

Literary.

For the Wesleyan.

ON THE WORKS OF CREATION AS AN INCENTIVE TO CONTEMPLATION.

NO. II.

As the body is fed and nourished by food and proper exercise, so the mind requires, in no less degree, to invigorate, strengthen, and ennoble its powers. We frequently meet, in our intercourse with the world, several, situated amidst the profusions of nature, surrounded by the most delightful scenery, yet how vacant!—not one thought—apparently no relish for such ravishing scenes—almost void of common reason—certainly of a reflective mind. Has he a soul? And yet how unmoved! With such a prospect, betray no emotion! No taste or relish for those multiplied comforts—the luxuries Nature so profusely has scattered within his view—alike indifferent to all—a stoic, unmoved by joy or grief! Our pity supplants our indignation, and we conclude that the constant enjoyment has removed all philosophical ideas and, no doubt, religious contemplation; or so absorbed is his mind, that every thing around him is equally indifferent. Another instance. The opposite of this, the contemplative mind of those whose meditations are enlivened, delighted, and enraptured, in examining the formation, growth, and beauty of the variegated parterre, the luxurious plants and shrubbery, with the most insignificant insect that crawls beneath his feet: all equally occupy his mind. Their order, symmetry, and beauty elevate his soul in praise and humble adoration of the Great First Cause, the governor and supporter of Creation. With our thoughts thus engaged in considering the insignificant parts of Creation, how sublime when in the study of the more refined and superior works of Nature—the study of worlds upon worlds. Here we see the great contrast; not that Nature has been deficient in either case; 'tis the sluggishness of our minds; when we bask in the sunshine of prosperity, amidst a profusion of the blessings of life, we are lost to more refined sensation, discover no beauty in the surrounding objects, and generally forget our obligations, indeed the very being who upholds, and so profusely continues to lavish on us such unnumbered blessings. He who studies Nature will find, that not one particle, however minute and insignificant, has been created in vain; all are equally the production of a wise and unerring Providence. Every part has its allotted station, placed as most fit in the capacity it was ordained to fill, and best suited for those enjoyments designed for its comfort and support. The animal creation, governed by an instinct almost human, if removed from their native home for any length of time, when near their former abode and the wiles they have frequented, recognise their ancient residence, and by gestures, even with their voices, express their feelings. Not less the horse or dog, and other associated quadrupeds. The feathered race, even those birds of passage, who though but for a short space entertain us with their melody or their usefulness as food,

seek their former haunts, and with their young, probably fledged and reared, return to pass another limited season in those retreats before occupied by them.

Natural objects, when properly contemplated, continually admonish us in the important lesson of divine wisdom, leading us to consider our situation in this sublunary state, our connections and dependencies, from which we learn the duties required of us, and the exertions we are capable of making. From the consideration of our mental faculties we infer the exalted idea of a future state of existence, so naturally arising in the intelligent mind which reflects on the never-ceasing energy of the mental powers, and its independency of all moral circumstances. Thus perceiving what is the purer essence of our nature, and what the grosser, we are conscious that our present existence was not the primary or principal intention of our Creator: yet, as it is allotted preparatory to that for which we were created, it claims our particular attention, becomes either advantageous to us or otherwise, accordingly as we deal with the objects that surround us. Our superiority in the scale of being gives us the power of applying to our own use the gifts of Providence, by which we are surrounded, with the greatest advantage, not only so as to supply the necessities of our mortal nature, but also to derive considerable mental gratification from them. Shall we then neglect rightly to use the gift of reason, and thereby become unworthy of such a boon, as well as lose all the benefits to be derived from it? Certainly not. Let us rather, on the contrary, so exercise and improve our understanding, as to form a right judgment of the value of things, by which alone we can be enabled to conduct ourselves according to the proper circumstances of the state in which we are placed: a business which requires more caution in the investigation than some are apt to imagine—implying a thorough knowledge of the human mind, which cannot be obtained only by a careful examination of its capacities and infirmities.

I cannot help [as duty prompts] here offering some reflections on that Hand which formed us, that Divine Mind which directs all our involuntary operations, and that Benevolence which renders these operations instrumental to the comfort and happiness of all its creatures. And although I cannot presume to recount the works of the Almighty, or show the wisdom of his counsels—far above the narrow scale of human enquiry, far out of the reach of the feeble efforts of human comprehension are such investigations—yet his attributes are discoverable in his wise administration, and made evident to us through the medium of our senses. Let us, then, receive these emanations of the Divine Mind, shed down upon us, with joy and thankfulness; and, like the effects of the rays of the sun falling on our crops of corn, which bring forth their abundance: so let the influence of divine benevolence act on our mind, perfecting all that is good in us, and expanding our hearts with universal philanthropy. This world is, by no means, barren of comforts to those who cultivate a relish for the delights it affords—avoiding satiety; for by a pro-