensation or economy of providence, accomplished. A foundation is laid for a long and most lasting friendship between the parents themselves and their offspring in after-life, and for the delightful returns of gratitude on the part of the children, when parents in their turn come to stand in need of the filial assistance. And the social affections thus strengthened in this one particular instance, are by this means naturally improved into the more extended, the universal habit of goodness, and fitted for exerting themselves after a more operative and effectual manner in other connexions, and in every varying scene of human life.

"You, my children, are to remember as you grow up, what prodigiously strong and forcible obligations you lie under to your parents on account of that perpetual, unwearied care and tenderness which they have shewn towards you in your infant state, and to which alone, under the divine blessing, you are indebted."

"For"
for having got beyond it, had it not been for this you must have perished in your infancies, and never have enjoyed the light of life, or had the pleasure of finding yourselves gradually advancing towards manhood, and of being qualified by degrees for manly relishes, and for engaging in such manly occupations as are belonging to the present scene of things. Often think, my dear children, through how many anxious days and months your parents denied themselves of almost every comfort and enjoyment, submitted to almost perpetual confinement, toil, weariness, fatigue, hazard, dangers, pains and sorrows for your sakes. And all this, though you could never have done them any kindness beforehand, and when they were altogether uncertain whether you would ever live to repay these labors of love, or whether if you did live to have the opportunity of doing so, you would have the inclination. All this they did for you, though not knowing but possibly you might, notwithstanding all their own best endeavors to prevent it, be through your base and wicked temper their future plague.
and burden. I hope, however, that this will not be the case with respect to any of you; and that you will so reflect upon what I have been saying concerning the tenderness of your parents towards you in your infant state, as never to think any thing too much to be done for them in grateful return; that you will willingly obey all their commands; that you will cheerfully endure any burden yourselves for the sake of lightening theirs; that you will reverence and love them, and have all possible tenderness for their interest and welfare, if ever they should come to want your assistance. all this is due from you. and how sadly unnatural and perverse will be your disposition, if instead of this grateful return you should slight and despise your parents, put them to all manner of inconvenience and trouble, and fill their hearts with inexpressible pain and sorrow by your imprudent, or by your extravagant and untoward conduct! the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother; the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it. is not this very terrible? but you may be
be ready to think that there have been many undutiful children, whose eyes have never been plucked out by a raven, or eaten by an eagle. and that is very true. but let me tell you that Solomon's intention in this manner of speaking was not to intimate that this very thing itself would exactly and literally happen to disobedient and undutiful children, but by these sensible ideas to strengthen your apprehension of something yet more terrible that must befall you, if this should be your temper and disposition. what a shocking terrible thing does it appear to you for any to have their eyes plucked out by one animal and eaten up by another. now, says Solomon to you, children, let me inform you, and be sure to remember it, that either that, or something which you will find to be still more shocking and terrible, must needs be your lot, if you behave with contempt, ingratitude and disobedience towards your parents. this is an unnatural, wicked, and dreadfully degenerate temper. it must therefore be highly displeasing to God, and bring upon you his indignation and wrath; and
"and if persist in, cannot but terminate "in the most tremendous woe." but as our infant state is thus helpless and infirm, the proper improvement of which, and the wise design of providence in it, I have now been endeavoring briefly to point out, so likewise in our future life on earth we are exposed to a great variety of calamities and sorrows. "there is a time to laugh," it is true. but we all know that there is likewise "a time to weep." we form projects. but as we have seen, unless it be with great caution, wisdom and foresight, we are liable to no small disappointment in the event and issue of them. and sometimes, even though ever so prudently planned, vexation and disappointment does nevertheless attend them. many evils are we thus liable to suffer in consequence of our own imprudence, or else of our necessary and unavoidable defect in wisdom. and many more are we exposed to in consequence of the follie or injustice of others. pain, sickness and distemper of body attend us in one degree or another throughout the whole of life. or if we ourselves be well, "our "friend Lazarus," it may be, "is sick." those, whose company, health, prosperitie and
and happiness is our own greatest joy, are the greatest joy of all. Unlike these, laboring perhaps under many pains and infirmities of body, or if not under these, under worldly losses and disappointments of various kinds, in our own affairs of this nature we are liable, not only in many instances to the frustration of our hopes, but even to very urgent, pressing difficulties and embarrassments; so that we know not which way to look for, or whence, according to any outward means or human probabilities, to expect our succour. In the midst of all, however, providence has put into our power a great variety of enjoyments by which life is or may be for the most part sweetened and made comfortable to us. There is a strength and fortitude naturally belonging to the mind of man, which may render evils tolerable; especially when it is aided and assisted by reason and reflection, by prudence and the moderation of our desires. Several observations with respect to these ills of life, considered as objections insisted upon by some against the providence of God, have been already laid before you. But let me here both in farther answer to such objections, and likewise for your direction as to the manner of bearing
bearing these evils, and for your comfort and satisfaction under them, remind you as follows; that by such afflictions we are naturally put upon serious thought and recollection, that they have a direct tendency to excite the due exertion of our rational faculties, and to a consideration of the true nature of human happiness. And by this means they produce upon the whole, a good far over-balancing their own pressure and weight of evil. By these disappointments and sorrows we are naturally put upon seeking our comfort in religion, and led to place our repose, our confidence and happiness in God. And is it not well worth our while to endure any ills of life for the sake of being brought to the devout and fervent love of God at last? Or even of having the heavenly flame of devotion by means of them increased and heightened. And in a thoughtful, serious, well-tempered mind somewhat of this kind will assuredly arise out of the suffering scene, and be the effect of our afflictions. They will bring us nearer to God. They will be the means of uniting us more closely to him; and will thus be contributing to our truest felicity and highest good. When we have made God
God our "refuge and our hiding place," we are at once safe from storms, and in a situation for enjoying the most sublime and exquisite felicities, "God, we are then enabled to say, is my portion; I will not fear what man can do unto me." Many of the afflictions of life are in a manner annihilated and made to vanish into a thing of nought by the power of religion, and others of them that may remain, it enables us with ease to bear; according to that admirable advice and exhortation of the psalmist, "wait on the lord and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. wait, I say, on the lord." and then farther in the third place, the various calamities of human life are furnishing us with perpetual occasions, and supplying mankind with constant opportunities, for the exercise of the social affections, the tender and sympathizing passions. and by this means the highest good is effected; we are formed into the temper of virtue; we are made like to God; we are made fit for heaven; and by the few transient scenes of calamity and sorrow here occurring, ripened for an everlasting world, where there will be no such
Lect. XII. Such thing. The afflictions of others give
the opportunity for exercising our kindness and good-will; and by our own we
are made more sensible of theirs, and consequently become more disposed to embrace
that opportunity. Thus do the evils of our external condition naturally tend to make
us thoughtful, rational, manly in our views, sedate in our temper, religious in our affec-
tions, tender and sympathizing in our dispositions towards mankind. Happie fruits!
most desirable end and issue of them!

But alas! when we come to examine secondly, the religious state and condition
of mankind, we are far from finding these fruits universally to arise out of them: and
in this the actual state and condition of mankind with respect to religion, we shall
see the reason why they do not. Though as we have seen, man is a being naturally
formed for the knowledge and contemplation of God; yet how few are there who em-
ploy their thoughts or exercise their reason in this way? And yet so highly natural is
religion to mankind, that they will have the appearance of it in one shape or an-
other. And from this natural tendencie of the human mind to religion, in conjunction
with
with so sad a neglect of employing our reasonable powers aright in the contemplation and study of religious truths and principles, have arisen those superstitions that have been so mightily prevalent in the world, and the cause of so many dire and horrid mischiefs among mankind. many have been tempted dishonestly to give their countenance to these superstitions; even though they themselves were well enough convinced of the folly and vanitie of them, thus there has been so much the less probabilitie of their being removed out of the way, and in the mean time those, who with greater innocence have embraced these false notions concerning deitie and religion, have had their tempers at once corrupted and disturbed by them. for it is not every thing that men may call religion that can afford us the comforts of it, but only true religion itself; religion in its own genuine principles and nature. we may call those principles the truths and doctrines of religion, which are directly contrarie to the real system of religion; and if so, can it at all be wondered at that they should have contrarie effects? that they should not produce the same? and then a great many others
others there are, who never think about religion at all; who call it all superstition; who despise it in every shape and form; and who are so strangely infatuated, as to value themselves not a little upon daring to do this. “Of this, my good children, you will see sad and melancholy instances when you come to look about you in the world, and observe the conduct of mankind. But I hope you will ever remember, that to despise religion, is in effect to despise God your maker, whose nature and perfections are the foundation and object of it. And glad, exceeding glad, shall I be, if what in these our evening exercises I have been saying to you concerning God, his goodness and his love to you, and his power to make you either happy or miserable, shall have made such an impression upon your minds, as that you will ever look upon it as the most odious, the most ungrateful, the most absurd and foolish disposition that can possibly be indulged, to be indifferent to the sentiments of religion; indifferent whether we love God or not; whether he approves of us or not; or even whether there be a God or not.
not. I am sure the wiser and better you are, so much the greater horror will you have of such a temper." is it not sad and grievous that, whilst God is ever so intimately nigh to us by his supporting and all-sustaining presence, by the acts of his power, in the wonders of his love, yet we should in temper and affection be almost entirely estranged from him! who can reflect without a pious indignation, that it should be the language of any human creature to God his maker; "depart from me; I desire not the knowledge of thy ways; who art thou, that I should serve thee?" and yet what vast numbers are there amongst mankind, with respect to whose temper and actions this language expresses the apparent meaning and import of them, though there be something in it too horrid even for themselves to avow in words? a circumstance of itself alone sufficient to convince them of their folly, if they were not indeed almost hardened beyond conviction. but such is the religious state and condition of mankind. we are naturally capable of religion and disposed to it; but yet through vanity, levity, inconsideration, and the power of corrupt
Lect. XII. example, sadly unmindful of it. "the ox
knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." but we "forget the
God who formed us, and lightly esteem the rock of our salvation." "but yet,
my good children, there is a great deal of religion to be seen in the world,
which you are to consider as the public testimonie of mankind given in favor
of it, and which should excite your curiosity to enquire into the nature and
meaning of it. you see your parents and others, the whole neighbourhood,
the whole citie, and you presume the fame of the whole country and kingdom,
assembling themselves together upon the slated days of public devotion. now by
these actions God is solemnly acknowledged as the creator and ruler of the
world. and you may very naturally imagine that mankind all over the world
could scarce have agreed so unanimously as they do in such a practice as this, if
there had not been some very obvious and convincing proofs of God's being
and government, which you to be sure, as well as many others, who have lived
before you, may be very sensible of, if
"you
"you will but seriously apply your minds to seeking of God your maker, " who giveth songs in the night." " who giveth songs in the night; you may be ready to ask perhaps, what is the meaning of that? why, it means the joy and comfort, which God gives to those of mankind, who humbly wait upon, and devoutly adore him in their afflictions." " songs" are a token of joy. and " the night" is a gloomy season; and is therefore a proper emblem of affliction; so that to " give songs in the night" is to give comfort in affliction.

The moral state of the world is much the same as the religious state of it. man is made for virtue as well as religion; which are indeed in the true and genuine idea of them very closely and inseparably connected; but he sadly neglects the one as well as the other. and yet so powerful are the tendencies of nature to both, that he cannot wholly overlook either the one or the other. " when therefore you, my children, come to look abroad in the world, if you do it with a candid eye and after a friendly good-natured manner, you will see a great deal of generositie and kindness, of gratitude, meek-
meekness, patience and forgiveness among mankind, which you yourselves must be desirous to imitate in your own temper, and to cherish in the minds of others. but yet you will perceive that there is not anything like so much of these in the conduct and dispositions of human kind as might naturally be expected, and as would in fact take place, were we but as mindful as we ought to be either of God or of our own natures. and in many instances you will see most sad and lamentable departures from a spirit of this kind. and, if the sight and observation of these do but increase your own indignation against vice and wickedness, it will be well and happy for you. and from what we have thus far been insisting upon concerning the external, the religious and the moral condition of mankind, you will easily collect what notion is to be formed of human happiness as enjoyed here upon earth; that the present is far from being a state of perfect felicity; that yet there is a great deal of satisfaction and comfort enjoyed by mankind on earth; that there might be a great deal more, were they but more thought-
thoughtful, and more attentive to religious interests and concerns, and the cultivation of virtue and the moral temper; and that all the true and solid happiness that is enjoyed amongst us is owing to such a spirit: and that therefore, if you would either be happy yourselves, or make others so, you must live piously and delight in goodness yourselves, and endeavor so far as your influence may reach to persuade others to the love and pursuit of pietie, and to the cultivation of the same friendly and benevolent dispositions." thus have we considered the nature of man and his present condition. that glorious interesting topic, his hopes in relation to futurity, and the accomplishment of them in the blessed world above, must be reserved for the next opportunity we shall have of meeting upon this occasion.
WHEN we treated last in these our evening exercises upon the great, all-important, universally interesting and infinitely momentous topic of religion, it was observed that human hope had for its object both the good things of the present life, and the great realities and events, pleasures and enjoyments of a future state of being. With relation to the former, we then took notice that there are too very different ways or methods according to which our hopes are entertained and very commonly cherished by mankind, so as to render them under one of these classes or arrangements altogether chimerical and visionary, and which are therefore for the most part disappointed; whereas those belonging to the other being rational and upon fair and probable grounds assumed and taken up, come generally to be gratified in the end. How happy would it be for us, did we but confine ourselves as much as possible to these latter! and these, it was then observed, would, as we presumed, be found the
the proper emblem of that other hope, in Lec. XIII, which we are so much more nearly concerned, than in any thing that can befall us here; that hope or expectation I mean, Future state, which we all of us with so much joy embrace of living hereafter in the world of spirits, and of entering ere long upon it. an hope, which looks "into that which is arguments " within the veil," which penetrates beyond the utmost bounds of time, and which gives us the cheering, triumphant prospect of being placed so soon in a situation, where no calamities can any longer annoy us, where we shall be for ever enjoying the happy fruits of those we now bemoan, and under which we ourselves are actually laboring, as well as be acquainted with the many beneficial consequences in that blessed world arising out of those, which others are now enduring, and we ourselves so oft behold with a lamenting and sympathetic eye. that this hope, so glorious, so animating, is indeed of the kind I have hinted, or, in other words, an hope founded upon the most solid and convincing arguments; arguments, which the most inquisitive and searching mind may with the utmost satisfaction relie upon, is what I am now to in proof of. shew.
indeed, to us, who are favored with the lively, infallible oracles of Christian truth, there is the most ample and decisive attestation given upon this head by the authority itself of these lively oracles, and in the express, frequent and most solemnly repeated assurances of our blessed Savior and his holy apostles, to whom "God has borne witness by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, by them life and immortalitie" have been in a most glorious sense "brought to light." and upon this foundation we may with the utmost safety rejoice in the firm persuasion of being one day admitted to see the glorie of God as manifested and made known in the now inconceivable and inexpressible felicities, objects, employments and entertainments of the heavenly state. "but had you, my dear children, the expectation of becoming possessed ere long of some fair and ample fortune in this world, by which you were to be much raised above your present rank, and even above many of those, whom you now look upon, though I hope without any envy, as your superiors in this particular, would it be at all displeasing to you to have this hope con-" firmed
EXERCISES.

"firmed by a varietie and number of wit-

nes, who should all agree in giving

you the strongest reasons for entertain-
ing it, and believing that it would in

a little time be gratified and accom-

plished? would you not hearken to each

of them? would you think that what

any one had to say to you on this head

was at all superfluous, because you knew

of another, who could likewise give you

satisfaction in relation to it? would you

not on the contrary rejoice in the varietie

of the evidence as greatly corroborating

and strengthening your hope? but how

much more pleased should you be with

seeing this increase of evidence in relation

to your hope of a future world? there

will soon be an end to the highest honors

of the present life, and, in a little time,

the largest treasure of worldly riches,

that you can by any means acquire, will

perish and decay, or, which is all one,

you yourselves will be taken from the

possession of them; but if you are once

entered upon the happiness of futuritie,

you will find it to be as complete in its

nature, so likewise endless in its duration.

I hope therefore it will be a great plea-
CATECHETICAL

LECT. XIII. "Sure and satisfaction to you to hear of having the reality of this future happiness proved by the light of nature, and by arguments and reasons deduced from the innate and well-grounded suggestions of our own minds:" that is to say, by such arguments as we might have made use of, and been acquainted with and seen the force of them, even though we had never had any knowledge of Jesus Christ, or of the declarations of his gospel. the proving of it in this way will by no means weaken or invalidate, or any way derogate from that clear and certain proof of this article that is to be drawn from the authorities of his religion; but will be just so much additional strength to our evidence and proof upon the whole in relation to this so interesting and joyful a speculation. we will therefore go on, if you please, to enquire a little into this subject according to the manner we have now been speaking of. and in doing this we will endeavor, first, to point out the reality of a future state; secondly, consider somewhat of the nature of those rewards and punishments that will be distributed in it; and then, thirdly, enumerate some of those inferences which
which are to be made, and which we may naturally found upon this principle or doctrine. As to the first of these particulars, the realitie of a future state of rewards and punishments, it is to be proved, first, from the nature and perfections of God; his goodness, his holiness, his power and his wisdom. Secondly, from the inward frame and structure, the mental passions and affections of man himself. Thirdly, from his condition here, or the conduct of divine providence towards him in the present state. These are the three grand and general sources of argument upon this so highly momentous topic, so far as we can carry our reflexions upon it, without having recourse to the special illuminations and miraculous testimonie of the gospel. Upon each of these then I will now briefly insist. There is something very pleasing in the following description of the nature, power and efficacie of religion, which has been given us by Doctor Lucas in his inquirie after happiness. "Religion, says he, rectifies our opinions and dispells our errors, and routs those armies of imaginarie evils, which terrifie and torment the world much more than spirits and ghofts do. "This
this discovers to us objects worthy of all
the love and admiration of our souls.
this expiates our guilt and extinguishes
our fear. this shews us the happiness
of our present condition, and opens to
us a glorious prospect of our future one.
this discovers to us the happie tendencie
of temporal evils, and the glorious re-
ward of them; and, in one word, teaches
us both to enjoy and suffer. it moderates
our desires of things uncertain and out
of our power, and fixes them upon those
things, for which we can be responsible.
it raises the mind, clears the reason;
and finally forms us into such an united,
settled and compacted state of strength,
that neither the judgement is easily
shaken, nor the affections hurried by
any violent transport or emotion.”
you see, my good children, how much
the truth and propriety of this descrip-
tion depends upon that doctrine of a
future state, which you perceive to be
refered to in it.” who then would not
wish to have all these glorious effects of re-
ligion ascertained and made to be reasonable
in the expectation of them, by the fullest
establishment and clearest proof of that doc-
trine?
trine? let us proceed then to inquire what evidence in favor of it is to be derived from those several and distinct topics or sources of argument that have just now been mentioned, to wit, in the first place, from the nature and perfections of God, his good-ness, his holiness, his power and his wisdom. this is an argument, the entire force of which cannot be comprehended but in a comparative view, and as connected with that which is to follow, and which is founded upon the nature and constitution of man. however some separate observations may usefully be made relatively to each of them; after which their united force shall be briefly pointed out. from the idea which we are naturally led to form of the absolute and unlimited power of the deity, we may plainly and evidently collect that our existence hereafter must at least fall within the possibilities of nature. "you, my children, will easily perceive that it must needs be altogether as easy for the supreme being to continue your existence in another world as it is to support it now, or as it was originally to bring you into being. you can do one thing and not another; nay, the very same thing you can do at one
one time and not at another. and why?

because there are impediments and ob-

structions lying in your way, proceeding

from some other acting power in nature,

and which impediments it is wholly be-

yond your abilitie to remove. but you

will immediately perceive from what has

in the course of these exercises been laid

before you, that nothing of this kind

can happen or take place with respect to

the intentions and will of the deitie. if

the divine being wills your existence

hereafter, there is none, no man, no

angel, no devil, no inhabitant of any

world whatsoever, that can slay his hand,

or say unto him what doest thou. so that as

to the idea or possibilitie of the thing, it

is altogether as easy for you to conceive

that you may exist in another world, as

that you may be alive to-morrow in this.

and this let me observe to you, is no in-

considerable point in an argument of so

much consequence; that the thing,

which we would prove is in the notion

or idea of it, of as easy comprehension

as any of those familiar views or objects,

which you are every day conversant

with. you will not at all wonder to

find
find yourselves alive to-morrow, though you ought to be very thankful for it to that God, in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways, and to whom alone you will be indebted for this farther extension of your being. many children, as well as persons of riper years, are very suddenly cut off by death, and whenever it seems fit and proper to sovereign wisdom that it should be so, but I say, you would not at all wonder, my good child, to find yourself alive to-morrow. now it ought not in reason to be any greater matter of surprize to you, that you are to live hereafter or in another world. for with the Lord a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a thousand years. and surely, my dear children, when you recollect what has been so largely said to you concerning the goodness of God, nothing, I imagine, could appear to you more natural, than the supposing that his goodness, so free, so disinterested, so large, so exuberant as it appears in fact to be from the surrounding works of nature, and in the perpetual operations of his providence, should incline him to continue your being beyond
beyond the short and scanty limits of this world. the higher opinion you have of any earthly friend, of your own father, for instance, or mother, the firmer persuasion you have that they will continue to be as kind to you hereafter as they are at present; and that far from being disposed to deprive you of any good which you enjoy, they will be rather inclined to multiply the comforts of your being, and to enlarge and heighten the happiness of it. why then should you ever suspect that a being, who is infinite in goodness, should be so far from continuing to be good to you after death, as at this destined hour to deprive you even of that grand blessing, which is the foundation of all besides, your very existence itself? that after so very short a period, he should cease to have any kindness for you at all; nay, that he should then act the very cruellest part towards you that can possibly be imagined, next to the making you eternally miserable; namely, the striking you out of being for ever, upon these plain and obvious principles it must needs, I think, appear, that the higher notions you have
"of the divine goodness, so much the less of the divine goodness, so much the less! -"

able you will be to suppose that God able you will be to suppose that God

should deprive you of your being after a should deprive you of your being after a

few years only passed here upon earth, few years only passed here upon earth,

and the more readily will you conclude and the more readily will you conclude

another state to be ordained for man." another state to be ordained for man."

when we mentioned the holiness of God in when we mentioned the holiness of God in

the stating of this argument, we did it to the stating of this argument, we did it to

shew, that if there be a future state at all, shew, that if there be a future state at all,
it must needs be a state of happiness and it must needs be a state of happiness and

reward to the good, and of punishment and reward to the good, and of punishment and

miserie to the wicked. and this is a truth miserie to the wicked. and this is a truth

that you will easily perceive must necessarily and directly flow from that acknowledg

attribute of the deitie. for being that attribute of the deitie. for being that

righteous lord and sovereign ruler who loveth righteous lord and sovereign ruler who loveth

righteousness, and consequently righteous prophets, nothing can be more absurd than prophets, nothing can be more absurd than
to imagine that a future state should be to to imagine that a future state should be to

any such a state of misery and torment. any such a state of misery and torment.

and it would be equally absurd to imagine and it would be equally absurd to imagine

that to any of those who enter upon it with that to any of those who enter upon it with
depraved and wicked dispositions, it should depraved and wicked dispositions, it should

be a state of bliss. for God cannot "take be a state of bliss. for God cannot "take

pleasure in iniquitie." yet what could pleasure in iniquitie." yet what could

be a greater evidence of his doing so, than be a greater evidence of his doing so, than

the admission of the wicked and ungodly the admission of the wicked and ungodly

into a state of perfect, heavenly and ever-

lasting
Lect. XIII. lasting felicitie? this is the highest possible token that can be given of the divine love, even to the best and most virtuous of mankind. It is therefore a manifestation of it that cannot surely be extended alike to the wicked and profligate. Nor would it be at all consistent with the wisdom of God, another attribute which we mentioned as comprehended in this first topic of argument, and in the general scope of it, that vice and wickedness should be thus triumphant hereafter. This would be giving it so much countenance as would be utterly inconsistent with the essential holiness of the divine being, and consequently with the nature and design of his moral government. But secondly, the reality of a future state may be very strongly inferred from the nature of man himself; from his inward make and structure, his mental powers and affections. Man is a noble creature, he stands eminent and superior in rank of being; foremost and chief among all the works of God below, and a most prodigious difference there is between him and any of the brute creation. Those of them that make the most superb and stately appearance in the animal tribe itself, what are
are they when compared with man, who is made capable of religion and virtue, of knowing and worshiping God, and even of powers, resembling his perfections? and in contemplations exercises and attainments of this kind he is naturally qualified for making a perpetual progress, far beyond what the narrow limits of this world will admit of, even supposing his religious and moral improvements to be carried on at ever so great a rate; nay, the more any man knows, and the longer he lives in the pursuit of knowledge, the more he perceives himself capable of knowing, the more eager he is after still farther knowledge, and the more exquisitely delightful he finds the pursuit and acquisition of it to be to him, and he cannot but apprehend that it will be continually more and more delightful to him the longer he continues to be so employed and in this manner entertained. The same observations are applicable to his religious and moral character. The more he loves God, the more he perceives himself capable of advancing in this divine affection, the more he desires to do it, and the greater idea he forms of the happiness that will result from going on to perfection in these
these devout aspirations of the mind, the more he delights in virtue, in imitating God, and doing good, the more raised and elevated are his ideas of the happiness to flow out of such a temper yet farther cultivated and improved, from the continued incessant progress of it, and from a farther extended series of such godlike action. this then being the case, this total, absolute, and in a manner infinite, disparity considered between man and any of the brute creation in their original powers and capacities of being, is it at all probable, can we possibly imagine, that they should be alike in death? or can anything on the other hand be more probable or more naturally apprehended, than that there should here too be an answerable disparity? or what can be more incongruous to our notions of the divine wisdom, than to imagine that man should be thus nobly distinguished by the powers of his being from the brutal tribe, and yet with respect to the continuance of it be altogether upon a level with them? that he should be endowed with powers capable of being exercised and improved in a future and nobler scene of action and enjoyment, and yet his being
being be wholly confined to this? upon such a supposition, what adequate end can we perceive to be answered by his being thus nobly endowed? "let it then, my " dear children, be deeply impressed upon " your minds, that you are beings made " capable of religion and virtue; and that " it is these which constitute even the hap-" piness of heaven itself, and of all the " glorious angels and arch-angels who " there inhabit; and you will, I am per-" suaded, apprehend it to be much more " probable, that you should be designed to " live ere long in company with these glo-
" rious beings and in that blessed world, " and in pursuing with an everlasting " ardor the perfection of these your noble " faculties, than that you should lose your " being like the brutes that perish." from the nature of any work or fabric contrived by human art, we make very probable con-clusions as to the designed continuance of them. a shepherd may run up a little hut upon the downs without digging for a foun-" dation or bestowing any great expence or labor upon it. and when we see him thus employed, we judge that he designs it only for a few days or months, at most, conveni-" ence,
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and that it is then to be taken down again, but when we observe any person digging deep for the foundation of an house, and employing a great number of hands in laying it and in raising the superstructure, bestowing upon it a great many ornaments, dividing it into several apartments, some for one use and some for another, taking care to make every thing fast and sure, firm and solid, and putting himself to a vast expense of time and thought and labor and money for this purpose, we conclude of course that he has no design of pulling the house down as soon almost as it is built; or at least we should scarce admire his wisdom if he did so. The application of this similitude must needs I think be very easy. and I will leave it to you, my children, to draw the argument yourselves, which I would suggest by it in favor of a future state; and would now go on to ask you, whether we may not in your opinion venture to look upon that eager desire and expectation of such a state that belongs to the mind of man, as being a plain intimation given us by the great former of our spirits, that we are indeed ordained to live in such a state? we have
have many other natural desires and appetites belonging to us, such as hunger and thirst, in relation to the mere animal life and being; a love of truth, a love of novelty, a delight in great and magnificent objects, a taste for society and friendship, constituting so many parts in the intellectual and moral frame of man. and for the gratification and indulgence of every one of these desires, we find that the gracious author of our beings has in fact made a very plentiful provision. now the desire of a future state seems to be altogether as natural to us as any of these. why then should we imagine it to be the only natural inclination belonging to us that will be disappointed? it is the most important of them all. it is that without which the rest would be comparatively of little value. God can as easily gratify this as any of the other. and why should we suspect his goodness in this particular case alone, so fully verified and amply displayed in all besides? by how much the nobler (a) are the powers and faculties of our

(a) "The best way, says Mr. Manlove, to know that the soul is immortal, is to keep its noblest faculties in due exercise, and then they will speak for themselves." See his Dis-
our being, so much the more difficult must it be to reconcile the destruction of it either to the goodness or to the wisdom of the deitie. and this is what I meant by the comparative view of these two topics or sources of argument, the nature and attributes of deitie, and the constitution and frame of man. and in particular, the more intense and eager our hopes of happiness hereafter, so much the more improbable is it that the supreme being should not indulge us in the gratification of them; so much the more difficult to account for our being naturally led to entertain any such hope, if this be not designed.

But then farther still we mentioned, as you may remember, a third argument in proof of a future state appointed and ordained for man; and which was to be deduced from the condition of man here upon earth,

Discourse concerning the Immortalitie of the Soul, c. ix. p. 114. This seems to have been the argument of the ancient Druids. Inter hos Druidæ ingeniiis celiores, ut autoritas Pythagoræ decrevit, sodalitiis adstricti consortiis, quæstionibus occultarum rerum altarumque erēti sunt, & despectantes humana pronuntiarunt animas immortales. Ammian. Marcell. l. xv.
earth, or the conduct of divine providence towards him in the present world. "this world, my good children, has all the appearance imaginable of a state in which we are to be trained up and disciplined for another. It is a state of education. you perceive your own immediate and earthly parents to be bestowing a great deal of thought and care upon you in your present young and tender age, and that not merely in providing sustenance for your animal life, but in forming likewise your minds and manners, and leading you into the knowledge of this or the other science or art, which you can make but very little use of at present, and can scarce imagine it may be of what benefit or advantage it can be to you to be instructed in them. but do you think that they would be at all this trouble, if they were sure that you would not live to be men and women; or if they had not the greatest reason to presume that you would? now this is exactly the conduct of providence towards us all. there are many things in your present state of education under your parents and teachers, that may per-
N 5 haps
Lec. XIII. "haps be somewhat troublesome, tedious, and vexatious to you, and from which you had much rather be excused. But they are designed to answer a good end bye-and-bye in your future state of mankind, if it please God to bring you to it; and you yourselves will then be sensible of this." thus God afflicts many good men here upon earth, even to the very latest moment of their lives they are exercised with sorrows of one kind or another; and these are the discipline of heaven for the improvement and perfecting of their virtue. But for what end can we suppose it to be carried on? why so much care taken for the bettering and improvement of their tempers, if after all themselves are to be so soon as by death annihilated? (a) so like-

(a) Non mihi itaque videtur hæc parva esse causa, quare cum malis flagellantur & boni, quando Deo placet perditos mores etiam temporalium poenarum afflictione punire. flagellantur enim simul, non quia simul agant malam vitam, sed quia simul amant temporalem vitam: non quidem aequaliter, sed tamen simul, quam boni contemnere deberent, ut illi correpsti atque corresti consequerentur aeternam, ad quam consequendam si nollent esse socii, ferrentur & diligenter inimici; quia donec vivunt temper incertum
likewise many of the blessings and enjoyments of this life are of such a kind as to be naturally fitted for the improvement of the moral temper, and for exciting in our minds those views and affections, that are in the directest manner adapted to prepare us for another and a nobler state of being. God does not only supply us with the meat that is by the nature of it suitable and convenient with respect to our bodily health and sustenance, but gives us likewise all things “richly to enjoy” for the culture of our minds, for the strengthening and improvement of our reason, for the refinement and exaltation of our virtue. We enjoy very ample means and opportunities of a religious nature. We have the blessed gospel of Christ in our hands, and Christ came into our world, notwithstanding all the amazing glory and dignitie of which he incertum est, utrum voluntatem sint in melius mutaturi. Aug. de Civitat. Dei, 1. i. c. ix, where we see the pious and judicious father insisting upon the afflictions which befell good men, as being a gracious discipline, intended not only to promote their own preparation for a future and immortal state, but also to have a like influence even upon the wicked by means of their example exhibited in the suitable improvement of them.
he was in the heavenly one possessed, on purpose to confer this blessing upon us; a blessing purely spiritual, and relative to the higher interests of our being. but why all this care on the part of heaven in our religious and moral education, if not with a view to some other state in which the ends and purposes of it are to be completely answered? what father appoints his son to be for a certain number of years employed in learning this or that particular art, occupation or profession, but with a view that he should exercise and employ himself in the same, when that period shall expire? but thus our thoughts are naturally led to the christian plan. which, God willing, shall be the subject of our distinct consideration on the next opportunity.
THE three great sources of argument upon that prime subject, the doctrine of a future state, we have already observed to be as follows: first, the nature and perfections of the divine being, his goodness, his holiness, his power and his wisdom; secondly, the inward frame and structure, the mental powers and affections of man himself; thirdly, his condition here on earth, or the conduct of divine providence towards him in the present life. And under each of these heads we have endeavored to evince the certaintie of it. But it is of the highest importance to observe in relation to some of the arguments which in treating of these particulars have been insisted upon, that they will be so much the stronger for the farther continuance of our being, after we have enjoyed the felicitie of the heavenly world for thousands of ages, and so on for thousands of ages still, than they are now for the expectation in general of a life to come. Such I mean, as those which were derived from the noble powers, faculties,
and from the goodness of the supreme being, and that delight and complacency which he ever takes in virtue and holiness. These faculties and affections of our minds, the longer they are exercised amidst the bliss and glories of futurity, so much the more will they be enlarged and elevated, and so much the more capacious will they still be of greater happiness in a farther extended duration of our being. And the longer we exist in the possession of so sublime a felicity, so much the stronger and more lively proof and demonstration shall we have of the goodness of the supreme deitie, and of the pleasure he takes both in the virtue and in the happiness of his reasonable and moral offspring, so much the more powerfully and feelingly shall we in this particular be convinced; consequently so much the more improbable will it appear, and so much the more unnatural in us to imagine, that he should by the annihilation of our being deprive us of them both. This therefore is one, and a most important one, of those inferences that are to be deduced from the topics that were insisted upon in our last exercise upon this occasion;
occasion; that there is not only a future, but an immortal state of being ordained for man. and thus too we are furnished with a noble and in the highest degree satisfying illustration of what has been before insisted upon, in answer to what is sometimes thought so much to militate against the supposed goodness of the supreme being, namely, those calamities and evils of various kinds, which so much perplex and imbitter this present scene of things. we said that all these evils might be graciously and most benevolently on the part of heaven intended to produce a far greater quantity or sum of good upon the whole, by the happy consequence of them in some other state of being than could otherways have been effected. the realitie of this other state of being has now been evidently evinced. and in that permanent, everlasting scene of existence, the proofs of which have been thus so lately presented to your consideration, what ample space has the divine providence as it were allowed itself, in which to operate after such a manner as to produce these happie and delightful consequences. and thus how gloriously may the divine and sovereign being display the perfection
section of his benevolence and wisdom to all his creatures even of the human race, that shall be for ever triumphing with unabating ardor and affection in these demonstrations of his eternal love? " what calamity or evil can you possibly imagine, " my good children, to take place in this world, be it ever so heavy, ever so extensive, ever so lasting, which may not in a future state of never-ending existence become the matter of exultation and triumph on account of the happie effects, with which in that state it will appear to have been connected as the instrumental and producing cause? effects eternal in their duration, yet arising out of an evil, which on account of its being an evil of this life only, must needs have been altogether momentarie and transient."

the improvement which by means of such afflictions we make in virtue, is a good which is to be carried with us into another world, and will there be existing in our minds, and growing into a still greater good for ever; so that it is, properly speaking, an eternally good effect arising out of a transient and momentarie evil. thus again, it has been often looked upon as a considerable difficul
cultie in the scheme and dispensations of Lec. xiv.
divine providence, that good men should so frequently be cut off by death in the midst of their days. This, it must be acknowledged, has indeed been often the case. Some of the best of men, in all the vigor of their usefulness, and amidst the highest activity of their pious zeal, have been thus removed from our world. But then you perceive, according to what we have been insisting upon concerning the realitie of a future state, that, though called out of this world, their happiness is going on in another, their virtuous progress is not at all interrupted, but on the contrary by this removal wonderfully facilitated, and in the highest degree befriended. It is a removal unspeakably advantageous to their own moral improvement. And though we cannot indeed but bemoan their absence; yet may we not justly and usefully look upon it as a punishment for the sins of those who are left behind? May it not answer some very valuable purposes in promoting our own seriousness and piety to be inquiring at least, whether it be or not? and the want of such good men no longer acting that brave and honorable part on earth, should stir up those
those who yet remain among us, to be proportionably more warm and vigorous in pursuing the same honorable measures. this will be highly advantageous to themselves. and when such is indeed the happie effect of a serious consideration employed upon the so early removal hence of men thus honorably distinguished, the benefit to the world may be upon the whole the same as if they had remained with us, their virtue being thus by means of their removal transfused into the minds of others. what an happy thing to himself was Elijah's translation into heaven? at the same time he was scarce missed in Israel, on account of that holy flame which in consequence of his removal was kindled up in the mind of Elisha. but then, then it is, that the decease of good men is the saddeft los$, when they leave none at all, or but a very few indeed, that are equally good behind them. for all the forementioned reasons however, particularly on account of that so much greater happiness which they themselves enjoy in consequence, we see that the removal hence of such, even in the prime and vigor of life, cannot justly be considered as carrying in it any objection to the providence of the
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the almighty. this would be in effect to Lic. xiv.
object to it, because the virtuous are made
happie, which would be a strange kind of
reasoning indeed! but the argument, as you
perceive, supposes that they enter immedi-
ately upon the happiness of a future state.
and surely we must believe it to be Alto-
gether as easy to the divine being to carry on
the happiness of the virtuous without breach
or interruption, as to revive or renew it
after a long intervening state of unconsci-
ousness and insensibility. and the one be-
ing altogether as easily conceived of as the
other, which is it, I would ask, that ap-
pears most consistent with the ideas we en-
tertain concerning the exuberance and per-
fection of the divine goodness? or what
can be more unnatural than to imagine
that the gracious, sovereign being, whose
real design towards us is eternal felicitie,
should nevertheless grudge us such a com-
paratively small, but yet in itself interest-
ing portion of happiness, as may be en-
joyed between death and the resurrection?
it is as if any one should bestow upon us a
large and ample fortune for life, and yet
grudge us the sustenance or the provisions
of a single day; which we should at least
look
look upon as being strangely whimsical and capricious, and the scriptures seem plainly to suppose that all mankind upon their decease have their habitation or lot assigned them either in heaven or hell. But a state of insensibility is neither one nor the other; nor is it possible to conceive of any moral ends or uses that can be answered by it. (a)

Whereas

(a) And indeed, says Mr. Grove, if we strictly examine the notion of the *utter extinction* of the being, and its *reproduction* after a certain interval of time, it will appear highly absurd to reason; for after it has once ceased to exist, the same *individual* thinking being can never exist more: a new one may be produced exactly like the former, and so may a thousand more; but that will not make them all to be the same being; as it would do for the same reason, as any one of them may be the same with *that* which had an end put to its existence some time ago, whether a longer or a shorter, makes no difference. After there has been a gap or separating space of time, nothing can possibly unite the being existing before, and that which exists after into one. And this alone, to those who believe a resurrection, may be instead of a thousand arguments of the soul’s not dying with the body; because in that case the resurrection would not be barely *refitting up the body*, that it might be united to the same conscious principle, with which it was in union before (and which had never for a moment ceased to exist, and so might
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whereas even in the miseries of a future world inflicted by the supremely governing deity

might have a title to be rewarded or punished, for what was done in a former body) but producing another conscious principle; new as to its very substance, if the soul be immaterial, and annihilated; or at least as to the principle of life and consciousness, if it be matter; which would constitute it a distinct individual agent, having no interest in the good or bad conduct of that other; though, perhaps, it resembles it as nearly as one being can another. the reasoning of Lucretius here would be just enough. Neciam nostram conlegerit asas, &c. that if time should gather together our materials after death, and after they were reduced into the same situation, life should be superadded, yet would not that signify any thing to us; any more than it does what beings had been composed of the same stuff before we were born. See his Treatise on a Future State, c. viii. §. xi. p. 110—112.

Q. 1. I have often wondered why there is nothing in the creed of the immortality of the soul, and its state before the resurrection.

A. 1. The article of Christ's descent tells us, that his soul was among the separated souls, while his body was in the grave: as he told the thief, that he should be that day with him in paradise.

2. The resurrection of the body is a thing not known at all by nature, but only by supernatural revelation, and therefore is an article of mere belief: but the immortalitie or future life of souls, is a point which the light of nature revealeth, and therefore was taken both by Jews and sober Heathens
Heathens as a truth of common notice: even as the love of ourselves is not expressed in the ten commandments, but only the love of God and others, because it was a thing pre-supposed.

3. The immortality of the soul is included in the article of the resurrection of the body: for if the soul continue not, the next at the resurrection would be another soul, and a new created one and not the same: and then the body would not be the same soul’s body, nor the man the same man, but another. who was ever so unwise to think that God had so much more care of the body than of the soul, as that he would let the soul perish, and raise the body from the dust alone, and join it with another soul? 4. Very learned and wise expositors think that the Greek word (Anastasis) used for resurrection, indeed signifies the whole life after this, both of soul first, and body also after, oft in the New Testament: it is a living again, or after this life, called, a standing up again: and there is great probability of it in Christ’s argument with the Sadducees, and some passages of Paul’s, 1 Cor. xv. Baxter’s Catechizing of Families, c. xxi. p. 154, 155. To the same purpose Dr. Clarke. The notion, says he, of the soul’s immateriality evidently facilitates the belief of a resurrection and of a future retribution, by securing a principle of personal individuality, upon which the justice of all reward or punishment is entirely founded; but if thinking be in realitie nothing but a power or mode, which inhering in a loose and fleeting system
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will be still advancing towards their final accomplishment, and the perfections of the great God and father of the universe be even by these in the grand result illustrated and displayed to the view of his intelligent creation. " for far be it from you, my good children, to imagine that the wicked are punished in a future state out of any such principle in the deitie as revenge, or what we call passion. no; but you are to consider such punishments as the measures of a wise and benevolent ruler or governor in the moral universe." the best earthly sovereign that ever lived never thought it inconsistent with his goodness to punish malefactors; and his subjects would soon have found the dreadful effects of his not doing so (a). if you ask whence these punish-

system of matter, perishes utterly at the dissolution of the body; then the restoring the power of thinking to the same body at the resurrection, will not be a raising again of the same individual person; but it will be as truly a creation of a new person, as the addition of the like power of thinking to a new body now, would be the creation of a new man. See his Third Defence, p. 88.

(a) It is upon these principles that an ingenious author thus expresses himself in commenting upon a passage in one of Cicero's Orations. " Tully's
Tully's business in this Oration was to paint out Clodius in his true colors, to let people see into the hands of what an ill man they had given the power of a tribune, to let his judges see what a guilty wretch they had absolved; to convince his whole audience that a villain absolved by corrupt judges could not yet but be miserable, through the irregularity of his passions and affections and the consciousness of his misdeeds: pursuant to this purpose it was proper for him to distinguish between the punishments exacted by men, which were sometimes bought off, and those inflicted by the Gods, which were never to be avoided; the one reaching body and goods, the other the mind. The Gods interpose not in what concerns the former; their inflictions are laid on the mind. Self-consciousness and reflection are the ministers of their vengeance; they make use of no other to punish wickedness. This is all that Tully says; and many good men, as well christians as deists, who believe the future state, will say upon the matter the same thing. but, though according to Tully, the Gods have ordained only self-consciousness and reflection to punish wickedness in this life, may they not have ordained this also, though this only, to punish it hereafter? I say not everlastingly, for Tully had other notions of the Gods than that comes to; but so long at least,
the remorse of their own conscience; by this some have been even plagued to death while in this world. and it will be a much greater source of torment in the other, because there will be nothing there to divert their attention from these dismal reflections, or to alleviate the pains of a self-accusing mind. Secondly, the worst of company, whose business and delight it will be to insult and deride, to tantalize and torment them, out of pride and envy. Thirdly, a most lively sense of having forfeited the divine favor, and being in a state of alienation from the best of beings. It is often-times a matter of no small vexation and uneasiness even here, to think of having by our own imprudence and folly, forfeited the friendship of some wise and worthy man. Imagine then, if you can, what a vexation and torment it must needs be to any one in

"least, till the punishment shall work a change of mind in the sufferer, and then the punishment cannot but cease. I interest not myself in the case, but take it for granted that Tully could make the Gods authors of no punishments, but what were designed for the amendment of the sufferer, and the instruction of the beholder." See Free Thoughts on a Future State, p. 45, 46.
his most deeply reflecting moments, to be continually accusing and upbraiding himself for having forfeited the friendship of his God! and being now excluded from a sublime and glorious felicite, which he himself might have been enjoying as well as others, had it not been for his own wilfulness and folly! and by considering only and reflecting upon the direct contrary of all these particulars, you may easily furnish yourselves with some notion or idea, enough to animate all the efforts of your minds, be it only duly attended to, of the happiness of futurity. as dreadful and tormenting as are the agonizing tortures of an accusing conscience, so great, satisfying and delightful will be the pleasures of an approving one; of reviewing and looking back upon our own integritie, and that unshaken fortitude, with which by divine grace we have been enabled to maintain our contest with sin and folly, whether that of our own or others. the greater difficulty, opposition, hazard, fear and despondence in the progress of our virtue here, so much the more exquisitely joyful will be the reflection of our minds upon having at length and for ever surmounted all. and if we cannot
cannot but look upon it as being the very worst of evils to be banished from the favorable and propitious presence of God our maker, and to live under the perpetual, keen and most pungent sense of a loss so inexpressibly great, we may by this means come to form some idea or notion of that intense and elevated happiness, which cannot but be the result of a directly contrary state and situation, of being the objects of divine complacence and love, and most intimately conscious of it, and then, thirdly, when we reflect upon the amazing number of other holy, heavenly, virtuous men, who are gone before us into that happy state of being towards which we ourselves are daily tending, and how many more will follow us thither; what a prodigious company of pure and virtuous spirits from every quarter of the universe have been, and will be continually resorting to it, and what a vast inconceivable number more there is, who have from the beginning had their residence and habitation in it, what an idea must this give us of those pleasures of societie and friendship, of harmony, love and union that are there to be enjoyed! nothing however can furnish us with a more pleasing sentiment.
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Lc. xiv. sentiment of this nature, than our reflecting
upon that close, inseparable union, which
we shall then have with our lord Jesus Christ himself, the great "author" of eternal happiness to all those, who believe in
and " obey him," and the " captain" of
our " salvation." " this is he, as an inge-
nious writer expresses it, will the separate soul then say, who put on our nature
with its infirmities, but by his resurrection and ascension on high, has changed
his infirmities into glory. this is he,
who conversed here below in mean condition among men, and behold him
raised above the magnificence of all
the angels. this is he that once suffered
the contradiction of sinners, but receives
now the applause and veneration of all
the inhabitants of heaven. this is he
that ignominiously hung upon a cross,
but now all creatures behold him with
reverence and trembling. this is he,
that here below suffered death, but who
now holds in his hands the life of all
things and the substance of the universe.
this is he that was once seen lying in a
dark tomb, in comparison of whom now
the splendor of the sun is but as a shadow.
" this
"this is he was thought unworthy thatthe earth should bear him, who now LEc. XIV.
walks upon the heavens, and under whose feet the whole fabric of the earth does tremble. this is he in whom I once
believed "only," but whom I now see fully and manifestly, and to whom I have liberty to approach without fear, and behold him face to face." such then, my children, is the notion or idea that you are to form of the happiness of the heavenly world, and of the rewards of (a) virtue there to be conferred."

and we may easily see the shocking impropriety there must be in the conduct of any one, who expecting to participate in so great and glorious an happiness as this, should demean himself to the baseness of a vicious and worldly spirit.

But the reflections now last insisted upon Christian naturally lead us to what we proposed this revelation, evening to enter upon; the more distinct

(a) Rewards, which, though they be too great to be understood by the sons of men, yet are not so great, but that they may be expected by us, when we shall be adopted to be the sons of that God; whose power to bestow, can be equalled by nothing but by his desire to gratify. See Mackenzie's Moral Paradox, p. 52.
consideration namely of the Christian scheme of religion. " and the first question, my good children, which naturally offers itself upon this head is, what you suppose to be meant by Christianitie or the Christian religion? and you will answer no doubt, that by Christianitie, or the Christian religion, according to the apprehension you have entertained, is to be understood those doctrines and duties that were preached and published in the world by Jesus Christ and his apostles, Peter, Paul, James and others; the knowledge of which doctrines and duties are communicated to us in the writings of the new testament; and to the truth and authority of which God has borne witness by signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. so that Christianitie you are to look upon as a divine revelation of religion superadded to the original and primarie light of nature in relation to it." many of the doctrines of it are the same with those of natural religion. but then they are differently revealed; namely, by the personal authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great prophet of God, and the miraculous attestations
tions which accompanied his publication of Lect. XIV. them. So that even with respect to these doctrines taught by the light of nature, you are to consider it as being a vast advantage resulting from christianitie, that by means of it an additional and twofold evidence has been given to them. We have their importance by this means more strongly inculcated upon us, and the authority and truth of them so much more firmly evinced. And then farther these doctrines of original, primitive and natural religion christianitie has enforced and enlightened, not only by its authority as more directly and immediately applied to them, but likewise by a great variety of doctrines peculiar to itself, supported by the same authority; and all illustrating and confirming these great maxims of primitive revelation.

"Now, my good children, you will easily perceive that such an additional and special revelation of religion as that which I have been speaking of is possible." That possible, there are other intelligent beings besides ourselves inhabiting other worlds, is a sentiment founded even upon the discoveries and conclusions of nature itself, as we have already in the course of these lectures had occasion.
occasion to observe. now it is altogether as easy for the supreme deity to commission some one or other of these beings to appear in our world, and to take up his abode amongst us for a time, and for the answering such or such a salutary and useful purpose, as it was for him to appoint any of us our habitation and stated residence here. so that there is nothing that can be in the least degree absurd in supposing that some such being may have appeared in our world in order to publish the doctrines of religion among mankind under the sanction of a distinct and special authority for this purpose conferred upon him. but how, may some be inclined to say, is his authority to be evinced? how are we to be satisfied that he does appear in our world invested with such a divine commission? now this can only be made evident by such miraculous works already hinted at in this view, "by you, my good children;" such extraordinary, unaccustomed operations, as cannot be accounted for by any apparent powers of nature, and which tend to engage the attention of mankind to the doctrines of such a teacher, and to diffuse the knowledge and reception of them throughout the world,
the design of which therefore we cannot but suppose to be the pointing him out to us as a special and divine teacher, and the giving success to the doctrines he should deliver. these doctrines we cannot imagine would ever have been in such an especial manner attested, countenanced and supported by heaven itself, were they not in reality both true and of the utmost importance to mankind. nor can any thing be more clear and evident than the possibility of such miraculous events or operations. for the whole system of nature we know to be the workmanship of God, and what more naturally supposable, than that he can cause whatever deviations he thinks proper from the usual course and order of nature, which may constitute so many miracles to us, though an original part in the plan of his universal government, as much as the natural state itself of the world and its events. and to say that the supreme being cannot cause miracles to be performed or to take place, would be as great an absurdity as to say, that he who makes a watch cannot pull it to pieces, or make it go faster or slower as he thinks fit, or suspend its motions, or alter in this manner or that, the form, contexture and workmanship
mankind of it. the continuance of our being is every moment owing to the immediate and instantaneous power of the deitie, exerted for the support of it. can it then be doubted, whether that being, by whose power millions and millions of creatures are thus in the common and ordinary course of nature continued in existence, should not be able, if he thinks fit, instantly to heal, or impower another in this manner to heal, the diseases of any among mankind, and so to continue and lengthen out their lives? our very life itself we have originally from God. he is the giver and author of it. now must we not needs believe that it is altogether as easy to him to restore life in this or that particular instance, if such be his will and pleasure, as it was at first to give it? can it ever be thought impossible to that being instantly, if he pleases, to suspend the influence of the winds, to whose power alone, every moment exerted, it is owing that they have any influence at all? or that he, to whose continued agencie in supporting the usual operations of nature, we must needs ascribe the nourishing quality of all our food, should be able to communicate it in any other manner he shall
shall think proper, and with equal ease, to
a smaller as to a larger portion of it, even
in the same degree; or make the bread itself
to increase and multiply with as much ease
as the grain or feed, from the produce of
which it is made. So far then we seem to
be upon very certain grounds advanced.
but though the possibility of such a reve-
lation, as that which is now the subject of
our discourse, be indeed a necessary step in
the argument, yet must it needs be the low-
est. Let it therefore be added, that such a
revelation is not only possible but highly
credible. That is to say, all things consi-
dered and duly weighed, nothing can to our
reflection appear more likely, than that the Likely.
divine being should, in some such manner
as we Christians suppose he actually has,
revealed himself to mankind; at least there
can be nothing in such a supposition carry-
ing in it the very lowest degree of impro-
babilitie; so that we cannot reasonably be
surprised at hearing of such a thing. For
consider only the prevalence in the world
of iniquitie, and the numerous temptations
to it; the various afflictions and sorrows of
human life, and the need we have of sup-
port and comfort under them. Consider on

O 6 the
the other hand, the blessings and joys of a
virtuous life, and the vast, unspeakable fel-
licitie of making a continual progress in it.
consider these things, I say, and then judge
whether it be not a most natural presump-
tion, that a God of infinite benignitie and
goodness should in such a manner revele
himself to us, as to afford us some addi-
tional aid and assistance in our virtuous pro-
gress, and for enabling us the better both
to encounter the temptations of life, and to
bear its ills; and after a manner more sublime and elevated to enjoy the pleasures of virtue and religion. in the system of ani-
mal and external nature we find a very kind
provision made for incidental wants and
distempers, such as men may have brought
upon themselves, or that may have befallen
them through the inconsideration, folly or
injustice of others, or by means of any
afflictions, which may have come upon them
with little or no pre-apprehension of any
such matter, yet without either their own,
or the fault of any one besides, as well as
for the stated wants of nature, and the in-
firmities originally belonging to our frame.
why then should it be thought incredible
that God may have furnished us with the
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Like salutarie and graciously intended medicines for our souls' infirmities and for the diseases of the mind? That in fact he has done this by the appearance of Christ Jesus in our world, and the nature and qualities of his gracious prescriptions in this kind, shall, God willing, be the business of our next meeting upon this occasion, to evince.

LECTURE XV.

We have already made it to appear that such a divine revelation as that we suppose to be contained in the gospel, is a thing possible, or what very well may be. We have likewise shewn it to be a thing credible; or that it is at least no way improbable that it should be. The next step in this argument is those ancient prophecies, which for many ages preceding the actual publication of the gospel to mankind, declared that it would be. These prophecies are contained in the writings of the old testament. Thus it is that we are to distinguish on account of several, and those very
very remarkable predictions, which we meet with in the new. with respect then to those of the old testament, by which the appearance of our blessed savior amongst mankind was prefigured and pointed out, they were intended in the first place for the comfort and entertainment, the satisfaction and joy of those to whom they were originally delivered. this is plain from what you, "my good children, may remember our blessed savior himself to have declared concerning Abraham, who lived so many ages before the coming of Christ into our world, that he saw his day and was glad. what do you think can be the meaning of Abraham's seeing Christ's day? it must surely mean his foreseeing in consequence of a divine revelation that had been given him for that purpose, that at such an appointed time some illustrious messenger from heaven would appear among men, would assume the character of a savior, and in a most glorious sense and in an absolutely complete and perfect manner fulfil it. well therefore may it be added that he was glad. and let me more particularly observe it to you by the way, that this joy of his must **needs**
needs have been of the benevolent kind; it flowed from a generous, public spirit, and the delight he took in the common good and general welfare of his brethren of mankind. the most distant posteritie he considered in that light. and therefore he rejoiced in Christ’s day for the sake and in behalf of those, who after so long a succession of years, were to enjoy the benefit and light of it. and this I mention in order to shew you, that it is to be one exercise of your benevolence and friendship towards mankind to be pleased and delighted with whatever good is befalling any of your fellow-creatures, whether it be by means of your own endeavors or those of another; or whether it be in the course and order of divine providence, without the intervention of any human instrumentalitie at all. nay, as the instance and example before us does indeed so particularly signifie and point out, you are not only to rejoice with them that do rejoice, but even with them that shall rejoice, when you can have any probable or certain apprehension of it.”

Such
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LECT.XV. Such was the case of Abraham with respect to gospel-times or the christian revelation. For these prophesies, this knowledge communicated to him concerning these far distant events must needs have been miraculous. It was altogether as impossible that he should know of these things so long beforehand without a miracle, as that without a miracle the sick and dying should be instantly healed, or the dead raised to life. And by whom can we suppose such extraordinary and special knowledge to have been communicated to any of mankind, but by that supreme being himself, who has "kept the times and seasons within his own power," and from whom alone therefore it could proceed? When therefore it was in this manner declared unto Abraham, "that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed"; that is, in and by Christ Jesus, who was to descend from him, he might most certainly depend upon the truth of it; such a miraculous and special revelation of this far distant event being properly speaking a divine promise; the promise of a God that cannot lie. "Observe that, my good children, God is a being that cannot lie. From whence you may most
most certainly infer that you ought not. 

to lie, or to deceive another. for you

are to be perfect as God your father who is

in heaven, is perfect. and God cannot lie,

because he is a being so perfect in the

moral excellencie of his nature, as that

he can never be disposed to it, so that

the more like you are to God, the les

prone you will be to lying; the more

you will abhor it. at the same time you

know how expressly it is made incumbent

upon you by the sacred scriptures, that

you be followers of God as dear children.

But with respect to the prophesies we have
been speaking of, they were ever and anon
renewed; Moses had the foreknowlege of
Christ's coming communicated to him from
above as well as Abraham. and there are
many of the psalms containing prophetical
descriptions of his appearance and charac-
ter; several of which are to be known by
those quotations which are made from them
as prophesies by our blessed savior and his
apostles. by this means we learn that the
second, twenty-second, and the hundred
and tenth psalms contain prophesies of this
kind, being refered to in this view by the
writers of the new testament. but in those
books
books of the old which we particularly
style prophetic, though they predict many
other future events, and contain a great
varietie of instructions and admonitions ad-
dressed to those of the then present times,
it is that we meet with the greatest varietie
of clear, and most remarkable descriptions
given of our blessed savior, of the nature
of his kingdom and the design of his ap-
pearance. witness only the fifty-third chap-
ter of Isaiah, in which we have a descrip-
tion so exactly answering to what our savior
did and taught and suffered, whilst here
upon earth, which must very much surprise
you, when you consider that it had been
exhibited so many ages before he actually
appeared amongst men. and yet you are
not to imagine, my good children, that
this is so surprising as not to be believed;
for we ourselves, you and I and others,
often foretell things to come; that is to
say, we inform this or the other friend;
that on such or such a day, a week or a
month or two hence, we design to do so
or so, or to be at such or such a place;
and accordingly it very often so comes to
pass tho' not always, because we are apt
to change our minds, or providence may
prevent
"prevent our doing that which we defign to do. now God knows all things from the begining even to the end, future as well as past, and as with him there is no variableness or shadow of turning, whatever he designs will certainly come to pass, it not being in the power of any other being to prevent the execution of it, and certainly whenever he thinks proper he can communicate to any of his creatures a knowledge of such designs, and cause them in prophetic language to be exhibited. for, it would be strange indeed that he, who has given us all our knowledge and our very capacity for knowledge and of communicating it to one another, should not himself be able to communicate it to us in this particular branch or species of communication, as well as in any other way. so that there is in realitie no more difficultie in apprehending that God at sundry times spake unto the fathers by the prophets concerning Jesus Christ, than there is in apprehending that one man may communicate his intentions to another." and surely it answered a very good purpose as already intimated. it was setting before the men
men of those times a very pleasing and delightful prospect, and might afford in this respect the highest entertainment; the foresight of these glorious times being by no means confined to the person by whom the prophecy was originally delivered. Others, who were credibly informed of it might safely depend upon its accomplishment, as well as he; so that every age would enjoy the benefit of those which had been delivered in that preceding; and as the number of them increased, their confidence in the accomplishment of the event would be so much the more confirmed. On all these accounts then we may justly say that christianitie was proved even before it had a being in the world; these prophesies being so many attestations given to it, as properly speaking, miraculous, as any of the miracles themselves recorded in the gospel. And then secondly, if they proved christianitie even to those who lived before the appearance of Christ in the world, and who could not have had it proved to them in any other way, they must certainly constitute a very great accession or increase of evidence in favor of it in these times succeeding his appearance. For they are still prophesies and
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miracles still; and by a diligent and proper consideration of them our idea of the evidence and proof attending it cannot but be prodigiously heightened and enlarged. (a)

But now farther, fourthly, as it is possible that such a revelation as that we supposed to be contained in the gospel might be given to mankind, as there is nothing improbable in supposing that it should, as it was foretold for many ages before that such a revelation would be communicated, so accordingly in the course and order of divine providence, and at the time appointed for it, this has actually been done. For the illustration of this particular there are four things to be considered, and to one or other of these heads every thing relating to the more direct and immediate proof of christianitie may properly and naturally be reduced. first, the character of its author; secondly, the nature and tendency of the doctrines which he taught: thirdly, the miracles by which these doctrines were attested and confirmed: and, fourthly, the manner

manner in which the knowledge of these things have been conveyed down to us.

first then, with respect to the character of its author: this is a point of very high and considerable moment, not only on account of the example exhibited, but in relation more directly to the proof of his divine authority. nothing can be more unlikely than that the supreme deity should commission any being of an immoral character to treat with mankind upon the great subject of religion and a future life. there would be such an inaptitude and incongruity in this case between the message and the messenger, as would by no means harmonize with the beautie of the divine conduct in other respects so apparent to mankind; so that from hence alone suspicions would very naturally arise as to the reality of the message. just in the same manner as if in common life any of us were to receive a pretended message from some friend of ours by a person to whom it appeared very improbable that he should commit such an affair, the very character of the person would lead us to suspect a fraud. besides, one who plainly enough discovered himself to be of a corrupt disposition in other instances,
stances, we might naturally enough suppose to be guilty of a design to impose upon us a pretended revelation; so that whatever such a person delivered, however excellent in itself, under the notion of a divine and specially revealed doctrine, and whatever seemingly strong attestations it might be attended with, still it would gain but little credit on account of those perpetual suspicions which we should be apt to entertain of some intended mischief lurking under these fair appearances, founded upon the immoral character of him assuming the prophetic office. Supposing his message to be really divine, these suspicions would nevertheless take place. Consequently the employing any one of such a character on the part of heaven in a message of this nature to mankind, would be a defeating of the very end proposed. He would be sent "that he might be believed on in the "world." and yet, notwithstanding all his credentials, the badness of his character would naturally tend to prevent that belief. It is not therefore consistent either with the goodness or the wisdom of the divine being, that the author of such a revelation should be of a character like this. And on the other
other hand, if any one declares himself to be such a divine prophet, and appeals to a great variety of miraculous works by him performed in proof of that claim, and if at the same time he appears throughout the whole of his conduct to be a person, not merely of an inoffensive, but of an highly useful character, full of generosity, kindness, meekness, piety and undaunted courage in the cause of God and goodness, we immediately conclude, that, if God did indeed in any such manner discover and make known his will to mankind, it would surely be by the mediation or intervention of a person thus characterized and distinguished. and from the goodness of his character in all other respects, we should naturally be led to look upon it as so much the more improbable that he should act the part of an impostor in relation to the message, which he declares himself to have been commissioned from above to deliver. but if in this case the character be not only highly excellent, but absolutely complete and perfect, the credibiltie of the prophetic claim is by this means prodigiously heightened. we see here an evident connexion between his example and his doctrine;
trine, which has all the appearance of being a regular and orderly scheme. They mutually enforce each other; and there is such an aspect of contrivance, wisdom and design in this as naturally betokens a reality, and amounts to a very strong presumption of truth in the case. "Now, my good children, these observations which we have last been making, are no other than a representation of the real character of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a person, not only inoffensive, but in the highest degree pious, benevolent and friendly in all his actions. His character was not only an excellent, but an absolutely perfect one. He was surrounded, you know, with enemies, who were always upon the watch against him, in order to find out if possible, something unfavorable, something unpopular, something odious and malignant to fasten upon him, but they could never do it. They could not convince him of sin. He himself, notwithstanding all their malice, challenged them to do so. You see then, that of all persons that have ever appeared in our world, he was the most likely, on account of his own
immediate character, to be the author of a divine revelation to mankind, and the special minister of divine grace and mercy for our recoverie and salvation. and therefore when you find him actually to make this claim, you may the more readily assent to it. these things agree and harmonise so well as to be a natural ground of belief in the instance of such a claim advanced." and now as to the second point or article in this argument; the nature and tendencie of the doctrine delivered by our savior. it is a doctrine calculated to promote the highest good of men both here and hereafter. it teaches meekness and quietness, contentment and patience, to do good and to bear evil. it presents to the mind the most pleasing and delightful truths and contemplations. it recommends, and actually supplies us with, that knowledge, which is of all others the most useful and entertaining. it is intended to make us like God, and consequently to advance us to the truest and most sublime felicitie of our own beings. it gives us the most amiable views of the divine nature and providence, and thus cheers and supports our minds under the afflicive dispensations.
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fations of the present life. all these things it inculcates not only so far, and upon the fame principles, as did the light of nature; Tendency but likewise by a great varietie of discoveries that are peculiar to itself. discoveries in relation to things, of which without it we could not possibly have had the of least notion or idea. every thing that it delivers to us concerning Jesus Christ himself (a) and the Holy Spirit, and a great many

(a) The prodigiously high degree of moral force and energy accompanying these discoveries, so far as relates to the person, character and offices of our lord Jesus Christ, will perhaps better appear from the following soliloquy than by any formal modes of argumentative illustration. "o sweet Jesus! o amiable lord! whither through excessive grief I should turn mine heart, I know not; when I consider what abject and bitter things thou hast undergone for my sins. and who can be of so cold and obdurate an heart, that this love of our redeemer does not in flame? to the end that he might deliver us from the pains to which we were liable thro' sin, himself suffered the pains due unto sin. o most merciful God! what shall we render to thee for this thine unspeakable grace and charitie! we formerly, indeed, admired much that thou wouldst vouchsafe to debase thyself so far, as to take our human nature upon thee, to be born in a stable, to be laid in a manger;
many particulars in relation to the heavenly world are peculiar to this dispensation; as also the institutions of baptism and the lord’s supper, both of them so admirably fitted for cherishing and invigorating the divine and heavenly life within us. (a) and all

"manger; but when we consider the humilitie of thy passion, in which thou disdainedst not to be contemned and trampled upon like a vile worm of the earth, we even faint away thro’ admiration." See Meditations upon the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; set forth by J. C. London, 1695. p. 42, 43. "this being so, as we have it expressed, ibid. p. 102.
"103, how is it possible we should ever forget this immense charitie? it is truly a wonder our hearts are not wholly dissolved in the love of him. it is a wonder we can ever cease from praise and thanksgiving! how can we consent to love any thing besides him, whose excess of love is so great towards us? how can we entertain any other thoughts or cares than to return love for love? why do we refuse to suffer for his sake, who suffered so much for ours? how comes it to pass we scarce vouchsafe even to think of what he so willingly acted and endured for us? o most sweet Jesu! what piety overcomes thee? what charity hath vanquished thine heart, that for us most vile sinners, thou shouldest undergo so bitter and ignominious a passion?"

(a) "The bread indeed, says an ancient writer, is meer food alone, but there is in it never-
all these things do in a wonderfully pleasing and delightful manner concur to raise our

"nevertheless a life-giving power." so likewise with respect to baptism; "a mere outward ablution is not the thing intended; but that by the power of the water operating in a way of lively faith and active hope in a due performance of the sacred rite; and by means of the holy names employed, it may become perfective of our salvation." 

it is on account of such excellent effects arising from the due celebration of these ordinances, as well as the illustrious character of the great institutor of them, that St. Basil, speaking of baptism in particular, calls it most glorious baptism, and most admirable baptism. 

says the pious archbishop Leighton, was that other-sacrament (baptism) and this (the Lord's supper) but coverts, under which Christ conveys himself and his graces to the believing soul, while the profligate and flight-hearted are sent away with empty elements. See his eighteen Sermons, No 8. p. 135. to the same sense, so far as relates to the holy supper, we have a learned catechist expressing himself. 

A. qualis autem ea
our conceptions of the majesty and goodness of the divine being, to make us more in love with religion and virtue, to inspire our hearts with a fervent charitie, and to produce the greatest trust and confidence in the almighty lord and governor of the universe. So that in short, christianitie is exactly such a system of religion as we might naturally suppose, and most probably presume a divinely authorised teacher and instructor of mankind to introduce, if ever such an one should really appear. And considered in this view the doctrine of christianitie goes a great way towards proving itself. When a person lays claim to a divine commission for teaching a doctrine like this, and

and works miracles in proof of it, against which there is no exception lying, as to the truth and realitie of them, how can we hesitate about the admitting of such a claim or embracing the doctrine? what obstruction or impediment can there be to our assent? but this leads us to the third particular mentioned in this argument; namely, the miracles of the gospel, as wrought both by our savior and his apostles. these were very great and numerous. they were wrought in the most public manner imaginable. they were very different in the kind and species of them, and for the most part such as upon the very first view and appearance of them we cannot but conclude to be absolutely above the powers of nature, and beyond the utmost reach of human subtlety, art or contrivance. such as the healing at a distance and in a moment; and raising the dead to life. the miracles in these several kinds were repeated again and again. and there was always a great number of our savior's enemies at hand, who would have been glad, if they could, to have detected him in any fraud; and who had all the opportunitie they themselves could desire of doing this, had there been

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occasion given in the nature or the manner of the performance; and yet it was not done. "now, my good children, I think you will easily apprehend, that if a person takes upon him to work miracles, and declares that he does so, and affords others the fairest opportunitie for examining into the truth and realitie of them, and if vast numbers at the very time and place, when and in which these miracles are said to have been wrought, are quite eager to lay hold of this opportunitie, and to examine into the truth of them with the greatest strictness and accuracie, and if these very persons would have been beyond measure glad to have found that they were not true and genuine miracles, and yet after all this examination declare them to be true and genuine, as our Savior's enemies did with respect to those that were performed by him, you must needs think and believe them to be so; you must see surely the necessity of admitting them as such, if you would act like rational beings. and, if upon such evidence we are not to believe, I know not how we can rationally believe any matter of fact at all." we have already observed too that prophesies are
are a species or a distinct sort of miracles. Lect.XV.

and of this kind there are several, as has before been intimated, which we meet with in the New Testament as delivered by our blessed savior and his apostles. the destruction of Jerusalem, for example, was foretold by our savior himself, according to what we find recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, the thirteenth of St. Mark, and the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, in so great a variety of plain, expressive, distinguishing particulars, as are not capable of being applied to any other event, but exactly answering to that. so that, as it is plain that our savior in what is recorded by the several evangelists in those chapters, did indeed design to deliver a prophesie, it must needs too be evident that it could be no other than a prophesie of the destruction of that city; which did accordingly, and in the manner there described come to pass. so likewise the apostles foretold the appearance and establishment of poperie in the christian world so many hundred years before it took place; an event so extremely improbable in itself, that it could never enter into any man's imagination to forge a pro-
LECT. XV. a prophesie of that kind. and, if it had, it is scarcely possible he should have hit upon so many circumstances of similitude as are apparent between poperie as now actually existing in the world, and poperie as we have it described by St. Paul and in the book of revelation. now all these prophesies (a) and miracles have in fact given the highest credit and authoritie to christianitie, insomuch that by means of them, as was naturally to be imagined, the whole world in a manner has been led to the knowledge of it. "and can you, my children, believe that God should by such "extraordinarie methods of his providence "teach men a falsehood?" but this leads us:

(a) It is to be observed too, that as prophesie does thus strongly enforce the authoritie of the christiant religion in general, so is it naturally corroborative of the doctrine of a future state in particular. this is ingeniously urged by Erasmus. quid multis? quum omnia sic evenerint quemadmodum erant praedicta, de suprimeo judicio, deque piorum & impiorum praemiis quicquam addubitare videtur esse extremae cæcitatis. homini divino credimus, si ter quaterque verum praedixit: & ei quam in tam multis, tamque juxta sensum humanum incredibilibus, fuit veridicus, non credemus in uno quod restat? In Symbolum, cap. v. p. 198, 199.
us to reflect, in the fourth place, upon the manner in which the knowledge of these things has been conveyed to ourselves. Historical now it is an undeniable fact, that such a vast number of converts as we have just now been speaking of, were actually made by the preaching of the gospel. and yet it was a religion, which for a great number of years after its first publication, no man could profess without exposing himself to great sufferings and dangers, and even to death itself. for the sake of it how-Attestation, ever, notwithstanding all these dangers, such the vast, amazing number who renounced the principles in which they had been educated, which had all the force and authority of all the kings and princes and priests of the earth in favor of them; and christianity all this force and weight of authority against it. so that it appears utterly impossible to account for the conduct of these primitive converts to the christian faith, without supposing that there were really such miraculous attestations given to it as out-weighed all these temporal and political considerations. for there were no temporal or political considerations on the other side, that could effect it. either
therefore christianitie must be true, or here is a great palpable event, a permanent appearance in the world which we are not able any way to account for, but for which, supposing christianitie to be true, the most natural and obvious reasons may be assigned. besides, through a vast number of writings that have been published to the world since the time when it is said to have been first made known down to the present age, the knowledge of it is in fact to be traced and observed, according to the account given of it in the New Testament. in every age we find christianitie, and meet with it in historie, owned and acknowledged among mankind, just in such a manner as we must suppose, admitting the writings of the New Testament to be authentic. out of which writings there are in the ancient books of this kind, a vast number of quotations exactly answering to such and such passages now to be met with in that book; and these passages are quoted as from authors of undoubted credit and authoritie. this therefore proves two things, both that the evangelists and apostles were looked upon as credible writers, and that their writings have been faithfully and truly transmitted down
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down to our times, and they all of them assert the miracles of Christ, and the authority of what he declared, delivered and made known to mankind. The latter follows of course from the former, and of the former they were very capable judges. Many of them were actually eye-witnesses of these miraculous performances, and the rest lived at the very time, and on the very spot where these miracles were wrought, and had the best means of knowing whether they were true and genuine miracles or not. And these very preachers of christianitie exposed themselves to every imaginable difficulty and suffering for the sake of it. What should induce them to do this, if they did not believe it to be true? “You dismission. “Do not, my good children, see men now a-days exposing themselves to pain and “tortures and poverty and death itself “for nothing; and yet the apostles did so, “unless christianitie be true. For there is “nothing else but the truth of that doctrine, which could have induced them “to act the part they did. This then you “may conclude, that it is a faithful, that “is a credible and well-attested saying, “and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ “Jesus
CATECHETICAL

Lect. XV. "Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

you may not perhaps enter at present

" into the force of all that I have been

" saying upon this head, or be able to re-

" collect it exactly. but I hope that it

" may be the means of exciting your

" curiosity hereafter to enquire a little

" into these things, and even of leading

" you to apprehend at present that there

" is some good reason to be given for that

" reverence with which we desire you to

" be attending to those instructions that

" are given to you in the bible; and if

" any thing of this kind should happily

" be effected, I shall have obtained mine

" aim: this at least I hope you will con-

" clude, that I do for mine own part ap-

" prehend, that there is a very sure foun-

" dation for the belief and principles of

" religion; so that you may depend upon

" it for the future that I am greatly in

" earnest when I call upon you to be and

" to do good, to live soberly, righteously and

" godly in this present world, to love devo-

" tion, prayer and the public worship of

" God, and to search the scriptures. nay,

" though you should forget every thing

" that I have said, yet thus much I hope

" you
"you will remember, that I used to come to you from time to time, and employ myself in endevoring to convey some useful instruction into your minds. and this will put you upon asking your parents, or others that may be able to inform you what it was that I was used then to discourse about. this I can assure you of, that I shall always reflect with pleasure upon the part I have borne in this evening exercise, out of the real concern that I have for your best interests and highest good, and from the hearty wish of my soul, that you may be a seed to serve the lord, and be accounted unto him for a generation; that you may not any of you be a grief to your father, or a bitterness to her that bare you, but that you may be to them as olive-plants around their table, and like the pleafant vines or fragrant flowers of the garden."

THE END.
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