been preserved from falling upon some of the planets in the same system, and the several systems from falling upon each other ; had he taken into the account that there are greater things than these, and “ that we have seen but a few of God’s works ;” that virtuous pagan would have been ready to exclaim in the words of the Psalmist, “ O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches.”

In the attribute of infinite wisdom is comprehended that of *omniscience ;* for as wisdom is only knowledge well-di­rected, *perfect* wisdom must be the well-directing of *all* knowledge.

iii. *Goodness.* The goodness of God is not less conspi­cuous in his works than His power or His wisdom. Contri­vance proves design, and the predominant tendency of the contrivances indicates the disposition of the designer.

Now, all the evidences of design which we behold in the universe are directed to useful and beneficial purposes, and, consequently, indicate benevolence as a predominating fea­ture in the character of the Creator ; while, from the vast number of creatures on our earth endowed with life and sense, and a capability of happiness, and the infinitely greater number which probably inhabit the planets of this and other systems, we may infer that the goodness of God is as bound­less as his power, and that “ as is his majesty, so is his mercy.” Out of his own fulness hath he brought into being numberless worlds, replenished with myriads of myriads of creatures, furnished with various powers and organs, capa­cities and instincts ; and out of his own fulness he continu­ally and plentifully supplies them all with every thing neces­sary to make their existence comfortable. “ The eyes of all wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season. He openeth his hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing; he loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. He watereth the ridges there­of abundantly ; he settleth the furrows thereof ; he maketh it soft with showers, and blesseth the springing thereof. He crowneth the year with his goodness; and his paths drop fat­ness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness ; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks ; the valleys also are covered with corn ; they shout with joy, they also sing.” Survey the whole of what may be seen on and about this terraqueous globe, and say, if our Maker has a sparing hand. Surely the Author of so much happiness must be essential goodness ; and we must conclude with St. John, that “ God is love.”

***Obs. "***The world abounds with contrivances, and all the contrivan­ces in it with which we are acquainted are directed to beneficial pur­poses. Evil no doubt exists ; but it is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache ; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it : but it is not its object. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, one would hardly say of a sickle that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instru­ment, and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if be had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, this, he would say, is to extend the sinews ; this to dislocate the jointe ; this to break the bones ; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease ; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, this is to irritate, this to inflame, this duct is to con­vey the gravel to the kidneys, this gland to secret the humour which forms the gout. If, by chance, he came to a part of which he knows not the use, the most that he can say is, that to him it ap­pears to be useless : no one ever suspects that it is put there to in­commode, to annoy, or to torment. If God had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be as many sores and pains to us as they are now instruments of gratifica­tion and enjoyment ; or, by placing us among objects so ill suited to our perceptions as to have continually offended us, instead of minis­tering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for in­stance, every thing we tasted bitter, every thing we saw loathsome, every thing we touched a sting, every smell a stench, and every sound a discord.”—***Paley's Natural Theology.***

Instead of this, all our sensations, except such as are excited by what is dangerous to our health, are pleasures to us. The view of a landscape is pleasant ; the taste of nourishing food is pleasant ; sounds not too loud are agreeable, while musical sounds are exqui­site ; and scarcely any smells, except such as are excited by effluvia obviously pernicious to the brain, are disagreeable ; while some of them, if not too long indulged, are delightful. Since, then, God has called forth his consummate wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and has made those things, which are necessary to our existence, sources of pleasure to us ; who can doubt but that be­nevolence is one of his attributes ; and that, if it were not impious to draw a comparison between them, it is the attribute in which he himself most delighteth?

But it is not from sensation only that we may infer the benevo­lence of the Deity. He has formed us with minds capable of intel­lectual improvement, and be has implanted in the breast of every man a very strong desire of adding to his knowledge. This addi­tion, it is true, cannot be made without labour ; and, at first, the re­quisite labour is to most people irksome : but a very short progress in any study converts what was irksome into a pleasure of the most exalted kind ; and he who by study, however intense, enlarges his ideas, experiences a complacency which, though not so poignant, perhaps, as the pleasures of the sensualist, is such as endears him to himself, and is what be would not exchange for any thing else which this world has to bestow, except the still sweeter complacency aris­ing from the consciousness of having discharged his duty.

That the practice of virtue is attended with a peculiar pleasure of the purest kind, is a fact which no man has ever questioned, though the immediate source of that pleasure has been the subject of many disputes. He who attributes it to a moral sense, which instinctive­ly points out to every man his duty, and on the performance of it rewards him with a sentiment of self-approbation, must of necesssity acknowledge benevolence to be one of the attributes of that Being who has so constituted the human mind. That to protect the inno­cent, relieve the distressed, and do to others as we would in like circumstances wish to be done by, fills the breast, previously to all reflection, with a holy joy, as the commission of any crime tears it with remorse, cannot indeed be controverted. Many, however, contend, that this joy and this remorse spring not from any moral in­stinct implanted in the mind, but are the consequence of early and deep-rooted associations of the practice of virtue with the hope of future happiness, and of vice with the dread of future misery. On the respective merits of these two theories we shall not now decide, but only observe, that they both lead with equal certainty to the benevolence of the Deity, who made us capable of forming associa­tions, and subjected those associations to fixed laws. This being the case, the moral sense, with all its instantaneous effects, affords not a more convincing proof of his goodness, than that principle in our nature by which remote circumstances become so linked to­gether, that the one circumstance never occurs without bringing the other also into view. It is thus that the pleasing complacency, which was, perhaps, first excited by the hopes of future happiness, comes in time to be so associated with the consciousness of virtu­ous conduct, the only thing entitled to reward, that a man never performs a meritorious action without experiencing the most exqui­site joy diffused through his mind, though his attention at that in­stant may not be directed either to heaven or to futurity. Were we obliged, before we could experience this joy, to estimate by reason the merit of every individual action, and trace its connection to heaven and future happiness through a long train of intermediate reasoning, we should be, in a great measure, deprived of the present reward of virtue ; and, therefore, this associating principle contri­butes much to our happiness. But the benevolence of a Being, who seems thus anxious to furnish us with both sensual and intellectual enjoyments, and who has made our duty nur greatest pleasure, can­not be questioned; and therefore we must infer, that the Author of Nature wishes the happiness of the whole sensible and intelligent creation. Ps. cxiv. 15, 16 ; xxiii. 5 ; lv. 10, &c.

Objectors have asked, Why, if the Author of Nature be a benevolent Being, are we necessarily subject to pain, diseases, and death ? The scientific physiologist replies, Because, from these evils, Omnipotence itself could not in our present state exempt us, but by a constant series of miracles. He who believes the Bible, knows likewise that mankind were originally in a state in which they were not subject to death ; and that they fell under its domin­ion through the fault of their common progenitors. Without, how­ever, insisting upon this, the question is one which may be answered upon such data as are presented by the phenomena of nature. Now, we know that as all matter is divisible, every system composed of it must necessarily be liable to decay and dissolution; and our material