

in all ages, to be upright towards us: 'tis agreeable to his promises, and declarations of his heart, to shew himself upright, to sincere souls, in overlooking their infirmities, in defending their persons, in strengthening their graces, and prospering them in their souls. They shall grow up as calves of the stall, Malachi iv. 2. They are changed into God's image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly, Mic. ii. 7. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, Prov. x. 29. They shall still bring forth fruit, to shew that the Lord is upright, Ps. xcii. 14. They go from strength to strength, Ps. lxxxiv. 7. Grace be with them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, Eph. vi. 24. God will shew himself upright in hearing our prayers: for the prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. xv. 8.---God will be upright in comforting us in sorrows, trials, and afflictions. I was brought low, and he helped me, Ps. cxvi. 6. They that fear the Lord shall want no good thing: he is a very present help in trouble, Ps. xlvi. 1. All things shall work together for good, Rom. viii. 28. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness, Ps. cxii. 4. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous, Ps. lviii. 12.---God will direct us in our doubts. The integrity of the upright shall guide them, Prov. ii. 3. He will clear up our integrity: he
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will bring it forth as clear as the noon day, Pf. xxxvii. 6. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness, Mic. vii. 9. ---God will shew himself upright by establishing us to the end. He will never turn away from us to do us good, Jer. xxxii. 40, 41. Thy latter end shall greatly increase, Job viii. 7.---He will shew himself upright in bestowing outward blessings on the upright man. A faithful man shall abound with blessings, Prov. xxviii. 20. The upright shall flourish, Prov. xiv. 11.---God will shew himself upright in crowning our integrity with internal peace, and with eternal glory. God will lead us into the land of uprightness, Pf. cxliii. 10. God says to us, walk before me, and be thou upright: I will be thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward, Gen. xvii. 1. The upright shall dwell in thy presence, Pf. cxi. 13. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Matth. v. 8. His countenance doth behold the upright, Pf. xi. 7.---O! what ground have we for unbounded confidence in the sincerity and faithfulness of God!

4. Here is a powerful cure of anxiety and fear concerning FUTURE EVENTS, relating to ourselves, our friends, the church, and the world! and rich ground for contentment with our present condition and circumstances.---As to our present state and situation in life, we ought to think it
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the very best for us at this moment: we may be assured it is the very best, upon the whole of things, when we consider ourselves in connexion with our friends, the church of Christ, and the universe. However we may think another condition would be better, it is a grand mistake; for it would not be well for us, on the whole, at this point of time. Remember that you have had much and long experience of God's goodness, faithfulness, and mercy, for many years past; and you are not left DESTITUTE NOW. You have many mercies for soul and body now in hand. You have many pledges of his grace and faithfulness. Your experience witnesses to this every day, hour, and minute of your life.

And as to FUTURE EVENTS, with respect to yourselves, the church, and the world; there are two most reviving consolations, to prevent an anxious dread, and inspire a lively hope and cheerfulness.

CONSIDERATION I.

All events are in the hands and power of a good God and Father: and his gracious designs and tender love to us always bring forth such happy events in our favour, such pleasing surprizals of mercy, as could never be expected from the outward face of things. God loves to surprize us with new mercies and blessings. Such instances we have in rich abundance all thro' the Scripture. As the angel appearing to Abraham on the point
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of sacrificing his son---Esau's sudden favour to Jacob---Joseph's surprizing advancement---Moses surprized with the opening of the Red Sea---Ruth's marriage to Boaz---David saved from the rage of Saul---the three heroes preserved in the fire---Peter suddenly brought out of prison---Paul saved from forty murderers---with a variety of other events, which shew that the truly-good man shall be bettered by every thing, and worsted by nothing all through life.

CONSIDERATION 2.

The precious decrees of GOD, expressed in clear promises and rich prophecies, assure us of the continual advancement of wisdom, religion, and happiness in the universe, and the increasing interest of Christ amongst mankind---the triumphs of grace over the wickedness of men---the ruin of Satan's kingdom---the enlargement of the empire of truth, light, and vital holiness; and the incessant progress of knowledge, goodness, and happiness, through all nations, to the end of time.---This is a subject full of infinite consolation: 'tis a thought you ought to cherish and diffuse abroad in all its brightness to your friends and the church of Christ to the end of life. Yea, if it were in our power, we would spread the truth from pole to pole; and all the worlds which GOD has made, should hear it resound from our triumphant voice.

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A C O N T E M P L A T I O N
ON THE
ALL-SUFFICIENCY,
PERFECTION, HAPPINESS, AND GLORY,
O F
G O D.

XVIII. The ALL-SUFFICIENCY of God.

GOD is a SELF-SUFFICIENT BEING. He needs nothing, without himself, to make him happy. He is the first of beings: self-existent, and independent of all other beings. He existed millions and millions of ages, even from all eternity, alone; before any creature existed. He was then self-sufficient for his own happiness, and self-satisfied with the contemplation of his own nature and manner of subsistence, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has all good in him, and is the source and fountain of all goodness.---One of our primary ideas of God is, that he is an independent being and goodness, in a nature that knows and loves itself. God is possessed of all possible perfections; and he is quite happy in the enjoyment of them. The divine Being, in its mode of subsisting in three persons, must be happy: for these glorious persons have enough within

within themselves to give the deepest and most exquisite delight to each other. This glorious and all-sufficient God has no need of the adorations and love of angels and saints to make him happy. His holy creatures reap all the benefit of their prayers, praises, and obedience. He is infinitely above all blessing and praise for ever and ever.

GOD is an ALL-SUFFICIENT BEING to his creatures. He has enough within himself to communicate to his creatures. He is able to do whatsoever he pleases---to fulfil all his vast engagements and promises. He has laid himself under amazing obligations to do most prodigious things for millions and millions of lost sinners. He has entered into astonishing contracts with his dear son, to bring those innumerable millions of millions of ruined souls to glory, by the blessings of special goodness.

The ALL-SUFFICIENCY of God appears,

1. In the world of NATURE and PROVIDENCE, he gives life, and breath, and all things to his creatures, Acts xvii. 24. The whole world of mankind on the face of the earth owe their existence, powers, and comforts, entirely to his immense power and goodness. He sustains, every moment, all the millions of birds, beasts, fishes, reptiles, and insects. The life of all the vegetables on earth flows from the all-sufficient God.

2. GOD

2. GOD is all-sufficient in GRACE and glory. The spiritual existence of all true christians is derived from his immense fulness: and all our divine powers to live to GOD, all the holy qualities of our hearts, and all the comforts and joys of our life, flow from his boundless fulness, as the all-sufficient GOD. He has filled the covenant of grace full of all manner of blessings. He has put all this fulness into the hands of Christ. Out of his fulness we receive grace for grace, John i. 16. His grace shall be sufficient for us, 2 Cor. xii. 9. And our GOD will supply all our needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

XIX. The PERFECTION of GOD.

Your father in heaven is perfect, Matth. v. 48. He is perfect in his nature and manner of existence: he is perfect as a Father, perfect as a Son, and perfect in the person of the Holy Spirit. No perfection of GOD is wanting to either of the divine persons in the undivided being of GOD. Every attribute of GOD is perfect: he, as a spirit, is perfect: his eternity is perfect, or it is the highest manner of unsuccessive duration: his omnipresence is so perfect, that no idea can be formed of its being defective or wanting in any degree: his immutability is so perfect, that nothing can be imagined more so: his life is perfect life: his omnipotence is so perfect, that no conception of men or angels can ever add one

idea to it. His will is perfectly right in every thing; and his sovereignty or dominion is a perfect dominion, and will be so for ever. His dignity, prerogatives, taste, and affections, are all so entirely perfect, that they admit of no increase in themselves; tho' the displays of them may increase to eternity.

His knowledge, wisdom, and prudence, are so absolutely perfect, that they cannot possibly be more so through eternal ages. His goodness, mercy, patience, grace, and love, are all perfect; and he delights to exert them in the most glorious manner.

His holiness, or purity, is perfect holiness, perfect purity; so as to admit of no increase in itself: though his holiness may and will have brighter displays on earth, and in heaven, and hell, through an infinite duration.

His justice is absolutely perfect: his truth and sincerity are perfect: his veracity and faithfulness are entirely and eternally perfect. There may be, and there shall be farther and brighter displays of them in our world, and in a boundless eternity of misery or happiness; but God's sincerity and faithfulness never had the least deficiency since the creation of the world. God is perfect in his self-sufficiency for his own happiness and glory: he knows how to provide for
himself

himself in all possible cases; and will provide for the full glory of his character through eternal ages.

His work is perfect; and his way is perfect in creation, providence, and redemption. He is perfect in his all-sufficiency to his creatures, and especially to all his saints. He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those that walk uprightly. And this is our comfort, this is our joy, that God will perfect that which concerneth us; and will make every thing belonging to his people beautiful in his time, Ecc. iii. 11.

The perfection of beauty in God should excite us to love him with the most ardent affection. We should delight to have thoughts of vast admiration and esteem, and thoughts of the highest benevolence and gratitude. We should delight in his presence, and take the utmost pleasure in all his perfections.

XX. The HAPPINESS and GLORY of GOD.

HAPPINESS consists in pleasure. MISERY consists in pain. Pain is a consciousness of some evil present with us. It is impossible for God to feel pain, because he is subject to no natural or moral evil. He cannot feel any pain from DISGRACE, for with God is terrible majesty and infinite grandeur. He cannot feel pain from sub-
jection

jection and SLAVERY, for he has eternal and independent dominion. He cannot feel pain from POVERTY, for he has all the riches of time and eternity. He cannot feel pain from WEAKNESS and inability to accomplish his designs, for he has the omnipotence of a God. He cannot feel pain from MORAL EVIL, because he is glorious in holiness. He cannot feel pain from losses and DISAPPOINTMENTS, for he is infinitely above all the power of men and devils. His counsels shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, Isai. xlvi. 10. He cannot be miserable and unhappy by IGNORANCE, or a weakness in his understanding, for he has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

A state of ease in all the powers and affections of a thinking being is a state of pleasure.---God feels himself in a state of the most exquisite ease and pleasure; and he triumphs in knowing that it never will be in the power of men or devils to disturb his repose and happiness to eternity.---His GLORY arises from the bright and beautiful assemblage of all his infinite perfections, and from their illustrious appearance in the works of creation and providence, but especially in redemption by the death of Christ.

XXI. GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

There is one part of the divine character which
has

has been omitted, but must, by no means, be forgotten: and that is the mysterious and incomprehensible nature of God. The consideration of this is of exceeding great use to humble our pride, and reconcile us to the glorious discoveries of divine revelation. As God is a most pure spirit, endued with infinite perfections, he must be above all our wisdom, and superior to all created understandings.

In these perfections of the DIVINE NATURE, of which we have some idea, there are many things to us inexplicable; and, with which, the more deeply and attentively we think of them, the more we find our thoughts swallowed up. As for instance, his self-existence---his eternity---his omnipresence, whether it be conceived of as *diffusive* or not diffusive---his producing effects by meer volition---the creation of matter---the creation of spirit---his omniscience, where his knowledge of what is past from the creation of the world, bears no proportion to the knowledge of what is yet to come, if any creatures be supposed immortal; especially his knowledge of future contingencies---how, being perfectly happy, and consequently having nothing to wish or desire, he was *excited to act*---how, being perfectly good and omnipotent, he permitted evil to enter into the world, besides many other actions and ways of God.---See Dr. Doddridge's Lectures, p. 118. Abernethy, vol. 2. serm. vi. vii.

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The incomprehensibility of God is of exceeding great use to all persons who are proud of their understandings, to mortify their vanity, and convince them, that, in comparison of God, they are less than nothing.---What impudence and pride must it be, to cavil at the sublime discoveries of the gospel of Christ!

XXII. RECOLLECTION of the whole beautiful
CHARACTER of GOD.

What a most amiable and venerable being is God; and how pleasing to all persons of true taste to recollect, to love, and adore this lovely and sublime character!

God is a spirit, invisible and incorporeal, possessed of understanding, will, and affections. He exists from eternity to eternity, and is ever the same in his nature, purposes, love, blessedness, and glory---every where present, and every where active---having life and active strength to effect all his designs, with infinite ease---and possessed of an unbounded capacity of understanding to survey his own nature, and all his ideas; with the nature and ideas of all his creatures in heaven, earth, and hell, without the least misconception or error.

We have considered his will, in its nature, objects, and properties, and especially his sovereign dominion over all worlds, and the uses we ought to make of that dominion. We have
viewed

viewed his dignity, prerogatives, taste, and affections; his love, grace, hatred, anger, zeal, and wrath: and we have seen the uses we ought to make of the affections of God.

We have contemplated the beautiful qualities of God, or his moral perfections: we see his WISDOM in creation, providence, and redemption: his GOODNESS shines all over the worlds of nature and grace: his mercy endures for ever: his patience renders him most amiable and venerable: his HOLINESS is purer than the unstained light of the sun: his JUSTICE is impartial and inflexible, in asserting the rights of the divine nature, and maintaining the rights of his people: his TRUTH endures for ever: his SINCERITY is the most pure, and without the least deceit: his VERACITY is beyond the reach of just suspicion: and his FAITHFULNESS will shine thro' all worlds as long as God endures! O! what a character is this! how lovely and adorable!

We have surveyed his wonderful SELF-SUFFICIENCY for his own felicity, and his ALL-SUFFICIENCY for the happiness of millions of millions of rational and immortal creatures; even all that shall ever love him to the end of the world. We have considered his absolute PERFECTION, HAPPINESS, and GLORY; which is ever the same in himself; and he is always happy in himself, and equally glorious to himself: although his

glory will be more displayed to his creatures through an immortal duration; and every reasonable being will have fresh views of God, in his justice or grace, as long as God and immortality endures!

Let us now, my dear reader, do honour to our powers and affections, by employing them on God. Let us dignify our understanding and our heart by a rational, ardent, and tender

DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE.

Glorious and immortal God! give us a distinct knowledge of thy beauty, an exquisite sense of thy goodness, and a vivid power to receive pleasure from all the various discoveries of thy nature and perfections in thy works and thy word, in ten thousand various points of light.

Give us a keen disgust at every object which is unlike God; and, by its moral deformity, appears opposite to his beauty and perfections.

Inspire us with a lively delight in the beauty of God; and let us feel, that thou art most agreeable and pleasing to our taste.

Help us to set our best affections on thee, the wisest and best of beings: let us renounce all sinful delights, because these would embitter and destroy our delight in God: attract us into the most intense union with thy nature and love: let us feel the most delightful union of our will with the beloved

loved God: give us new discoveries of thyself every hour, through our whole existence, by the light and grace of thy Holy Spirit; then it will be pleasing to our taste to read the most glorious passages and chapters in the Scriptures concerning God: we shall then love to converse with the wisest and best authors and preachers, who are fullest of God; and we shall love those great minds best, who can give us the greatest and richest ideas of God.

Give us such an ardent zeal and attention to thy beautiful character, as shall excite us to neglect no season or occasion of increasing our knowledge of God, of gaining new ideas of thee, and fresh views of thy lovely perfections to our last hour in the agonies of death.

Let us feel such a permanent delight in our understanding, will, and affections, as shall never suffer us to be drawn off from thee, whilst life, and thought, and immortality endures.

May no delusion or error move off our understanding from thee, the supreme TRUTH: no imaginary good move off our will from thee, the supreme GOOD. May no false and flattering charms move off our affections from thee, the supreme BEAUTY. May the whole vain world, in all its blandishments, never draw off our precious souls from vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Give

Give us the happiness, O! God, to find thy blessed RELIGION full of delight to our taste: and let us avow, in the face of the whole world, that we do not repent of entering into the warmest connexion and friendship with the God we love and adore!

May it always be pleasing to our taste, to think of spending an eternity with GOD---to live in the unclouded prospect of thy beauty---to view thee every moment of our existence---and wait thy pleasure, and obey thy lovely orders with all the powers, affections, qualities, and taste of our soul.

Give us this hope every moment of this mortal life. We ask no more: with less we cannot be satisfied. This is the whole of our infinite desires; the consummation of all our noblest pursuits and hopes. Amen.

Select B O O K S.

1. The discourse on Divine Justice, by the judicious and experimental ELISHA COLES, is certainly the most easy and popular I ever read.

2. DR. OWEN'S Dissertations on Divine Justice, are exceedingly clear and convincing. I wish most sincerely to see a translation into our language, for the use of English readers.

3. On the Sufficiency, Perfection, Happiness, Glory, and Incomprehensible Nature of GOD, see the excellent Dr. Gill, and the great John Abernethy.

4. On the PATIENCE OF GOD: CHARNOCK'S Discourse is the most excellent I ever read. To which add Dr. Gill's, vol. I.

5. On DELIGHT in GOD, see the masculine John Howe, and the worthy Dr. Samuel Wright in his Great Concern of Human Life, 8vo. 1734.