

and seas, the minerals, the vegetables, the fishes, birds, and beasts; and lastly, we have surveyed the lovely structure of the human body, the charming eloquence of the tongue, and its wonderful uses in preaching the gospel, and instructing and cheering the soul by wise and excellent conversation; and in every step of our Contemplation we have seen with admiration and gratitude the transcendent wisdom of Christ.

Let us now obey the call of universal nature; let us early in a morning stand on some pleasant eminence in the fields, when the skies are clear and the glorious sun just rising in the east, the birds all warbling, the cattle all looking gay, the sky-lark rising in the heavens and trying to carry her song to the very foot-stool of Christ's throne, a lovely river full in view, the fishes leaping up in praise to their maker; and all the creation cloathed with light and beauty as a garment; our understandings clear, our imaginations bright, active, and in a sublime and noble ferment; our wills fixed on Christ as the supreme GOOD, and our passions fired with his love as the supreme BEAUTY; and all our thoughts darted up to heaven, and spreading into the immensity of his grand perfections: and then let us burst out in a hymn of praise to our redeeming God. Christ is here: I feel his vital presence at my heart:

heart: these are all his works of wisdom and beauty.—It must be so—else why such harmony in the operations of nature, and constancy in their effects? Can all the parts of creation, concur in efficacy, which never united in design, without some common band of confederacy, or combining cause? And what is that cause but Christ the mighty, omnipresent God.

Can chance be the parent of *uniformity* which never fails, or fate give birth to infinite *variety*?

The several parts of this material frame, how distant soever in situation, and different in their matter and composition, do yet operate continually on each other, and concur by the mighty, invisible influence of Christ, to the production of the same salutary effects.

What influence our earth may have on it's fellow planets, or how far it's re-action may affect the sun, we cannot tell; but surely we feel the kindly heat of that bright luminary inspiring us with more than usual gladness. Nor on us alone is the bounty of Christ in the sun so efficacious; the other creatures partake his enlivening energy. To the sun, under Christ, the vegetable tribes owe their bloom and beauty: the piercing rays of the sun, entering the fertile mould, attenuates the vital sap, and exalts it into the slender tubes

tubes open to receive it, after the rarefaction of the internal air that was compressed by the cold of night.

This nutritious juice, being attracted along the minute canals, shoots up in branches, expands into leaves, bursts out in gems, and cloaths them with all their blushing honours.

What power is it then, which unites these distant parts of nature, and adapts their mutual influences in such nice proportions? Who supplied this fountain of light and heat with his inexhausted treasure, and who dispenses it with such generous, yet wise profusion?

Those objects are certainly too remote from each other, to have combined by mutual consent towards producing one joint and uniform effect. Besides, what instruments or messengers could pass between them to settle their distinct powers and times of operation? Yet these never interfere with each other, but conspire with astonishing harmony in the propagation and growth of plants and animals: (See Dr. Watt's *Philos. Essays*.) parts therefore they must be of a common system, and some mighty hand must hold them together, by a powerful, though unseen chain! Who but Christ can repair the sun's continual decays, and distribute his bounties in number, weight, and measure.

Nor

Nor is it the sun alone that must be leagued in friendly union with the vegetable and animal tribes: a large concurrence of other causes, a right temperature of earth, and air, and water, and seasons, is necessary to the life and health of the numerous inhabitants that are maintained on our globe. None of these parts are detached from the others, or independent of them.

The earth supports the plants; air and water nourish them; the plants supply the animals with food; these are subordinate to each other, and all are subjected to the elements in which they reside. In them they live, and to them they resign their respective natures. These elements compose one common mass, and are governed by the same laws. All nature, therefore, is ONE wondrous structure, ONE conspiring harmonious WHOLE.

That it's different, and sometimes jarring parts should co-operate for the preservation and benefit of such infinitely diversified creatures, bespeaks an oneness of design; and must require the presence and oversight of some power equal to that design. The several creatures are all confined to their respective elements, nor can any of them act beyond their own instincts and province in life; they are bound down to move in such a line of action by the infinite wisdom of Christ.

There

There is! there is! a supreme nature; a supreme, almighty, all-beautiful agent; who, unconfined by time or space, pervades the universe, and is intimately present with the whole extent of GOD's empire. This divine PERSON is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of GOD, and the eternal GOD the Son. HE is most certainly at the head of all things; supreme in wisdom; supreme in power; supreme in goodness, beauty, and love: the AUTHOR and MOVER of the WHOLE WORLD; who inspires it's powers, preserves it's connexions, and viewing with joy all his works from the beginning to the end, conducts their operations, with an unerring hand, to perfection, beauty, and happiness!

Through what an ascending scale of being and beauty am I led, to recollect and confess a governing nature, or universal infinite mind, who filled up every vacancy and formed every link of the immense series, and bid the several orders move upwards, succeed each other in endless progression, and be happy in each successive station, to the utmost extent of their capacity, condition, and duration.

From rude and unformed, I rise to polished matter in the elegant and curious shells of fishes in ten thousand beautiful forms, and in the vast variety of precious stones, and metals of gold
and

and silver:—from hence I ascend through the various tribes of vegetation, till scarce any chasm or vacancy is left between the *sensitive* plant, and the oyster with the other shell-fish, which adhere to their native rock.

From hence I advance through almost infinite orders of animal life, till INSTINCT approaches to a likeness or resemblance to REASON, and the brute is refining and refining till it comes to the confines of MAN, whose nobler structure, whose superior frame of mind points out intelligence, wisdom, and activity. Man appears to stand on the utmost verge of the material world, and to lift his head with high ambition into the world of SPIRITS. What orders of intelligence may lie beyond the human species, and fill up the immense interval between God and this middle limit of existence, who can tell, but from the discoveries of revelation? To us the upper end of the scale and the intermediate links are known no farther than the Scriptures reveal them, which mention angels above two hundred times; and I know enough to convince me, that I am of heavenly extraction; I am the immortal offspring of God; I am allied to infinite perfection!

This perishable body which I carry about me, I borrowed from the earth on which I tread, and there I must soon lay it down—but whence this

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quickness

quickness and range of thought; this vast capacity to take in millions of ideas from heaven, earth, and hell; this amazing power to survey my own ideas, and to compare them together, to see their agreement or difference: whence this grand flight of imagination and divinity of reason! whence, but from the Son of God, the source of all intelligence and thought, the spring of wisdom, immortality, and happiness.

Just now I saw the sun arise: the sun is Christ's servant; this minister has spread a cheerful warmth through my mortal frame. Now I feel more divine sensations pervading my immortal soul! Who then kindled this celestial fire! Who lighted up this consciousness of my higher relation, and taught my bosom to beat with pleasure and inexpressible joy? Who but God! inspiring God! redeeming God! enlivening God; that kind and gentle Saviour whose supreme delight is to diffuse happiness for ever, and whose bounty extends to the whole world of heaven and earth!

O! amiable and perfect Lord Jesus, thou sovereign and universal mind! eternal spring of immortal thought, wisdom, and order! how stupendous are thy works! what frugality amidst infinite profusion! what complicated effects are produced by the simplest causes! The sun, bright image of thine immense goodness! not only en-
liveness

liven the animal, but supports the vegetable world; and ripens and prepares matter for all the purposes of life and vegetation! Nor is our earth the only partaker of his enlivening rays,—thou commandest him, O Lord Jesus, to enlighten and cheer surrounding worlds by the perpetual diffusion of his bounties: his presence, like thine, dispels darkness and sorrow, and infuses secret rapture into the heart; his extinction would bring on universal darkness and insupportable horror in the world of nature; and thy total withdrawal would bring on greater darkness and horrors in the world of grace!

The AIR, that yielding and expansive element, like the breath of God the Saviour, not only feeds and nourishes the vast variety of living creatures, but even the vegetable tribes, which could not subsist without this common food for all animal and vegetable life.

What wonders, O Son of God! are performed by that simple agent, the power of GRAVITATION OR ATTRACTION, by which the vast frame of nature is linked in inviolable union, and the grand worlds of matter continue suspended and balanced in perfect equilibrium!

O! almighty redeemer! to gravitation, thy prime minister in our world, we owe the stability

of our hills and mountains, the current of our rivers, the ascent of our springs and vapours, which descend by the same influence in rains to refresh and fertilize the earth. To the attraction of gravitation we owe our tides, which keep immense waters continually fresh and wholesome; and this is it which causes the ascent of the nourishing juices to the tops of the highest trees. To gravitation we are indebted for the force of our engines to raise water; the vigour of our machines: and to attraction we owe the indissoluble *cohesion* of bodies all round the globe.

In this wonderful power of gravitation, I see thy hand. O God the Son! I feel thy being and universal providence. It is thy power which penetrates the essence and inmost particles of bodies; combines the remotest objects in mutual sympathy and concord. And gravitation, operating by unmechanic forces, produces the perfect mechanism of a world! In contemplating these inferior wheels and movements of this beautiful machine, let me love and adore my almighty mover, who impressed, and every moment impresses the mighty energy by which the whole creation continues always fair and flourishing! The immensity of thy works, bespeaks Thee immensely great, and possessor of universal and absolute dominion! their astonishing beauty and
variety

variety shew Thee to be the origin of order and perfection: their conveniency and usefulness to thy creatures discover Thee to be exuberant in goodness!

And, indeed, how numerous and diversified thy offspring! O, thou parent of being and of beauty! The vegetable train confess thy bounty, while, from the earth's nutritious breasts, they suck the vital spirit that feeds their tender and lovely forms. When they wither and seem to die, the returning sun, thy prime servant and instrument, the unwearied minister of thy beneficence, recalls them into life, and makes them rise blooming from corruption and decay: for the gross particles of the fertile earth being prepared in the exquisite laboratory or work-room of nature, and distilled thro' it's wonderful alembics, the pores of the surviving root; they are refined into a purer substance, and sublimed into a fine ethereal spirit,—Beautiful image of that circulation of nature and conversion of forms, by which the face of things is continually renewed, the wastes of nature supplied, and decay made the parent of life and vigour!

Infinite races of successions of animals spring from thy goodness, and every corner of thy wide dominion swarms with life and new creation; as if thou wast afraid lest any of thy unemployed treasures

treasures should be lost, and thy bounties be untasted and unenjoyed.

Nicely is the œconomy of every creature adjusted to it's rank and make, and exquisitely formed for imbibing it's proper satisfactions : how curiously is each of them armed against the dangers to which their situation exposes them, by proper INSTINCTS or weapons of defence ! the PARTS how admirably framed for continuing the SPECIES, so that nature is every moment teeming with new births all over the globe from pole to pole ; not a minute of time exists without some new creations to repair the wastes of death, and the breaches made ; and thus maintain the succession of beings, who are to live and be happy on the inexhaustible stores of a generous and all-sufficient God !

But O ! eternal Saviour, chiefly on man hast thou showered distinguished goodness ! his outward frame how fair, how erect and formed for contemplation ! cloathed with manly dignity and strength, or else softened with milder grace, and alluring smiles spread through every feature. It was thou, O parent of love ! who taughtest the human face to charm with such expressive sweetness, and ordainest the passions to vibrate from heart to heart, with harmony so responsive, by those endearing bands, linking him with the
partner

partner of his nature in friendly, sweet, and enchanting union!

Thou hast placed him a spectator of the universe: a spectator of the vast expanse of the heavens: a spectator of thy grand, beautiful, and majestic works above and below: and by stamping on his mind the features and powers of divinity, i. e. superior thought and reason, hast given him to see, know, and feel his relation to Thee his eternal parent, saviour, friend, and God.

Thou hast settled that fine combination and equipoise, which I perceive amidst the various powers and affections of my compounded frame; thou hast planted those generous feelings in the human breast, which being wisely and duly cultivated yield unfailing rapture and infinite joy; and by forming man to a sympathy with UNIVERSAL NATURE, hast allowed him to taste the pleasures of his redeeming God. Let him gratefully* acknowledge his obligations to Christ his supreme benefactor, and adore the bounteous hand that crowned him with such glory and excellence of nature.

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* Gratitude consists in five things, i. e. a lively sense of benefits—a clear sense of the beauty and sweetness of nature in the benefactor—an ardent desire to make the best returns—a vow that we will make better returns the moment it is more in our power—a resolute determination of the will never to lay gratitude aside, but increase in it for ever!

The wisdom of Christ appears in the wonderful POWERS, AFFECTIONS, and IMMORTALITY of the human SOUL.

The soul is a self-active percipient being; and in this soul we have a much greater resemblance of the eternal Son of God than is to be found in the whole material system; and his attributes or perfections will be more fully represented, and better understood, by being compared with the correspondent powers or perfections in the mind of man.

Let me set this before the eyes of my readers in the most easy, pleasing, and striking manner I am capable of; and thus teach the rising generation to be astonished at their own grandeur and dignity of importance, although their dignity of holiness be intirely lost.

The wisdom of Christ appears in the wisdom of the mind of man; in which we may, with the great and excellent Dr. LENG, observe the following astonishing instances:—I have sensation or perception, which are the first necessary inlets to all knowledge or rudiments, caused by the intervention of my outward senses;—but we may proceed to take notice of such abilities as infinitely transcend all the sensation and perception of brutes.

I have

I have a power of reflecting on my own soul, and all it's own ideas, as well as upon things without myself.

I have a power of comparing ideas, and of reasoning and judging of things past, present, and future, and of bringing up to view ten thousand facts past, facts present, and facts to come, quite down to the end of the world, and to all eternity.

I have a power of proposing a great and ultimate end of life and action, and of considering and suiting means to attain my noblest ends; and of acting always with some GRAND DESIGN or view of a great good, either real or apparent.

I feel a power of inventing and contriving, improving, perfecting, and beautifying many noble arts and SCIENCES, by considering the nature of CAUSES and their EFFECTS, and the dependencies of one thing upon another; and this astonishing power appears brighter in Lord Bacon, Mr. Boyle, in Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Cotes, than in millions of other men.

I feel every moment a quickness and vivacity of thought, and a power of representing to myself in an instant, things at the greatest distance in heaven, earth, or hell, as if they were present, without the least trouble of LOCAL MOTION. I feel

that I can fly to the utmost fixed star, and ten thousand millions of millions of miles beyond it: I can range through the heaven of heavens, and rove all round the globe from pole to pole in one moment: I can make a mental visit to all the regions of the damned in the twinkling of an eye: I can the next moment make a mental visit to the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs: I can range through the immense attributes and actions of God: I can review all his grand decrees in the light of divine revelation: and fly down into eternal ages beyond the death and burial of time: and see what God the Redeemer will do with me and all mankind, when all eternity is disclosed to view: I can view the transactions of God with men, devils, and angels, when time shall be no more.

I feel a power of forming to myself abstracted ideas of things; and of creating subjects of thought, which have no other *actual existence* but in my soul; and a power of judging of the agreement or disagreement of these subjects of thought with one another: and by this comparing of ideas, of producing many astonishing and useful truths in SCIENCE, MORALITY, and RELIGION.

These, and many others, are the great and amazing properties of the human soul, which shew it to be an intelligent being of a nature quite
different

different from that of MATTER, however modified or cultivated by art; and these views of the soul shew the exquisite wisdom and prudence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If I distinctly consider the powers of the soul, I shall have most noble prospects of Christ's infinite WISDOM.

The UNDERSTANDING can form conceptions of ideas of all GOD's natural and moral perfections, and his relations to us and the universe. What animal below man can form one idea of a GOD? The soul of man has the knowledge of ETERNITY ITSELF; it can reflect on GOD's eternal duration, and on all the clear revealed ideas of GOD: and when the soul fixes it's thoughts on eternity to come, how keenly does it apprehend, that itself shall proceed in existence and consciousness without end; with what pleasure does a wise and good man roll over millions of ages in eternity; and triumph in the thought that his happiness is but just begun, or just beginning to begin! An happiness ever new, ever fair, ever flourishing in the smiles of God the Redeemer! There is inherent in the minds of men a foresight of future ages, and which chiefly and most easily is found in the greatest minds and in the most exalted geniuses. Men of the vastest understanding, and of the greatest powers of imagination and taste; and the

farther a man proceeds in learning and in new discoveries in the sciences and in true divinity, the more he relishes the thought of immortality, and the more he longs for the eternal fruition of God. This passion for eternity of duration was implanted in my soul by my creating and redeeming God, Christ Jesus. I have a natural idea of eternity, a desire after it, and an expectation of it; which would not appear if my soul was not immortal. I have a conception of things past as far back as eternity before creation. I can survey, by the help of revelation, the ideas and determinations of God the Father, and his transactions with his eternal Son and Spirit; and I can conceive of their joys and delights in each other, and in their prospects of making and redeeming a world; I can form ten thousand conceptions of God's attributes and actions; and although the knowledge which my understanding has of God, and all things in heaven, earth, and hell, is imperfect in the present life; yet I expect a future state and world in which my soul will exist, and it's knowledge of Christ my God, and all other things, will be more clear, extensive, and complete. I find I have not time enough to cultivate the knowledge I am capable of attaining in this present state: I see that the liberal sciences have been cultivating for thousands of years, and within these two hundred years past, learning has been advanced

advanced beyond all former ages ; amazing improvements have been made since the great ALSTED published his astonishing ENCYCLOÆDIA, in two folio volumes, 1649. Vast and surprizing discoveries and advancements have been attained ; and yet there are worlds of science yet unconquered, and many parts of the well known sciences are yet unexplored.

The knowledge of the very best objects, the very best truths, the best discoveries of ideas which were hid in the unfathomable GOD from eternal ages, are all very imperfect at present ; but blessed be our great GOD and prophet, the little that we do attain is worth more than ten thousand worlds ! And we rejoice in the certainty that our souls will exist in a state where we shall see GOD face to face as he is, in all his glory ; and we shall know as we are known, when our immortal minds will be employed in more noble exercises on the very self-same objects we now contemplate : we shall know more of the eternity of GOD the Father, more of the eternity of the Lord Jesus, and the eternity of the Holy Spirit ; we shall know more of the eternity of heaven and hell, and more of the grand, the awful, and sublime transactions in those two eternal worlds : we shall know more of the eternity of our own souls, and be astonished at our own immortal dignity !

My

My knowledge in this life is not in proportion to the powers God has given me. Men of much greater capacities and taste than mine find that their richest attainments in learning are not equal to their understanding and thirst after knowledge. Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Milton, and Dr. Young, with a thousand other great men, have always found that their learning and knowledge of the whole circle of the sciences and divinity, were not in proportion to their capacities, nor in proportion to the close and intense study of forty or fifty years.

To suppose that such souls, of such amazing understandings, thirst for knowledge, and grandeur of imagination and passions; to suppose that such souls are on a level with a beast of the field, or a swine in a sty, or a dog in a ditch, is the highest insult on the common sense of mankind, and the greatest outrage on the perfections of God. It is nothing less than blasphemy on God's moral character, to say that he has bestowed these wonderful powers in vain. The wretched Socinians, who hold the material nature and total extinction of the soul at death, reproach their maker; they insult the essential attributes and dignity of God; they do, in effect, declare and assert, that the soul is no better than the soul of a brute, or the result of a proper organization of
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the brain; and when that brain is separated or dead, the soul is extinguished and lost. What contemptible stuff is this to come from the tongue or the pen of a philosopher! Well may we apply the words of the apostle Paul to these men, Rom. i. 22. *Φασκοντες ειναι σοφοι εμωρανθησαν.* Professing themselves to be philosophers, they acted the part of fools.

As for us, who profess ourselves vile sinners before God, and to hold those principles which are commonly called calvinistical, we feel that our souls always want to know more; and let us know ever so much in this life, we still ardently wish to know more and more of God and the universe. And we find that the farther a man goes in learning the languages and sciences, the more violent is his appetite for knowledge, happiness, and immortality: witness those great men above mentioned, and thousands of sound scholars now alive.

Has God given this appetite, or vast desire in vain! But the argument advances in strength when we consider the case of all truly good men and women in the world.—Those wise and good christians, who know most of God's being, attributes, and actions; who know most of the divine person, attributes, actions, and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ; who know most of the eternal person

person of the HOLY SPIRIT, and his infinite attributes, actions, and grace on the heart; who know most of the sense and spirit of the scriptures, and the kingdom of grace and glory; they desire to know more and more every day and hour of their lives; they follow on to know the Lord; they diligently use all the best means to increase and enlarge their conceptions of new ideas of God the Redeemer and his attributes, and to have more lively apprehensions of his eternal GODHEAD, and his divine and infinite satisfaction and righteousness: they thirst most violently for spiritual knowledge, and after all find it imperfect, partial, piece-meal, obstructed, and interrupted; and therefore they are not satisfied, and are often not contented with their present knowledge; and with unbounded ardor long for a future state and world where all darkness and imperfect conceptions of divine objects will be removed, and they shall see all clear, lovely, and ravishing, to eternity.

Now is this mighty discontent with our present knowledge, and this ardent and inextinguishable passion for infinite improvements all in vain? and in vain it must be, if the God of wisdom and goodness has not endowed us with immortality.

Who but a madman or a fool can believe that a soul that hath such vast objects, and is capable
of

of such astonishing actions in ten thousand different modes every day and every hour of life, can be made up of such perishing stuff, and no other than that which composes the body and brain of an ox or an ass!

The objects and actions of the WILL display the wisdom of Christ, and shew the soul to be immortal.—The object of the will is GOOD, or that which will give us the greatest and purest PLEASURE, as well as remove PAIN. GOD is the purest good, and no object is good or can be good, separated from GOD. Now GOD, as the supreme good, is suited to the will or the power of self-determination and choice. GOD has all the properties of the supreme good; and Christ has all the properties of the supreme good, equally with the divine Father. GOD the Redeemer is suited to our noblest powers of apprehension, conception, and taste; he is suited to all ages, places, and conditions in life, from the beggar to the monarch; he is suited to all offices and employments that we can sustain: I may enjoy his presence without blushes and shame, or sorrow and self-contempt, or suspicion of my acting like a fool, or dread of pain and bad consequences. My fruition of his favour and good-will improves upon longer experience; it will support in the severest troubles and the most excruciating trials in life; his presence yields sweeter pleasure on

the most frequent repetition; and the delights which arise from a union of my will and taste with his will and beauty, will be habitual, permanent, and increasing to eternity!

The will has a most amazing power of beginning motion; this is a real and wonderful power, and displays mightily the wisdom of Christ; this is such a power as matter is not capable of; my mind or soul hath a power of actuating the body, though not seen in the body; and I have a power of moving or not moving any part of my body at pleasure; and I feel a power of determining the motion of my body this way or that way, without being first moved or impelled by any outward force, that is, as we have observed a power of beginning motion of itself, which is indeed a true and real power, and is not to be found in dead matter; a power of willing, chusing, or acting freely, or without being acted upon by any external agent. The actions of the will are free, and resemble the absolute freedom and dominion of God; the actions of the best man or the worst cannot be forced by any creature, no creature has any power over it to force it, nor destroy it: I have ten thousand actions of my will, which are independent of the body; and my will can operate without the body in chusing or refusing; in flying to an object as good; or flying from an object as evil:

evil: and my will can subsist and live without the body, and when it is dead. This shews the vast dignity of the soul and the wisdom of Christ!

The WILL has vast, yea infinite DESIRES; and these desires are never fully satisfied in the present life; whatever my will has, it is desirous of more; it is never satisfied; it's desires after KNOWLEDGE are not gratified to the full to any one man in the world, nor it's desires after HAPPINESS in general; and it's desires after Christ himself, the supreme good, are not fully satisfied. These desires after Christ may be considered in five views, and each view displays the wisdom of Christ.

1. The *first* desires towards CHRIST, which break out from the soul, are with a view to obtain a real saving interest in his person, in the friendship of his heart, and an interest in his precious blood and perfect righteousness. The soul, on it's first deep convictions, cries out with incessant ardour, I would give a thousand worlds for a real interest in Christ!

2. The *second* desires towards Christ are to have a sweeter union and a more sensible converse with him in his grace and love. My soul panteth after GOD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living GOD; when shall I come and appear before