

that power with infinite wisdom and divine benevolence, we see, from the preceding facts, no proof of error or delusion in chronological data : but striking evidence of the wisdom of the Divine Being, who, foreseeing in the after ages of the world, what would be the provision, necessary for the prosecution of scientific research, and for the carrying on the designs of art, (his power being commensurate with his wisdom) supplied in the beginning, by the exercise of his creative energy, the immense, and yet unexplored reservoirs, in the bowels of the earth, so requisite for our present and future wants ; and who has ever since, by the laws of nature, (carried on in an uninterrupted and continued process,) furnished the materials of increasing supply, so necessary for the wants of succeeding generations.

We conclude this part of the Lecture, by a quotation from Dr. Dick. In answer to the question, addressed by the Almighty to Job—"Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth : declare if thou hast understanding?" Dr. Dick says—

"Our philosophers do not pretend to have been present when the earth was founded : but they profess to show us how it was made ; and that a much longer period was necessary to form its rocks, and its strata, than the Scriptures assign. Thus puny mortals, with a spark of intellect, and a moment for observation, during which they may take a hasty glance at a few superficial appearances, and follow the faint and deceitful light of reason, wander along in the mazes of error and uncertainty,—at the same time their theories are different ; what one builds up, another destroys : while, amidst the conflict of opinions, the narrative of Moses stands unmoved,—like the rock amidst the waves, resting on the solid basis of all the proofs, by which the genuineness and authenticity of his writings are demonstrated. 'From the endless discordance in opinions,' says a learned Professor, 'from the manifest inadequacy of the data we are at present in possession of, and from the physical impossibilities, which must for ever be a bar to any thing more than a superficial knowledge of the earth's structure—it is preposterous to suppose, that that high degree of moral evidence, on which the credibility of Scripture rests, can, with any justice, be weakened by our interpretation of phenomena, the connexion of which, among themselves even, we certainly are at present, and probably ever shall be, incapable of explaining.'"

The above remarks have not been made, with the slightest intention of undervaluing the present elevated position, or the successful and valuable investigations of philosophy and science : we place the highest value on these pursuits, and aim only to unite the principles so long disjoined ; viz., true scientific research, and the principles of our common Christianity.

We now come, in the prosecution of our already intimated intention, to notice the ultimate design and intention of the whole : and we do this the more reluctantly, because we are convinced, that we have far from adequately illustrated the subject itself : but had we, as we remarked at the commencement, descended to the examination of any single formation—say, the

comparative anatomy of the human frame—the relations among parts of Creation—or even the structure of a single leaf—or the microscopic wonders of the insect tribes—we should have been led out far beyond our present scheme, or what should be devoted to nothing less than an entire course of lectures : we have, for this reason, carefully avoided detail.

Who can look at the magnitude of Creation, without feeling that the field of our perception is narrow and limited in lead? The further science has advanced, the more has the mind been awed at the vastness of the association, at the grandeur of the subject itself ; even the philosophic Newton found that the further he progressed, the more insignificant his efforts appeared ; and he was wont to compare himself "to a child gathering pebbles on the sea shore." But still it is a noble endeavour to attempt to throw—

"A ray of light in this terrene abode,
To point to man the goodness of his God."

However inadequate our minds may be, then, to grasp this subject ; yet, this is no reason why we should not strive to attain a greater insight : not into the mysteries of the future, but into the creative designs of Providence, and the wisdom of the various contrivances that mark his skill.

One of the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises, has the following beautiful reflections on this subject :

"It is impossible to conceive that this enormous expenditure of power, this vast accumulation of contrivances and machinery, this profusion of existence, resulting from them, can thus, from age to age, be prodigally lavished, without some ulterior end.

"Is man, the favoured creature of nature's bounty, the 'paragon of animals,' whose spirit holds communion with celestial powers,—formed but to perish with the wreck of his bodily frame? Are generations after generations of his race doomed to follow in endless succession, rolling darkly down the stream of time, and leaving no track in its pathless ocean? Are the operations of Almighty power to end with the present scene? May we not discern in the spiritual constitution of man, the traces of higher powers, to which, those which he now possesses are but preparatory? some embryo faculties which raise us above this earthly habitation? Have we not in the imagination, a power, but little in harmony with the fetters of our bodily organs ; and belonging within our view purer conditions of being, exempt from the illusions of our senses, and the infirmities of our nature, our elevation to which, will eventually prove, that all these unsatiated desires of knowledge, and all these ardent aspirations after moral good, were not implanted in us in vain? Happily, there has been vouchsafed to us, from a higher source, and by a heavenly light to guide our faltering steps, and animate our fainting spirits in this dark and dreary search, revealing those truths, which, it imports as most of all to know, giving to morality higher sanctions, elevating our hopes, and our affections to nobler objects than belong to earth, and inspiring more exalted themes of thanksgiving and praise."

Such sentiments as these, are ennobling to the individual, and especially so to the philosopher ; and in distinct unison with these we trace the design of Providence, in the creative wonders which surround us, as