
A
C O N T E M P L A T I O N
O N T H E
E X I S T E N C E A N D P E R F E C T I O N S O F G O D .

As demonstrated from views of MEER MATTER—
the SUN—the PLANETS—the MOON—COMETS—
FIXED STARS—the AIR—WATER—OUR EARTH,
and its internal FURNITURE—VEGETABLES—
ANIMALS in general—BIRDS—FISHES—INSECTS
—REPTILES, especially SERPENTS—the NATURE
and FORM of MAN, including the wonderful
STRUCTURE of the HUMAN BODY, and the
amazing POWERS and AFFECTIONS of the HU-
MAN SOUL—NATURAL AFFECTIONS and DUTIES
to GOD, as the PARENT of the UNIVERSE, in
seven INSTANCES.

A R E P R E S E N T A T I O N O F G O D .

GOD is a spiritual being, the first cause of all
things.

God is infinite being and goodness, in a nature
that understands and subsists of itself.

God is infinite goodness, eternally satisfied with
the perfect love and knowledge of himself, and
taking a complacency in himself by internal actings.

This gives us the true idea and notion of the divine nature, antecedent to the creation of the world.

God is a spiritual being, endued with absolute and universal dominion.

God is the supreme and perfect being, upon whom the existence and powers of all other beings originally and constantly depend.

God is that being, without whom, such a frame or constitution of the world, such a magnificent structure could not be for one moment.

God is the creator of all things, the first and the eternal being, the greatest, the wisest, and the best of beings, the sovereign LORD and disposer of all his works. The righteous governor of his intellectual creatures, and the only proper object of their worship. Dr. WATTS.

We have already observed in the introduction, that the idea of existence and the idea of God do not so soon appear connected as the idea of existence in general, and the idea of our own being; or so readily as we perceive the agreement of some objects with other objects around us.

But the being of God will admit of proof; and it demands proof by the reason that God has given us: he has so formed our minds, as to stir up our diligence, and prevent laziness: 'tis a striking

striking instance of the wisdom of God, in framing our souls in such a manner, as that we are obliged to use our reason to discern the GOD that made us : and we cannot possibly approach to intire intuition, in our knowledge of GOD, in the present state of our embodied spirits.

The most simple and easy method of proof, with respect to the existence of GOD, is by making use of ideas, drawn from all the visible objects in the creation ; the agreement of which ideas, with the idea of a wise, powerful, good being, is instantly and unavoidably seen by the mind in the whole process of its operations and reasonings.

I earnestly wish to have my young reader stop here, and well digest these preliminary thoughts ; he will then go on with pleasure and delight through the following easy demonstration of the existence of a GOD.

Demonstration is a regular procedure of the human understanding : it consists in beginning with one idea of your subject, and then joining a second idea of the same kind with the first, and a third to the second ; and so on in a clear connexion.

Thus, in demonstrating the existence of GOD, which is not known to the human mind by intuitive ease, but requires a step beyond intuition,—we

make use of ideas, taken from the parts of the visible creation, whose agreement with the idea of God is instantly seen by the mind in every step of the demonstration.

Thus, the ideas we have of the sun, the moon, the planets, the comets, the air, fire, earth and seas, the plants, animals, and the structure and powers of man, instantly agree with our idea of a God, as a first cause of all; possess of infinite understanding and power: and it is impossible for the mind to act as a rational agent, without perceiving the agreement of these productions in creation with the idea of a God.

And this is the method which the human mind pursues in all demonstrations of any truth whatsoever; but our present design is only to demonstrate the existence of God.

Any man of common sense, and common honesty, may observe, that, in evincing the being of a God, we proceed, by short steps of the understanding, from ideas of the creatures to an idea of a God, the intelligent and powerful cause of those creatures: from thoughts of the visible world, to a rational thought of God, the author of that world, in proper words, and in a clear connexion of ideas, till you come to a satisfying conclusion, concerning the being of a God; which conclusion shall appear as evident to the
mind

mind as the first idea with which you set out : and the whole chain of ideas shall appear to the eye of the understanding to be clearly and closely connected, and give your soul that keen impression of truth, and strike the mind with that evidence and force, which is called conviction. And as reason is only employed about demonstrable truths, so our common sense, or intuitive perceptions, are the ultimate and sure foundation on which all our reasoning firmly and eternally rests*.

Let

* Our idea of existence, and our idea of a God, do not appear at first sight so connected as the idea of existence, and the idea of our own being ; besides these two ideas, of existence and of ourselves, are seen by intuition, and appear so connected, that we cannot separate them ; we cannot possibly deny their agreement, nor can we make them plainer by any third idea.

And thus it is with all axioms or self-evident truths---such are these, the whole is greater than a part. If to equal things be added equals, the sums are equal. If from equal things be taken away equals, the remainder will be equal.---But the existence of a God, the grand first intelligent cause of all things, will admit of proof by reasoning ; that is, by making use of other ideas, whose agreement with the idea of God is instantly seen by the mind ; and it cannot be otherwise ; when the soul compares these third ideas with the idea of existence and the idea of a God, it must see the connexion.

Every honest free-thinker will make use of his understanding to discern the existence and perfections of God : he will use those third ideas, that will enable him to see the agreement between the idea of existence and the idea of a first cause, which we call God : he will call in to his mind the ideas of the heavens, the earth and seas, the plants and animals : he will call in to his aid the intuitive perceptions he has of his own body and soul, with their various and wonderful operations : and from all these ideas he will be powerfully convinced of the existence of a wise, good, and almighty God ; on whom we ourselves, and all worlds, depend.

An atheist is not an honest enquirer after truth : he is a wretch of a sickly and vitiated understanding ; he will not make use of those ideas of the visible creation which are in his mind to enable him to discern the being of a God.

Let us now proceed, my dear reader, to take a walk through this grand temple of universal nature ; and, in every step of our progress, with wonder and devotion contemplate the great original parent and cause of all things.

A DEMONSTRATION of the EXISTENCE of GOD.

There is a GOD, a supreme and most perfect being, and the fountain of being and perfection to the universe.

That there is a GOD, all nature cries aloud through all her works.

I. The mere EXISTENCE of MATTER shews the EXISTENCE of GOD.

All matter is passive and dead, totally void of motion, utterly incapable of beginning the least motion. Who actuates matter? Who is the beginner of motion? Who causes attraction in very near distances? Who gives the power of repulsion when bodies exceed certain distances? Who causes repulsion to begin where attraction ends? What is the cause of innumerable classes of consistent hard bodies? Who has made a variety of elastic bodies? What is the cause of the constant and incessant action of an attracting power, quite through the creation to the centres of the planets? And how is it that this attractive power doth not act like a mechanical power, by contact, nor according

according to the quantity of surface, but according to the solid contents of the attracting bodies? How if the mutual attraction and gravitation of all bodies in the universe was to cease for one hour, what would become of the world? Where would be the globe of the earth? Where would be the planetary worlds? Where would be the mountains, the seas, and the buildings of men? What would become of all the cities and kingdoms of the earth? Would you not see all the frame of nature dissolved, and the heavens and earth in one tremendous ruin?

II. Do not the USES of the SUN demonstrate a GOD?

Who gave it such a prodigious magnitude? How came it into its situation in our system? Who made the matter of the sun's body, of such a sort, as to cause the most pure and intense heat? Who made it a hundred times larger in diameter than our globe? Who made it the grand fountain of light and heat to the whole world of planets, animals, metals, and men? Who adjusted its distance to such a nicety, as to answer the noblest ends and uses? O man! would not your heart's blood freeze if the sun were farther distant? Would not your blood boil in your veins, and your skin be scorched to parchment, were the sun nearer to our world, or if it made a nearer approach to man?

How

How comes the sun to go so many degrees north beyond the equator in the summer? and so exactly proceed as far to the south in the winter? Who gave him this oblique motion to our globe? Who causes his daily course round the world?* and his yearly circuit in so regular an orbit, as to come round to the same place again in 365 days?

III. The PLANETARY WORLDS supply convincing PROOFS of INFINITE and ETERNAL POWER.

Who made the parts of the planets, i. e. land and water? Who made the atmospheres of the planets? Who gave the planets their figure and form? Is not a globe the most commodious? Would not a large plain, or a square in our earth, or, the planets, ruin the whole system? Doth not the spherical or round figure result from the equal and uniform attraction of gravity? Is not the least planet above two thousand miles in diameter? Is not the largest planet fourscore thousand in diameter? Are not the ten moons in our system the effect of infinite wisdom? Is not the number of the planets the fruit of perfect design? What think you of the direction of their motion all from west to east? Do you imagine that their diurnal rotation round their axes follows from their annual? No, not at all. Is not the oblique position of their axes most excellently suited to the variety of seasons? Can you behold the different and opposite forces,

* Sir Isaac Newton would speak in this manner in common conversation.

forces, originally impressed, and perpetually in action, and not see a God? Can you consider the wise and perfect adjustment of these two forces, so as to produce the circular motion of these bodies, and not fall down and adore their glorious author?

IV. The DOCTRINE of the MOONS is a copious SOURCE of ARGUMENTS, to demonstrate an all-perfect GOD.

Is it not delightful to observe, how these secondary planets revolve about the primary ones, by the very same laws that govern those primaries? Is not the magnitude of the moons fitted to their use and office; and their distances from their primaries adjusted with the most perfect skill? Are not their laws of projectile and centripetal force, precisely the same as those of the superior planets? How great are their uses! How various the ends of our moon, to agitate the watry world; and to produce the most wonderful and useful motions, the flux and reflux of the seas, called the tides; with a thousand various uses besides! Do not you think that some of the moons of Saturn and Jupiter are bigger than our earth? And none are much less than Mercury and Mars. Are these the productions of chance and blind fortune, or the effects of fate and necessity? Are they not rather the

productions of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness?

V. The COMETS lay open to our VIEW amazing SCENES of the OMNIPOTENCE of GOD.

What is the substance of which these bodies consist? Is it not of a singular nature? Do not you see it so fixed as never to be consumed? and yet so volatile as to emit millions of rays of fire to your sight. What is the power by which these bodies are moved? Who impressed upon them their projectile force? Who gave them their elliptical orbits? Who made those ellipses so various in their kinds and distances? Is not the velocity of their motions surprisngly various? Are not their motions when near the sun four hundred millions of times swifter than when farthest distant from the sun? Who made such a number of comets (above forty)? How came they to have such different periods? Why is one no more than seventy-five years, whilst others are near five hundred years in performing their revolutions? What is the reason that they move in such different directions with respect to one another, and to the planets; whilst all the planets and satellites move from west to east in their periodical revolutions?

VI. The

VI. The FIXED STARS are innumerable DEMONSTRATIONS of a GOD.

Are not all the fixed stars real suns and centres of worlds? Do they not enlighten and warm systems of planets, that revolve around these central fires? What is the sun in our world but a point, when compared with the vast extent of the cometary field, and the starry heavens? Suppose our sun was removed to ten times the distance from us, would it not appear a hundred times less? Does not the distance even of the nearest fixed star, SYRIUS, exceed the power of calculation? Suppose found to move at the rate of velocity of seven millions of miles per annum, when would it reach the nearest fixed star? Are not two things absolutely necessary to render the fixed stars in the least degree visible to us? Is not a vast and prodigious bulk necessary? Is not a pure intense fire and innate light essentially needful to give us the least sight of these immensely distant worlds? Who fixed their distance? Who gave us faculties to view these remote glories of the skies?

VII. The ATMOSPHERE OF AIR is a fruitful SOURCE of DEMONSTRATION of a glorious CREATOR.

Is not the air the great mean of vegetable life? Would not all trees, plants, and herbs

die without air? Do you not find, that the air is the grand basis and food of all animal life? What bird, beast, or fish, could live a few hours without air? Air contains the nourishment and vital spirit for all living creatures. O atheist! thou canst not live an hour without air! Feel thy dependence on God and his creatures. Is not the air the grand medium of light? How could the sun's rays be tempered suitably, and transmitted to us agreeably without air? The heat would be too intense upon us without air. Is not the air the grand seed-plot of thunders, the fuel of lightnings, and the mean of their appearance? How surprising is the elasticity of the air! How amazing the springiness of its texture! What a noble and proper medium of sound! All the sweet and melodious sounds of music would be lost to us without air. Could there be any rains or dews without air? No clouds could exist without air. No snows or frosts without air. Do not the winds purge the air, and prevent stagnation, putrefaction, and death? Is not the air furnished with pure subtle particles, which are the vital spirit and balm of our blood, and feed the flame of all animal life?

VIII. The ELEMENT of WATER evidences the utmost WISDOM and DESIGN.

Here final causes pour in upon us from every quarter, resistless as the tides of the ocean; and bear

bear down all atheistical impudence with an irresistible torrent! Are not the fluid particles exactly suited to their use and ends? Does not this fluidity of water render it a most proper element for whales and minnows; with all the intermediate sizes and species of fish? Is not the ocean the glorious basis of navigation, and the grand mean of commerce and trade for all the nations of the globe? Is not the sea the universal cistern for rains, the grand and inexhaustible reservoir for rivers, springs, and pools of water? Does not the vast world of waters furnish the principal nourishment of all the tribes of plants and animals in the world? Do we not find in the seas an astonishing variety of curious and beautiful vegetables, perhaps richer than any upon land? Marine productions, especially corals, are striking instances of the immense riches of creating wisdom and goodness.

IX. The GLOBE of our EARTH, in all its PARTS, proclaims an infinite, powerful, and glorious GOD.

View all its external parts. What think you of its lofty mountains; its towering hills; its humble vallies? See how the rocks serve for springs! the vallies for fruitfulness and pasturage! How various the moulds and beds of earth! How are the several soils suited to all the purposes of vegetation?

vegetation? Is not the surface of the globe the grand basis of husbandry, and all sorts of precious grain? Is it not the ground-work of all gardening, plants, fruits, and flowers? Does not the face of some parts of the globe serve for good manure to produce fruitfulness in others? Is not our earth the grand mother of all our foods and all our beautiful flowers? Survey the internal parts of our earthly ball: what various quarries of stone for buildings of all kinds, from the meanest cottage to the grandest structure! what beds of coals for our fires! what veins of all sorts of minerals! what various ores for metals! what stores of lead! what beds of iron! and what immense treasures of silver and gold, which serve us for monies for commerce, and all the uses of civil and animal life! and what variety of precious stones of various colours and amazing brilliancy! above all, what beneficence in GOD to furnish us with that inestimable jewel, the Magnet, or Loadstone; which excels, in point of worth and usefulness, all the precious stones in the whole creation!

X. The whole VEGETABLE WORLD demonstrates
a GOD.

What an amazing number of kinds! Are there not above sixteen thousand species of vegetables? What do you think of the structure of a plant?
Do

Do you not see the wisdom of a Deity in the make of a vegetable? How beautiful is the growth of all vegetables, according to the laws of nature on fluids! how curious the parts, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit, the seed! How do the virtues of vegetables, for food and medicine, proclaim the exquisite wisdom and beneficence of the adorable Creator!

XI. ANIMALS, or animated MATTER, supply most amazing PROOFS of a GOD.

The structure of animals is more complete than that of vegetables. Is not the growth of all animals an effect superior to that of vegetables? Does not animal life depend on fresh food, as well as on air and water? Is not animal growth the effect of a proper digestion, and a regular distribution of the nutritious particles to every part? How suitable are the provisions for every kind of animals? How nicely and well adjusted their apparatus to receive and digest their food? See the mouth to receive! the teeth to chew! the tongue to assist in chewing! the gullet to transmit to the bowels! the stomach to digest! the intestines to strain off, by means of the lacteals! mark the progress of the chyle into the blood! see the colour and texture of this grand stream of life! how delicate the system of the nerves for feeling! how divine the structure of the eyes!
how

how accurately formed are the ears for sound! how exact the nostrils! and what a rich silver cord is the spinal marrow! Is not the prone posture of quadrupeds the most suited to their food and manner of life! Is not their motion on all four admirable? Are not the forms of their bodies amazingly various? Yet, is not every different species beautiful in its kind? See the various cloathing of animals! Are they not suited to their dwellings and stations in the creation? Is not their natural armature truly expressive of wise design and perfect contrivance in its almighty author? Observe their grand governing principle, which directs and animates all their motions and pursuits! Is not the supreme law of instinct a more uniform and infallible guide to beasts, than reason to man? Who has impressed this law on all animals, and taught them to pursue invariably, and attain their ends and the perfection of their being, without forethought or design? Who, but a GOD, can direct these creatures to attain their proper end without any rational knowledge or intention?

XII. The NATURE of BIRDS furnishes irresistible ARGUMENTS of the WISDOM of GOD.

View their heads; how adapted for flying! admire their various beaks and eyes! What do you think of their manner of motion? What do
you

you judge of their power of flying through the air? Are not the variety of their movements in the atmosphere wonderful? How well fitted are their wings and muscles for flight, and how suited are their claws to seize their prey, or defend their lives! what art in their nest! what beauty in their eggs! how patient and constant in hatching their young! how strong and violent their natural love to their offspring! how beautiful and grand are their plumage or feathers! how surprising are their journies or travels, for thousands of miles, without chart or compass!

XIII. The NATURE of FISHES is a manifold DEMONSTRATION of a GOD.

Consider their habitation, the larger and the lesser waters. Is not the watry world suited to their nature and genius, and their constitution and capacity admirably adapted to the fluid element? Is not the action of swimming wonderful? Are they not provided with a proper apparatus for swimming? Do you not observe how their bodies, their heads, their fins, their bladders, are all suited to this purpose? How keen and quick is their sight! Does not this supply their want of ears? Are they not totally destitute of ears and lungs? But do not their quick eyes supply their want of ears? and do not their gills fully supply their want of lungs? How

admirably contrived are these gills, by which they live and breathe! how delicate their covering! what exquisite art and beauty in the texture and colour of their scales! how free their motions! how nimbly they cut the water! and how fitly are many classes furnished with arms for defence! what an amazing beauty in the shell fish! what an endless variety in the forms! what garniture! what brilliancy and profusion of ornament on their shells! what amazing curiosity and neatness of work! and what a shining proof of the exuberant goodness and artifice of God!

XIV. The NATURE of INSECTS furnishes a prolix and pathetic LECTURE on GOD.

Is not the insect world a peculiar and amazing part of the creation? How numerous are the species! The most numerous class of all the animal world, Ray thinks 20,000 kinds. He found near 200 kinds near Braintree, in Essex. And how various their manner of life! how curious the shape of their bodies! how great the number of their parts! what surprising minuteness! and how delicate the finery of their dresses! what glowing colours! what curious carving! what rich embroidery! what nice enamelling! what splendor of gold and silver! what diamonds, pearls, and all manner of precious stones, garnish their cloathing! what scarlet, blue, green, yellow, violet,

violet, of the richest dyes! here is scarlet in grain, sky-blue, Saxon-green, and every other colour and ornament! What lady's dress, what monarch's robe, can compare with the beauties of an insect? How keen their sensations! how piercing their sagacity! how swift their motions! how quick the vibrations of their wings! what amazing transformations do they undergo! see their egg! the worm or maggot produced! their state of inaction or seeming death in an enamelled case! How rich are the cloaths of an insect-fly in it's glory and perfection! what an assemblage of jewels are studded on the back and wings! what an astonishing profusion of ornaments! gold, and pearls, azure, green, and vermillion, of the richest dyes! Do they not outvie the grandest lady, or the richest monarch in the world?

XV. REPTILES and SERPENTS demonstrate the all-wise G O D.

Are not their forms various? Is not the motion of some kinds by legs and feet? of others by feet without legs? Do not others creep in a worm-like manner, without legs or feet? Are not the movements of the Centipee, or hundred feet, most stupendous! What consent in all the motions of these numerous feet? What dost thou think of the serpent kind? the manner of their life, and

their various food? How wise the contrivance of God's providence in assigning their proper dwellings, and preventing their hurting his noble creature man! How amazing are the forethoughts of God! His attention to his offspring man appears in the formation of that voracious reptile the Crocodile.

XVI. The NATURE and FORM of MAN wonderfully prove the EXISTENCE, PERFECTIONS, and PROVIDENCE of the most powerful and glorious GOD.

Consider the parts and structure of his body! Is not the body of man the noblest piece of animal mechanism possible in nature? Does it not really transcend the power and thought of man to imagine any form or structure more perfect, more elegant, more grand, and commodious? What do you judge of man's erect posture? his beautiful shape? his proper stature? the structure and accuracy of the parts? the fitness of every part to its office and end? How marvellous the harmony and consent of every member to the whole frame! what sparkling brightness in the eyes! what sweet melody in the voice! how quick the ears to receive all manner of sounds! how nicely adjusted are the palate and taste to all sorts of foods! what a noble instrument is the tongue! Hence speech and eloquence, oratory and persuasion.