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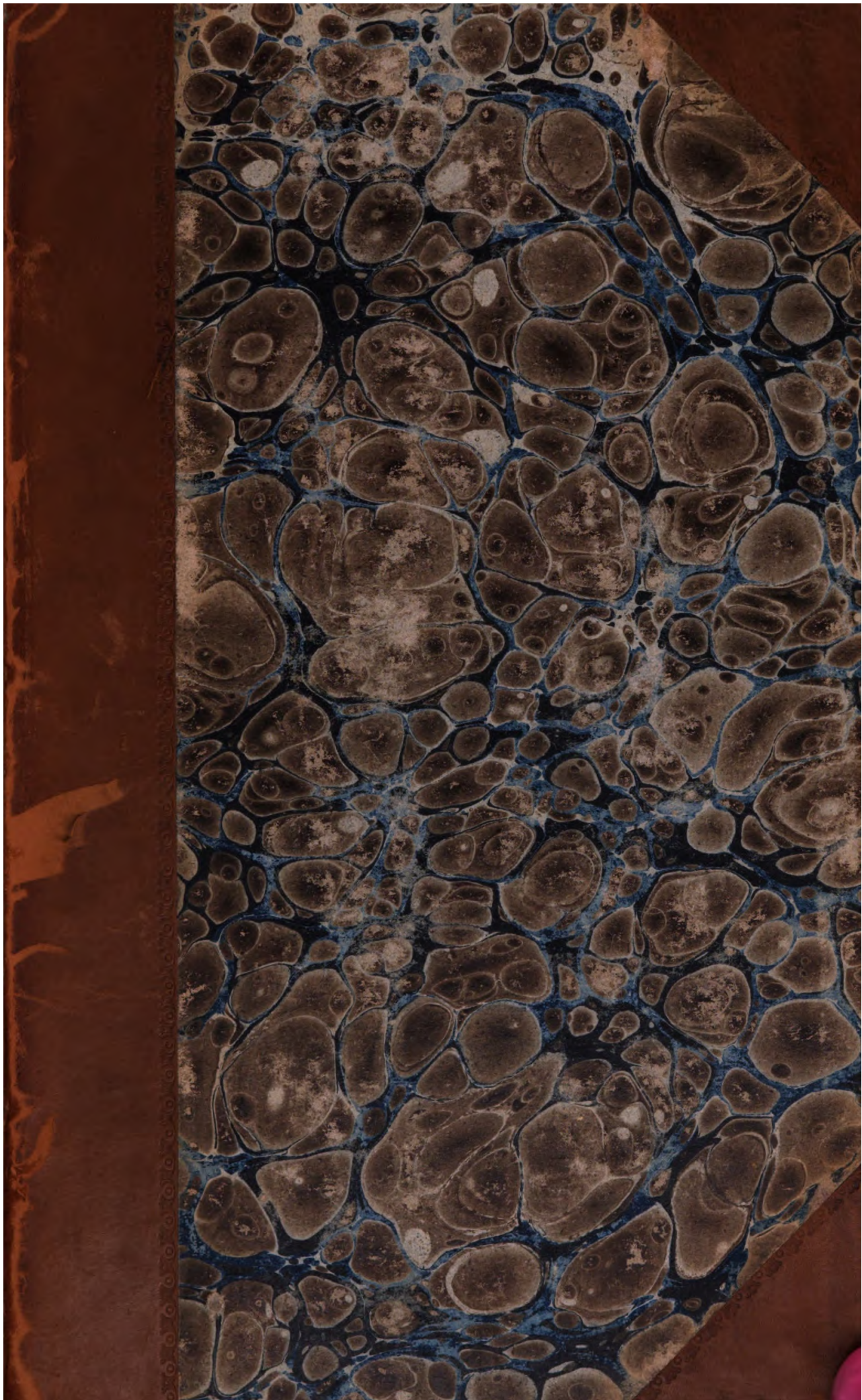
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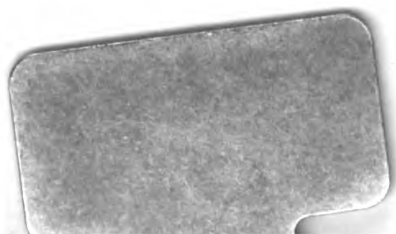


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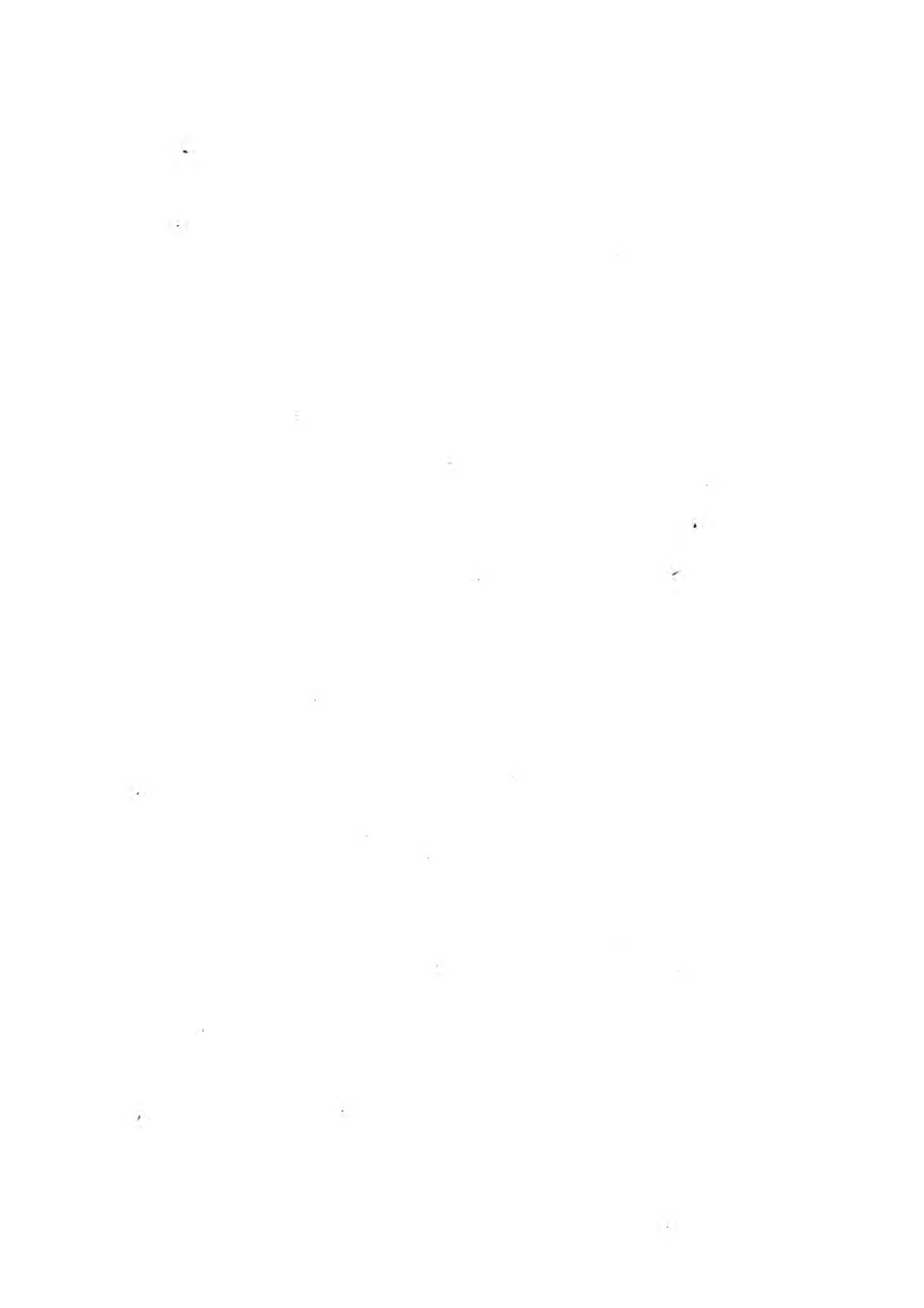
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*J. H. 1826*  
A

SUCCINCT ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
ANALOGY OF RELIGION,  
NATURAL AND REVEALED,  
TO THE  
CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE;  
OMITTING FIVE CHAPTERS,  
AS SPECIFIED IN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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## PREFACE.

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It would be impertinent to encumber the reader, with a long and studied preamble, under pretence of showing the importance of a book, which, during the period of ninety years, has been honorably received, and is still held in the highest estimation. To Bishop Butler we are chiefly indebted, for the application of a simple instrument of reason, to confound the specious arguments of the infidel, fatalist, and sceptic.—“I know no Author,” says Doctor Reid, in reference to analogical reasoning, “who has made a more just or a more happy use of this mode of reasoning, than Bishop Butler in his Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. In that excellent work, the Author does not ground any of the truths of Religion upon analogy, as their proper evidence. He only makes use of analogy to answer objections against them. When objections are made against the truths of Religion, which may be made with equal strength against what we know to be true in the course of nature, such objections can have no weight.” But it is not intended to anticipate the reader, by any partial explanation of the evidence, to which, these observations only allude, as it is a valuable accession, to the other Evidences for the truth of Christianity.

The following pages are confined to the examination of those parts of the Analogy, which are read by Under-Graduates in Dublin University. The resolution of the original matter into paragraphs, precludes, in a great degree, the possibility of confusion ; and the addition of appropriate questions, has a tendency to exercise the memory, and to make lasting and useful impressions upon the mind.

As the refutation of objections against Religion, forms the distinguishing characteristic of the Analogy ; so it occupies a considerable part of the present Analysis. The objections are fairly stated ; and in answer to these, the Author's arguments are so combined, as to enable the reader, to judge of the relative force of the reasoning upon each side of the question, and to draw his conclusions accordingly.

It may be proper to add, that, excepting the questions and a few occasional observations, the language will in all cases be found, identical with that of the Original. This adherence to the text, gives some authority to the present publication, and may, eventually, be the means of conciliating the student, to the Author's peculiar style and mode of reasoning.

CHARLES SLEATER, A. B.

*Trinity College Dublin, May, 1826.*

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THE chapters of the Original, which are omitted by Under-Graduates, are, the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 6th of the first Part, and the 7th of the second Part. With these exceptions, the Analogy is here unfolded, in the following order :

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## INTRODUCTION.

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*BETWEEN probable and demonstrative Evidence, what is the essential distinction? Probable Evidence admits of degrees; and of all varieties of them, from the highest moral certainty to the lowest presumption.*

*Whether one slight presumption for a thing renders it probably true? No. For there may be some probability against it: and though there be no probability against it, yet a slight presumption doth not beget that degree of conviction which is implied in saying a thing is probably true.*

*Whence does it appear however, that every the slightest presumption is of the nature of a probability? Since such slight presumption often repeated amounts to moral certainty. Instance in the ebb and flow of the Tide.*

*What is it which chiefly constitutes probability? It is expressed in the word likely, i. e. like some truth or true event.*

*What degree of evidence may probability beget? Either a presumption, opinion, or conviction, according as the Event has sometimes, most commonly, or always, happened in like circumstances.*

*Upon what depends the Force of analogical conclusions? Upon our having observed the like to these conclusions. Thus all the Rules and measures of our hopes, fears, and judgments, depend upon our having observed the like to what we hope, fear, and judge. Thus also the Prince who had never observed water to be hardened, rightly concluded by Analogy, that there was no such thing as Ice. [See Locke's Essay.]*

*To what sort of Beings does probable Evidence relate ?* To Beings of limited capacities. For to an infinite Intelligence, no possible object of knowledge can be probable, but must be either certainly true or certainly false : to us however probability is the very guide of life.

*Upon what very low probabilities are we obliged, in point of Prudence and Interest, to determine in practice ?* When there is the least presumption on the one side and none upon the other : Often too where the mind is left in Doubt ; and where the probability is greatly against success.

*The Author classes analogical and probable evidence among the Deficients in Logic ; what subjects does he suggest for further examination ?* To inquire further into the Nature, Foundation, and Measure, of Probability : To guard against the Errors to which analogical reasoning is liable : To find how far the extent, compass and force of analogical reasoning, can be reduced into general Heads and Rules, and the whole be formed into a system.

*Whence does it appear however, that Analogy is obviously of use towards determining our judgment and Practice ?* It is unquestionable that the Sun will rise to-morrow ; and be visible in the form of a Circle, and not in that of a square.

*And in opposition to what exceptions to Analogy, does this hold ?* Notwithstanding persons may find other Cases in which it is not easy to say, whether it be or be not of any weight ; or may find instances of seeming Analogies, which are really of none.

*What Authority is there for introducing analogical reasoning into the subject of Religion, even revealed Religion ?* “Origen has sagaciously observed, that he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same difficulties in it, as are found



in the Constitution of Nature." In like manner it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to have been from God upon account of apparent difficulties, may for the same reason deny the world to have been formed by him. On the other hand, if there be an Analogy between the natural and revealed Dispensations of Providence, this is a presumption that they have the same Author and Cause.

*What are the two erroneous methods of judging upon Hypothesis, concerning the Government and Constitution of the world?* Some form their notions upon Reasoning without foundation for the Principles which they assume. Others form their notions upon Reasoning from Principles which are certain, but applied to cases to which they have no ground to apply them.

*And to what are these methods compared?* The former method is building a world upon Hypothesis like Des Cartes. The latter, like explaining the structure of the body, and the nature of Diseases and Medicines from Mathematics without sufficient Data, is an error much a-kin to the former: since what is assumed in order to make the reasoning applicable is Hypothesis.

*Whether Analogy be a just and practicable way of judging in this matter?* It is both just and practicable. For it is just, to join abstract Reasoning with the observations of Facts; to argue from known facts to others like them; to argue from that part of the divine Government within our view, to the part beyond it; and from what is present to collect what may be hereafter.

*What is the Principle, (the only one,) which the Author takes for granted in the present Treatise?* That there is an intelligent Author of Nature, and natural Governor of the World.

*And why is this a legitimate assumption?* For

as there is no presumption against This prior to the proof of it : so it has been often proved with accumulated Evidence ; from this argument of Analogy and final Causes ; from abstract Reasonings ; from the most antient Traditions and Testimony ; from the general consent of Mankind. Nor is it denied by the generality of those who are dissatisfied with the Evidence of Religion.

*Besides those persons who judge of the Government of the world upon Hypothesis, there is a different class, who do the same upon Speculation ; how are they described ?* There are vain and idle Speculators, who form imaginary Models, according to which they suppose the World might have been better disposed and carried on than it is at present.

*What is the general answer to their imaginary emendations ?* That we have not Faculties for this kind of Speculation.

*How does it appear, that the plan of Government fixed upon by the wisest Speculators, would not be the best, even according to their own notions of best ?* For whether they judged that best which is productive of greatest Happiness, or of greatest Virtue, or of both ; yet this would only relate to the End ; for they would be very incompetent judges of the Means to obtain this End. This we find to be so in the present life, much more so in the World past and to come.

*What are the extravagant consequences which would result from their imaginary Improvements ?* That all creatures should be made at first as happy as possible, and should have nothing of Hazard put upon them : that they should in fact always do what was right : and that the method of Punishments should be rejected as absurd, and contrary to happiness.

*How, according to the Speculator, might infinite Power effect that persons should always and in fact*

*do what was right?* Either by not giving them any Principles which would endanger their going wrong ; or by laying the right motive of action in so strong a manner before them, as to make them act conformably to it.

*Whence have we a practical Proof of the moral character of the Deity?* Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to Him, and to deny all imperfection of Him : and this is a proof of God's moral character, since it is His voice speaking in us.


*And from such moral character, what is the Inference, concerning the End of the divine Government, and the Means by which it is conducted?* We may conclude, that virtue must be the happiness, and vice the misery of every creature : and that regularity and order must finally prevail. But we are in no sort judges of the Means necessary to accomplish this End.

*Why may it be concluded, that the moral System of Nature and the known Course of things, are perfectly analogous?* They may be traced up to the same general laws, and resolved into the same principles of divine conduct.

*Of what Extent and Force is the Analogy here proposed?* In some cases it will amount to a real practical Proof ; in others not so : yet in these it is a confirmation of what is proved in other ways. It will afford an answer to almost all objections against the system of natural and revealed Religion, and an answer, though in a lower degree to objections against the Evidence of Religion.

*What is the proper Scope or Design of the Author's Treatise?* To show, that the particular parts objected against in the moral and Christian Dispensations are analogous to what is experienced in the Course of natural Providence ; that the chief objections urged against the Christian Dispensation,

may be urged with like justness against natural Providence, where they are found to be inconclusive : And to show that this argument from Analogy is unanswerable and of weight on the side of Religion, notwithstanding seeming objections against it. [*See chap. 8. Part II.*]



# PART I.

## OF NATURAL RELIGION.

### CHAP. IV.

#### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

A STATE of Probation as implying Trial, Difficulties, and Dangers with regard to our future Interest, is here distinctly considered; the credibility of such a state is shown from Analogy; and all presumptions against it are removed.

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*In what three senses may the present life be called a Probation-state for a future world? 1. As implying Trial, Difficulties, and Danger of miscarrying with regard to our future Interest. 2. As intended for moral Discipline and Improvement. 3. As a Theatre of action for the manifestation of persons characters to the creation of God. [The first sense of Probation is the object of this chapter, the other senses are treated of in the following chapter.]*

*What is the meaning of Probation in the first and most common sense of that word? That our future Interest is now depending upon ourselves; that we have scope here for good and bad behaviour, which will be rewarded or punished hereafter; together with Temptations to the bad, and Inducements of reason to the good.*

*How does Probation in this sense agree with moral Government? It is in a great measure the*

same. For the notion of a future account and general righteous judgment, implies some sort of Temptations to what is wrong: otherwise there would be no possibility of doing wrong, nor ground for judgment.

*What is the difference between Probation and moral Government?* The word Probation is more particularly expressive of Allurements, Difficulties and Danger, than moral Government.

*How does the Analogy of Nature render it credible, that this Life is a state of Trial with regard to a future World?* God's natural Government, by Rewards and Punishments, by annexing pleasure to some actions and pain to others, implies that we are in a like state of Trial with regard to the present World.

*By what means is it proposed to show more distinctly, the parallel between our Trial in our temporal and religious Capacities?* By considering what it is which constitutes our Trial in both Capacities; and by observing how mankind behave under it.

*What constitutes our Trial in both Capacities?* It must be either somewhat in our external circumstances, or in our nature.

*How may it be somewhat in our external circumstances?* Men may be betrayed into wrong behaviour upon surprise, or other external occasion, who otherwise would have preserved their character of Prudence and Virtue.

*How may it be somewhat in our Nature?* Men who have contracted habits of Vice and Folly, or who have particular passions in excess, will indulge themselves at the expense of their wisdom and virtue.

*Why should particular passions be as much Temptations in our temporal as in our religious capacity?* They are no more coincident with Prudence, or that reasonable Self-love, the end of which is our



worldly Interest, than they are with the principle of Virtue and Religion.

*How do Temptations from within, and from without, coincide and mutually imply each other?* As when we say men are misled by external circumstances of Temptations, there must be somewhat within men themselves, to render such circumstances Temptations; so when men are said to be misled by Passions, it is supposed that there are external occasions and objects to excite these passions.

*How do particular Passions actually put us into a state of Trial in both capacities?* The external objects of the Appetites, Passions, and Affections exciting their corresponding emotions, both where they can be innocently gratified, and where they cannot: this as much puts them in danger of foregoing their present as their future Interest, by inducing to such vitious gratification.

*What is the Description of our State of Trial in our temporal capacity?* Mankind have a temporal Interest depending upon themselves, and a prudent course of behaviour being necessary to secure it; passions inordinately excited are dangerous Temptations to forego a greater temporal good for a less.

*How does it appear that our state of Trial in our religious capacity is perfectly analogous thereto?* So analogous, that if, in the above Description, the word future be put for temporal, and virtue for Prudence; it will be as proper a description of our religious Trial.

*How do mankind behave under their Trial in both capacities?* They behave in the same way; they are equally taken up with present gratifications; or are blinded and hurried away by inordinate passions, as well in their worldly concerns as in Religion.

*From the foregoing observations, how does it distinctly appear, that our Trials in both capacities are perfectly analogous?* Since they have been shown,

to proceed from the same causes, and to have the same effect upon men's behaviour.

*Whether are the Difficulties of right behaviour increased in a like way, in both capacities ?* They are. For as in our religious capacity, the difficulties are increased, by the ill behaviour of others ; by an Education wrong in a moral sense ; by bad Example ; by dishonest artifices in business ; and by Religion's being corrupted into superstitions. So the like happens in our temporal capacity, by a foolish Education ; by the carelessness of others ; by mistaken notions concerning temporal happiness ; and by our own negligence and vice.

*From Analogy how is it credible, that habits of Vice tend to place us in a more disadvantageous state of Trial ?* Since wrong behaviour in one stage of life, youth for instance, increases the difficulties of right behaviour in mature age ; *i. e.* puts us in a more disadvantageous state of Trial in our temporal capacity.

*Whether from Analogy, does any objection remain against our moral Trial, in consequence of our condition being low, careful, and uncertain ?* There can be no such objection. For as men by prudence and moderation may here on earth pass their time in tolerable satisfaction : so Religion requires nothing more of them than they are able to go through. But chiefly, because our religious Trial is rendered credible, by its being uniform and of a piece with the general conduct of Providence towards us, in all other respects within the compass of our observation.

*If our religious Trial were not uniform and of a piece with the general conduct of Providence, what might the presumption be against Religion, and against our moral Trial ?* It might be alleged, " What you say is our condition in one respect, is " not in any wise of a sort with what we experience " to be our condition in another. Our whole present " Interest is secured without any solicitude of ours ;

“and why should not our future Interest, if we have any such, be so too?”

*But since the contrary is really the case, how does our natural condition remove any such presumption?* We find that Thought, Consideration, and Self-denial, are absolutely necessary to our acting a prudent part in the present World: and the like may be the case with regard to our higher and more general Interest.

*What is the notable difficulty in Speculation against a Probation-state, from the considerations of the Frailty of our nature and of necessity?* Had we not Experience it might be urged, that it is improbable any thing of Hazard and Danger should be put upon such frail creatures, by an infinite Being; when every thing which is Hazard and Danger, and which will end in error and misery, is already certain in his fore-knowledge. [*See in the Original, chap<sup>s</sup>. 2 and 6 of the First Part.*]

*But, in regard to Practice, how does Experience remove any such Difficulty or objection?* The constitution of nature is as it is. Our happiness and misery are trusted to our conduct and made to depend upon it: instances of this are, the various miseries of life, occasioned by negligence and folly, which miseries are beforehand as contingent as the conduct which occasioned them.

*In fine, how does the general Analogy of Providence lead us to conclude, that we are actually in danger of miscarrying in our religious Trial?* Our present Interest is neither forced upon us, nor offered to our acceptance, but laid up for our acquisition; in such sort that we are in danger of missing it, by means of Temptations. And it is credible the like may be our case, with respect to that chief and final good which Religion proposes.

## CHAP. V.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THIS chapter treats of the two other senses of a Probation-state : its chief aim is, to prove that this World was intended to be a state of moral Discipline, for improvement in the character of virtue, as a requisite qualification for a future state of happiness. The reader will observe by what gradual steps the reasoning advances ; it is shown, I. That some new Characters and Qualifications must necessarily be acquired. II. That, from our Capacities of Knowledge and Power of Habits, we are capable of acquiring these new Characters. And here some important remarks are made concerning our Faculty of Habits. III. That such Capacities and Powers are both necessary and intended to be made use of. This intention of Nature is fully confirmed, by our being appointed, in our temporal Capacity, to go through the stages of Infancy, Childhood and Youth, as a necessary Discipline for mature age : - And our being placed in the present world as a state of moral Discipline for a future life is a providential Dispensation of things perfectly analogous to that just mentioned. IV. That the reasons for the thing may be assigned. Then our great need of Discipline and of virtuous Habits is made appear, by showing how the same may be necessary for all finitely perfect Creatures. After obviating three different Objections against a state of moral Discipline, the Author lightly touches upon a Probation-state in the last sense of the word, as being a Theatre of action for the manifestation of person's Characters.

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*Whence arises the question, How we came to be placed in a Probation-state of such difficulty and hazard? From the consideration that we are actually in such a state.*

*Whether can the Difficulties attending such general Inquiry be at all lessened, or the whole reason of it given? Though some of these Difficulties would be lessened by observing, that all wickedness is voluntary, and that many of the miseries of life have apparent good effects: yet to pretend to give the whole reason of this matter would be plain folly and presumption.*

*To this general Inquiry what is the partial answer, afforded by Religion? Religion teaches us, that we were placed in the present world, that we might qualify ourselves by the practice of virtue, for a future life.*

*To what more important Inquiry is this a satisfactory answer? To the Inquiry, What is our business here? The known End of our being placed in a state of so much Affliction, and Difficulty, is our improvement in virtue, as a requisite qualification for a future state of security and happiness.*

*What Analogy, in our temporal Capacity, corresponds to this life's being a state of moral Discipline for another world? The beginning of life considered as an Education for mature age, is in our temporal what the other is in our Religious Capacity.*

*How, and for what purpose, is it proposed to make out this Analogy more distinctly? By making some observations common to both Capacities, and by a more distinct consideration of each. For thus will appear more distinctly, the Extent and Force of the Analogy between both Capacities; and the credibility arising both from Analogy and from the nature of the thing, that the present life was intended as a state of moral Discipline for a future world.*

*I. Some new Characters and Qualifications are*



to be acquired ; to this effect, *what is the observation applicable to both Capacities ?* There must be certain Capacities, Characters and Qualifications, without which men would be utterly incapable of a future state of life : in like manner as there must be some without which men would be incapable of their present state of life.

*Why in general must certain Capacities &c. be necessary for all Creatures ?* Every species of Creature is designed for a particular way of life ; to which the nature and Capacities of the species are as necessary as their external Circumstances. Both enter the notion of such particular way of life, and are constituent parts of it.

*And why must these Capacities be necessary for human Creatures in particular ?* One thing is set over against another, as an antient Writer expresses it. Our Nature corresponds to our external Condition. Without this Correspondence, there would be no possibility of human life and human happiness : which life and happiness are therefore a Result from our Nature and Condition jointly. [See the 6th Sermon at the Rolls, and the general observation of the son of Sirach, *All things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect.* Eccles. XLII. 24.]

*II. What is the observation to show that we have Faculties fitted for acquiring these new Characters ?* The constitution of human creatures, and of all creatures within our notice, is such that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified.

*Whether the Faculties of all Species be made for Enlargement, and for the acquisition of new Qualifications ?* In imagination creatures may be conceived as incapable of having their Faculties enlarged : but the Faculties of all Species known to us, are made for enlargement, by Experience and Habits.



*That the human Faculties are made for Enlargement is evident from our Capacities of acquiring knowledge, and from our Power of Habits ; what are the three Capacities of acquiring knowledge ? Apprehension, Reason, and Memory ; i. e. the Capacities of perceiving Ideas, and of perceiving Truth, and of storing up our Ideas and Knowledge by Memory.*

*Whence does it appear that we are endued with such a Power as that of Habits ?* We are capable not only of acting, and of having different momentary impressions made upon us ; but also of getting a new Facility in any kind of action, and of settled Alterations in our Temper or Character. The power of the two last is the power of Habits.

*Whether Habits be distinct from Knowledge, and from the Capacities of acquiring it ?* Neither the perception of Ideas nor Knowledge of any kind, are Habits ; though absolutely necessary to their formation. The capacities however of acquiring Knowledge are greatly improved by Exercise. But whether the word Habit is applicable to all these improvements, is not here inquired.

*Whence does it appear, that the powers of Memory and of Habits are partly the same ?* That perceptions should readily and of course enter the mind, by means of their having been there before, seems a thing of the same sort, as readiness in any particular kind of action, from having been accustomed to it. And aptness to recollect practical observations of service in our Conduct, is plainly Habit in many cases.

*Habits are either of Perception or of Action ; what is the Instance of Habits of Perception ?* Our constant and involuntary readiness, in correcting the impressions of our sight concerning Magnitudes and Distances, so as imperceptibly to substitute judgment in the room of sensation. And it seems as if all other Associations of ideas not natu-

rally connected, may be called passive Habits ; as properly as our understanding Languages upon sight or hearing of words.

*And what is the Instance of active Habits ?* Our readiness in speaking or writing Languages.

*Habits are either bodily or mental ; what sort do the former comprise ?* Under bodily Habits are comprehended all bodily activities or motions, whether graceful or unbecoming, which are owing to use.

*And what sort do mental Habits comprise ?* Under mental Habits are comprehended, general Habits of life and conduct ; such as those of Obedience and Submission ; those of Veracity, Justice, and Charity ; those of Attention, Industry, Self-government ; and those of Envy and Revenge.

*In what respect do mental and bodily Habits agree ?* They are both formed by Exercise and repeated Acts.

*And in what respect do they differ ?* As bodily Habits are produced by repeated external Acts : so mental Habits are produced by inward practical Principles exerted and carried into action.

*Concerning mental, active or virtuous, Habits, what are the Instances, and ways of their improvement ?* Resolutions to do well, which are properly Acts ; real endeavours to enforce upon our minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of virtue which a man has himself, is a virtuous act. And all these will contribute towards forming good Habits.

*How far may virtuous Habits be formed by an external Course of action ?* No otherwise than as such an external course of action proceeds from the inward practical principles of Obedience, Veracity, Justice and Charity. Because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of Obedience, Veracity, &c.

*Whether an external course of action doth neces-*

*sarily and certainly conduce to the formation of virtuous Habits?* The going over the Theory of virtue, and drawing fine pictures of it, so far from necessarily conducing to form a Habit of it, that it may form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For from our very Faculty of Habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker.

*With regard to our Faculty of Habits it is observed, that passive Impressions by being repeated grow weaker; what are the three Instances adduced to show it?* Being accustomed to, Danger begets intrepidity, *i. e.* lessens Fear: to Distress lessens the passion of Pity: to instances of others Mortality, lessens the sensible Apprehension of our own.

*Concerning our Faculty of Habits, what two observations does the Author distinctly notice?* Practical Habits are formed and strengthened by repeated Acts. Passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated.

*From these two observations what Corollary immediately results?* That active Habits may be forming and strengthening by a course of acting upon such and such Motives and Excitements, whilst these Motives and Excitements are less sensibly felt.

*How does Experience also confirm the truth of this Corollary?* For active principles at the very time that they are less lively in Perception than they were, are found to be more thoroughly wrought into the Temper and Character, and become more effectual in influencing our Practice.

*And how do the three things already mentioned, afford Instances of it?* 1. By being inured to Danger, active habits of Caution are gradually wrought, while at the same time passive Fear gradually lessens. 2. By being accustomed to inquire out, and relieve persons in distress, our Pity lessens, yet we acquire a greater aptitude actively to relieve

them. 3. The daily instances of other men's Mortality lessens the sensible passive Apprehension of our own Mortality, but greatly strengthens a practical regard to it in serious men.

*From these observations, what confirmation do we derive, of the answer to this question, How far virtuous Habits may be formed by an external course of action?* Thus it farther appears that although the passive impressions made upon our minds by Admonition, Experience and Example, may have a very great remote Efficacy towards forming active Habits: yet they can have this Efficacy only by inducing to a virtuous course of action.

*Whether is it possible, that effects equivalent to Habits [i. e. what is wrought by Use and Exercise,] should be wrought in us at once?* The thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what in Fact is the appointment of Nature: which is that active Habits are formed by Exercise. Their progress may be so gradual, as to be imperceptible of its Steps.

*How does Experience abundantly show, that we are formed habitually to submit to Use and Exercise?* By accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness, facility, and often a pleasure in it. Our aversions weaken, the difficulties lessen, and the Reasons for it begin to offer themselves.

*In what two respects do practical Principles strengthen by Exercise?* They strengthen absolutely in themselves, and relatively with regard to contrary principles; which by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually, and of course.

*III. From our having these Capacities of improving by Experience acquired Knowledge and Habits, it may be reasonably inferred, that they are both necessary and intended to be made-use of; by what observation is this expressed in relation to our temporal Capacity?* So necessary and so much intended were these Capacities, that without them we



should be incapable of that which was the End of our creation in our temporal Capacity, *i. e.* the employment of mature age.

*In regard to our temporal Capacity only, whence appears the absolute necessity for improvement, by Experience acquired Knowledge and Habits? Maturity of Understanding and bodily Strength are arrived to gradually and by Exercise from Infancy. It may be questioned whether the natural Information of the Senses would be of any manner of use to a person in acting before Experience. Want of some acquired Moderation and Self-government, would render a man as incapable of Society as want of Language would.*

*And how does the Intention and Wisdom of Nature fully appear, in the Opportunity afforded us of supplying these necessary Deficiencies? We are placed in a condition in Infancy, Childhood and Youth adapted to supply them. Thus children are prepared for Subordination to civil Authority. And persons are qualified for their respective stations, for which they would be greatly unqualified unless they had been accustomed to them in their Youth.*

*And thus at length we arrive at the question itself; why may it be fairly concluded, that we are in a state of moral Discipline throughout this life for another World? Because this is a providential Dispensation of things, exactly of the same kind, as our being placed in a state of Discipline during Childhood for mature age. They are exactly analogous; since our condition in both respects is uniform and of a piece, and comprehended under one and the same general law of Nature.*

*Even without taking in the consideration of God's moral Government, why would there be no objection from Analogy, though we could not discern how, or in what respects, the present life could be a preparation for a future one? For we do not discern how Food and Sleep contribute to the growth of the*

body. Nor do children think that their sports and exercises contribute to their growth. Nor can children understand the use of many parts of Discipline, which yet they must go through in order to fit them for mature age.

*IV. But taking in that consideration, what are the distinct reasons assigned, how, and in what respects, the present life may be a preparation for a future one?* Since we want and are capable of Improvement by moral and religious Habits, in that character of virtue and piety which is a necessary qualification for a future state: And the present life is fit to be a state of Discipline for such Improvement; just as Infancy, Childhood and Youth are a Preparation for mature age.

*Whether, from Analogy, will our future state be a solitary one, or a Community like to the present?* The Analogy of Nature leads us to conclude that it will be a Community according to the Scripture account of it: and a Community under the more immediate, or more sensible Government of God; this also the Scripture teaches us, and though there be no Analogy for it, yet there is nothing unreasonable in conceiving it.

*Whether will our future state be an inactive one, affording no scope for the Exercise of virtue?* Our ignorance of the employments of this happy Community, and our ignorance what Scope there may be for the exercise of virtue, is no proof that there will be no Sphere for such exercise. Much less is our ignorance a proof that there will be no occasion for a character formed by the practice of virtue.

*Whence appears our capability of moral Improvement by Discipline?* It appears from what has been said concerning our natural Power of Habits.

*And whence appears our original and natural need of moral improvement by Discipline?* From the great Wickedness of mankind, and from the imperfections which the best are conscious of. But to



trace it higher than to excess in the Passions, from the very constitution of our Nature we are in Danger of deviating from what is right. It will farther appear by considering how creatures made upright may fall, and how by preserving their Integrity they might raise themselves to a more secure state of virtue.

*How are mankind actually in danger of deviating from right, from the very inward constitution of their nature, from the very nature of propensions or particular affections?* Besides the general principle of moral Understanding, men have in their inward frame various Affections towards external objects: and when the object of any affection cannot be obtained with the consent of the moral principle, yet may be obtained without that consent, this inclines us to such unlawful indulgence.

*And why must the general security against this Danger be the practical principle of Virtue?* As the danger is from within, so also must the security: from the practical principle of Virtue, which being strengthened or improved will lessen the danger, or increase the security against it.

*Whether would a sense of Interest be as effectual a security against this danger, as the practical Principle of Virtue?* [See the Note in the Original.]

*Upon the Author's Supposition, that particular Affections remain in a future state, why is there an obvious necessity for habits of virtue acquired by Discipline?* In order to regulate those particular Affections.

*Whether without this Supposition would the case be altered?* The thing would come to the same: for habits of virtue acquired by Discipline, are improvement in virtue, and this must be advancement in happiness, if the Government of the Universe be moral.

*How is it conceivable, that Creatures made upright may fall?* It may be distinctly conceived

from the very nature of particular Affections or Propensions.

*Whether is it accounted for by the nature of Liberty?* This would be to say no more than that an event's actually happening is accounted for by a mere possibility of its happening.

*What is the Hypothesis upon which an upright or finitely perfect Creature may be supposed to be formed?* Suppose Creatures intended for a particular state of life, for which particular Propensions were necessary, suppose them endued with these as one part of their nature, together with the moral Principle of Understanding, including both a practical sense of virtue and a speculative perception of it, as the other part of their nature: then supposing all these several Principles both natural and moral, to be in the most exact proportion possible: such Creatures would be made upright or finitely perfect.

*And how might such upright Creatures actually fall, by reason of particular Propensions, supposed to be one part of their Nature?* The objects of these particular Propensions being present, are a temptation to gratify them without the allowance of the moral Principle; till at last danger of deviating from right ends in actual deviation. And every act of Irregularity might disorder the inward constitution of mind, and alter those exact proportions, wherein the Uprightness consisted: but repeated Irregularities would produce habits, and spoil the constitution; so that Creatures made upright would thus become corrupt and depraved.

*How, on the contrary, might such Creatures have preserved their Uprightness?* By steadily following the moral Principle, supposed to be one part of their nature; and thus withstanding that danger of Defection, which necessarily arose from Propension, the other part of their nature.

*And how, by so doing, might they have raised*

*themselves to a more secure state of virtue?* By preserving their integrity for some time, their Danger would lessen ; since Propensions by being inured to submit, would do so more easily and of course : And again, their Security against this lessening Danger would increase ; since the moral Principle would gain additional strength by exercise.

*How do these considerations farther show, our original and natural need of Discipline?* Thus it is seen that vicious Indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character : and that virtuous Self Government is not only right in itself, but improves the inward constitution and character.

*To what Degree may the inward constitution or character be improved by Discipline?* Though it be supposed impossible for particular Affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral Principle, and it be consequently allowed that such Creatures would for ever remain defectible : yet their Danger of actual deviation might be almost infinitely lessened. [*The Exception to this shall be noticed in its proper place.*]

*Why may virtuous Habits and Discipline be necessary even for Creatures without blemish?* Their higher perfection may consist in, and their complete Security result from, Habits of virtue formed in a state of Discipline. And it is plainly conceivable that such Creatures may be in Danger of going wrong, and the ground of their Danger may be considered as a Deficiency in them, to which virtuous habits are the natural supply.

*And why much more necessary for those who have corrupted their Nature?* Upright Creatures may want to be improved, depraved Creatures to be renewed ; for those Discipline of the milder sort is expedient ; for these Discipline of the severer sort must be necessary.

*From the consideration that Creatures are capable of being raised and improved by moral Discipline, what conclusion naturally follows? That they should be placed in Circumstances peculiarly fit for that purpose.*

*The present World, it is observed, is peculiarly fit for moral Discipline; and why peculiarly so? The snares and temptations of Vice render it so: because they render Caution, Resolution, Recollection and Self-denial necessary to such as will preserve their Integrity. The Experience which the present State affords hath a Tendency to give us a practical sense of things, very different from a mere speculative knowledge, that we are liable to vice and capable of Misery, &c.*

*What is the case supposed, to show that strong Temptations render this World a more improving state of Discipline? Suppose a person to know himself in danger of doing any thing wrong, which yet he resolves not to do: continued Recollection, and keeping upon his guard, is a continued exerting of that act of virtue in a high degree, which need have been instantaneous and weak had the Temptation been so.*

*Whether Self-denial be essential to Virtue and Piety? This it would be ridiculous to assert; for actions materially virtuous, may be no exercise of the virtuous Principle, i. e. not be virtuous actions at all:*

*Whether Self-denial be necessary to Discipline and Improvement? This is nearer the truth, though not the truth itself; because actions materially virtuous may be an exercise of the virtuous Principle: and when they are, they have a Tendency to form and fix habits of Virtue. But this Tendency is proportionably increased in circumstances of Dangers, Temptations and Difficulties.*

*What is the seeming Exception to the foregoing Observations? Neither our intellectual Powers,*



nor our bodily strength, can be improved beyond a certain degree : and both may be over-wrought. And possibly there may be somewhat analogous to this, with respect to the moral character.

*Whether these observations be liable to any other Exceptions ?* There may be several other Exceptions to them. Observations of this kind cannot be supposed to hold minutely and in every case. It is enough that they hold in general.

*These Observations hold in general, and to the extent intended ; how far are they intended to hold ?* So far, as that from them may be seen distinctly, that the present World is peculiarly fit to be a state of Discipline, for our Improvement in Virtue and Piety : in the same sense as some Sciences are fit to form the mind, of such as will attend to them, to habits of Attention.

*OBJ.* That the present World, so far from being in Event, a Discipline of Virtue to the generality of men, that on the contrary, it is to them seemingly a Discipline of Vice.

*ANS.* The viciousness of the World is in different ways the great Temptation which renders the present world a state of virtuous Discipline to good men. The whole end is not pretended to be accounted for : the partial end is that some persons attend to the notices of Virtue and Religion ; and the present World may be an Improvement of virtue to such persons. And though the present World should not actually become a state of moral Discipline, even to the generality ; yet Analogy shows that this would be no proof that it was not intended for moral Discipline : For though the greatest part of seeds of Vegetables and bodies of Animals, put in a way to grow to Maturity and Perfection, decay before they are improved to it : yet no one will deny that those Seeds and Bodies which do attain it, answer the End that Nature designed.

*OBJ.* That so far as a course of behaviour

materially virtuous, proceeds from Hope and Fear, so far it is only a Discipline and strengthening of Self-love.

*ANS.* The doing what God commands because he commands it, is Obedience, though it proceeds from Hope or Fear. And a constant Regard to Veracity, Justice and Charity may form distinct Habits of these virtues. Nor is there any foundation for this nicety of Distinction in order to depreciate all Religion proceeding from Hope or Fear : because Veracity, Justice, and Charity, regard to God's authority, and regard to our own chief Interest, are not only three coincident : but each in itself is a just motive or principle of action.

*Whether is the active Principle of virtue the only essential part of a right character ?* There is another nearly connected with it, *i. e.* passive Submission or Resignation to God's Will ; to this the foregoing observations are also applicable. [*The 14th Sermon at the Rolls is chiefly employed, about that temper of mind, to which the Author gives the name of Resignation.*]

*Why is it contrary to Experience to imagine, that nothing but Afflictions can give Occasion for Resignation : or that it can have no respect to a state of perfect Happiness ?* Prosperity itself often begets extravagant and unbounded thoughts. Imagination is as much a source of Discontent as any thing in our external Condition. It is indeed true, that there can be no Patience when sorrow shall be no more : yet there may be need of a Temper of mind formed by Patience.

*Upon what accounts may Habits [i. e. what are formed by Use,] of Resignation be necessary for all Creatures ?* Though Self-love, considered as an active Principle leading us to pursue our chief Interest, cannot but be absolutely and uniformly coincident with the divine Will : yet it may be questioned whether Self-love considered as the Desire of our



own Interest, can any more than particular Affections be thus absolutely coincident, in such sort, as not to be liable to be excited upon occasions impossible to be gratified.

*But why must Habits of Resignation be certainly necessary for human Creatures?* Both Self-love and particular Affections considered as passive Feelings rend and distort the mind ; and therefore stand in need of Discipline and Resignation, in order to moderate them.

*Whence does it appear however, that the proper Discipline for Resignation is Affliction?* Since a right behaviour under that Trial, will habituate the mind to a dutiful Submission, which, with the active Principle of obedience, make up the Character which belongs to us as dependent Creatures.

*What, upon the entire, is the general Analogy to this life's being a state of moral Discipline for a future World?* Such Characters and such Qualifications, are necessary for mature life in the present World, as Nature alone does in no wise bestow ; but has put upon us in great part to acquire in our progress from Childhood to mature age.

*OBJ.* That all the Trouble and Danger attending such Discipline might have been saved us, by our being made at once the Creatures and the Characters, *which we were to be.*

*ANS.* It is in vain to object in this manner, for we experience that *what we were to be*, was to be the effect of *what we would do* : and that the general conduct of Nature is not to save us Trouble or Danger, but to make us capable of going through them.

*Acquirements of our own, Experience and Habits, are observed to be the natural supply to our Deficiencies ; why the natural supply?* Since it is as plainly natural to set ourselves to acquire the Qualifications, as the external things we stand in need of. And it is a general law of Nature, that we

should with regard to our temporal Interest, form and cultivate practical Principles within us. And it is credible the like may be our case with regard to a future state.

*What is the third sense of the present World's being a state of Probation? That it is a Theatre of Action for the manifestation of persons Characters to the Creation of God.*

*Whether is Probation in this sense really distinct from Probation in the other senses? It may be only a consequence of our being in a state of Probation in the other senses of that word.*

*How may the manifestation of persons Characters relate to a future state? In ways and manners which we are unacquainted with : particularly it may be a means of their being disposed of suitably to their Characters.*

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## CHAP. VII.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE object of this chapter is, to remove objections against the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of the natural and moral Government. As it is allowed that Analogy can be no direct answer to such objections, they are therefore urged as of great weight and plainly unanswerable. It is here shown that Analogy may however be remotely of great service, in suggesting the answer and showing it to be a credible one. The answer which Analogy suggests is comprehended in these three observations; 1. God's natural Government of the World is a Scheme, imperfectly comprehended. 2. In it Means are used to accomplish Ends. 3. It is carried on by general Laws. Now the moral Government being supposed analogous to the natural, the like objections against the moral Government admit of the like answer, as will further appear in the 4th chapter of the second Part, to which chapter the present is intimately related. From these observations the Author anticipates a Conclusion, which is here branded with the title of absurd and wicked: and indeed it is no less so, than is the exploded Sophism—That Vice, which is essentially productive of great Evil, should be tolerated because it may accidentally be productive of some Good. To the whole answer herein suggested, it is objected, that it is so much taken from our Ignorance as to be equally applicable to invalidate the Proof of Religion as to answer objections against it: but this objection is entirely removed by the quadripartite answer which is made to it. [In the 8th chapter

of the second Part, the answer suggested by Analogy to this class of objections, will be farther vindicated.]

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*In what consists the immediate and direct Force of analogical reasoning, when applied to Religion ?* It gives a strong credibility to the general doctrine of Religion, and to the several particular things contained in it, considered as so many Matters of Fact.

*Why cannot Analogy be an immediate or direct answer to objections against the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of the moral Government ?* The credibility or certain truth of a matter of Fact does not immediately prove any thing concerning the Wisdom or Goodness of it : and Analogy can do no more immediately or directly, than show things to be true or credible considered only as matters of Fact.

*Yet how may Analogy be a mediate or remote answer to such objections ?* By suggesting the answer and showing it to be a credible one. For Analogy suggests and makes it credible, that the moral Government is a Scheme, and imperfectly comprehended : and this affords a general answer to all objections against the Justice and Goodness of it.

*In what sense is the word Scheme, System, or Constitution, to be understood throughout the present chapter ?* As distinguished from a number of single unconnected Acts of distributive Justice and Goodness. [See the Preface to the Sermons at the Rolls, where this question is fully explained.]

*Under what two distinct Heads are objections against Wisdom, Justice and Goodness removed ?*  
I. By showing that upon supposition that God ex-

ercises a moral Government over the World, the Analogy of his natural Government suggests and makes it credible that the moral Government must be a Scheme quite beyond our comprehension. II. By a more distinct observation of some particular things in God's natural Government, the like things being supposed by Analogy to be contained in his moral Government.

1. *Upon the former supposition, how does Analogy render it credible that the moral Government is a Scheme?* The world and the whole natural Government is a Scheme, whose parts correspond to each other, and to a whole; as really as any work of art, or any particular model of a civil Constitution and Government. And in this Scheme Individuals, Species, Actions and Events, have various and unknown relations to each other.

*Why must the natural Government be a Scheme incomprehensible?* We cannot conjecture whether all Creatures, Actions and Events throughout the whole of Nature, have relations to each other: but as all Events have future unknown consequences; so every Event must be connected with somewhat farther in Nature unknown to us. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing in Nature: of all its Causes, Ends, and necessary Adjuncts.

*Whence does it appear that the moral Government is analogous to, and intimately connected with, the natural Government?* The natural and moral Government are so connected as to make up but one Scheme. And probably the natural Government is carried on merely in subserviency to the moral; as the vegetable World is formed for the animal, and organized Bodies for Minds.

*And why may the moral Government be a Scheme as properly as the natural Government?* Since every act of divine Justice and Goodness, may be supposed to look much beyond itself, and its imme-



diate object ; and may refer to other parts of God's moral administration, and to a general Plan, every part of which may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it.

*Of what parts may we suppose the moral Scheme to be constituted?* The time, degrees, and ways in which virtue is to remain in a state of Warfare and Discipline, and in which Wickedness is permitted to have its progress : the times for executing Justice : the kinds of Rewards and Punishments, &c.

*Supposing the moral Scheme to be thus perfectly analogous to the natural, why must our Ignorance be a just answer to objections against the Wisdom and Justice of the moral Scheme?* For it is most evident that we are not competent Judges of the moral Scheme, from the small parts of it which come within our view in the present life : and therefore no objection against any of these parts can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

*For what Reasons may it be necessary to show more distinctly, how just an answer our Ignorance is, to objections against the Justice and Goodness of Providence?* For our Ignorance and the consequence here drawn from it are universally acknowledged upon other occasions ; yet are universally forgot in arguing against Religion. Besides it is not easy to keep in mind the degree of our Ignorance and to make due allowance for it.

*And to this effect, what two very bold Assertions are supposed to be advanced against the Scheme of Providence?* 1. That the things complained of, the Origin and Continuance of Evil, might have been prevented by Interpositions, so guarded as to preclude all mischief arising from them : 2. That a Scheme of Government is itself an Imperfection ; since more Good might have been produced without any Scheme, by single unrelated Acts of distributive Justice and Goodness ; because these would have occasioned no Irregularities.

*What is the obvious answer to these Assertions, even admitting their truth? The Government of the World might be just and good notwithstanding; for at most these Assertions could only infer that it might be better.*

*But so far from being true, whence does it appear that they are mere arbitrary Assertions? No man can bring any Proof of them even to the lowest degree of probability; and instances might be brought of many suppositions much less out of our reach, which are absolutely impossible, and reducible to the most palpable Self-contradictions.*

*By what contrast is it shown, that unknown Relations and unknown Impossibilities, when they apply, do really render our Ignorance a satisfactory answer, to objections against Justice and Goodness? If a man contemplating any one providential Dispensation, which had no Relation to any others, objected that he discerned in it a want of Justice and Goodness; to such objection our Ignorance would be no answer. But when we know not but the parts objected against may be relative to other parts unknown: and when we are unacquainted with what is practicable in the case; then our Ignorance is a satisfactory answer.*

*And for what Reason do unknown Relations and unknown Impossibilities, render our Ignorance a satisfactory answer? Because an unknown Relation or an unknown Impossibility may render the thing objected against just and good in the Highest degree.*

*II. But it is observed that these objections will receive a farther answer under the second general Head; and here it may be asked, what are the particular things in the natural Government, the like to which may be supposed by Analogy to be contained in the moral? First. In the natural Government means are used to obtain Ends. Secondly. The natural Government is carried on by general Laws.*

*First. In the natural Government Means are used to accomplish Ends ; how is this observation applicable to answer objections against the natural Scheme ?* As no Ends are accomplished without Means : so undesirable Means conduce to Ends so far desirable as to produce an overbalance of Good. And many Means are necessary to accomplish Ends, which Means, before experience, seemed to have a contrary tendency.

*And supposing the same observation to hold, how is it applicable to answer objections against the moral Scheme ?* The things objected against the moral Scheme may be Means by which an overbalance of Good will finally be produced. And there is no presumption against this notwithstanding the Means should seem to have a contrary tendency.

*By what observations does the Author here prevent an absurd and wicked Conclusion ?* Though our natural Constitution by which we are capable of Vice and Misery may contribute to the happiness of the world ; and though the actual permission, nay commission, of Evil may be beneficial to it, [*i. e.* less mischievous than that it should have been forcibly prevented by another person :] yet still it would have been better and infinitely more beneficial if this Evil had never been done.

*And what are his Illustrations upon this Occasion ?* In the natural world some Disorders bring their own Cures ; some Diseases are themselves Remedies : many a man had died but for the Gout or a Fever : yet it would be madness to assert that Sickness is a better state than Health ; though the like has been asserted with regard to the moral World.

*Secondly. The natural Government is carried on by general Laws ; for this, what wise and good reasons does the Analogy of Nature suggest ?* We experience good Ends to be accomplished, as indeed all the Good we enjoy is accomplished, by this Means, that the Laws by which the world is governed,

are general ; for otherwise we could not act with that foresight which we see likely to procure such Good.

*Whether could all Irregularities, as they arise, be prevented by general Laws ?* Though every single case may at length be thus provided for : yet it may be impossible to prevent or remedy all Irregularities as they arise, by any even the wisest and best general Laws. For we see that this is absolutely impossible in civil Government.

*But we are apt to presume, that they might be prevented by present Interpositions ; what visible and immediate bad effects would these Interpositions produce ?* They would encourage idleness and negligence ; and would render doubtful the natural Rule of Life, which is ascertained by this that the world is carried on by general Laws.

*And why would present Interpositions also produce distant bad effects ?* This must take place in consequence of the wonderful Connections and Relations throughout the Scheme of Providence.

*How does it appear therefore, that the not interposing, far from being a ground of complaint, is an Instance of Goodness ?* Since Interpositions would produce Evil and prevent Good : and might even produce greater Evil than they would prevent.

*OBI.* “ That these supposed Impossibilities and “ Relations are what we are unacquainted with ; “ Or that the answers here given to objections against “ Religion, may be equally applied to invalidate the “ proof of Religion ; since their stress lies so much “ upon our Ignorance.”

*FIRST.* Though total Ignorance in any matter does equally preclude all Proof concerning it, and objections against it : yet partial Ignorance does not. Our Ignorance may be a satisfactory answer to objections against a thing, and yet not affect the Proof of the thing itself ; till this can be shown it is frivolous to assert, that our Ignorance invalidates the Proof of Religion as it does objections against it.



**SECONDLY.** Suppose unknown Impossibilities and unknown Relations might justly be urged to invalidate the Proof of Religion as well as to answer objections against it: and that in consequence of this the Proof of Religion were doubtful. Yet still moral obligations would remain certain, though it were uncertain what would be the final consequences of observing or violating them.

**THIRDLY.** These answers to objections against Religion are not equally applicable to invalidate its Proof. Because Analogy in general and a thousand particular Analogies show that this way of arguing in objecting against Religion is delusive; because they show it not incredible that, could we comprehend the whole, we should find the permission of disorders to be consistent with, and even Instances of Justice and Goodness. Now this is not applicable to the Proof of Religion as it is to objections against it; and therefore cannot invalidate that Proof as it does these objections.

**FOURTHLY.** Though generally speaking these answers may be said to be taken from our Ignorance; yet they are not taken from our Ignorance merely, but from somewhat which Analogy shows us concerning it: which is, that our Ignorance in the Possibilities of things leads to false conclusions in cases similar to the present.

*In the first part of this answer, it was inferred that partial Ignorance does not invalidate the Proof of a thing as it does objections against it; from what reasoning in general does this appear? We may be convinced that a person is of such a character, and that consequently he will pursue such Ends; though we are ignorant of the proper way of acting, in order most effectually to obtain those Ends: and here objections to his manner of acting might be answered by our Ignorance; though the Proof that such Ends were intended might not*



be invalidated thereby. [*The application of this to Religion, which is a proof of the moral character of God, is obvious, see the Original.*]

*With regard to the second part of the answer ; for what two reasons would moral obligations remain certain, notwithstanding a doubt remained concerning a future state ?* 1. Because moral obligations arise immediately from the judgment of our mind, which we cannot violate without being self-condemned. 2. They would remain certain from considerations of Interest. For though it were doubtful what will be the future consequences of Virtue and Vice ; yet it is credible they may have those consequences which Religion teaches us they will have, and this credibility is a certain obligation in point of Prudence, to live in the practice of all that is good. [*See Introduction : see also chap. 6 part II. where it is shown that Doubting implies Evidence, &c. In the Preface to the Sermons at the Rolls, are two distinct paragraphs which relate to this question. The 15th of these Sermons is entirely taken up with the consequences resulting from our Ignorance.*]

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## CONCLUSION.

[As to the omitted chapters, 1. 2. 3. 6. see the Original.]

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*INTRODUC.* That there is an intelligent Author and natural Governor of the World, is a Principle gone upon in the foregoing Treatise, as proved. And indeed so necessary is it to have this Principle established, that without an intelligent Author and Governor of Nature, no account at all can be given, how this Universe came to be, and to continue, as it is. Nor can any account be given of its general End and Design without a moral Governor of it. But with an intelligent Author and Governor of the World, these things may be accounted for. Because the very notion of an intelligent Author of Nature, proved by final Causes, implies a Will and Character; and our whole nature leads us to conclude His Will and Character to be moral, just and good. However in consequence of this his Will and Character, he formed the Universe as it is, and carries on its Course as he does.

*CHAP. I.*—Many things prove it palpably absurd to conclude, that we shall cease to be at Death. Particular Analogies show that there is nothing strange in our being to exist in another state of Life. And that we are now living Beings is a strong probability, that we shall *continue* so. There is no other ground for concluding, that Death will destroy us, than some such imagination, as That of our gross bodies being Ourselves: which is contrary to Experience. Experience too most clearly shows us the Folly of concluding, from the Body and living Agent mutually affecting each other, that the Dissolution of the former is the Destruction of the lat-

ter. And there are remarkable Instances of their not affecting each other, which lead us to a contrary conclusion.

*CHAP. II.*—That God's Government hereafter will be by Rewards and Punishments, is made out from the consideration that the constitution of our Nature is such, as to admit of Misery, as well as to be productive of Happiness. And we experience ourselves to partake of both in some degree : and we also know what higher degrees of both we are capable of.

*CHAP. III.*—Our whole sense of things leads us to think, that God will reward the good Actions and punish the bad Actions. This is also confirmed by observing, that some sort of moral Government is necessarily implied in That natural Government of God, which we experience ourselves under : that good and bad actions, at present, are naturally rewarded and punished ; and this moral Scheme of Government, thus in some degree established at present, together with the essential Tendencies of Virtue and Vice, raise in us an Apprehension, that it may be further perfected in a future state.

*CHAP. IV.*—Our future and general Interest is made to depend upon our Behaviour ; notwithstanding the Difficulty of securing it and the Danger of losing it : just as our temporal Interest is made to depend upon our Behaviour ; notwithstanding the like Difficulty and Danger.

*CHAP. V.*—Indeed the whole account of our being placed in such a condition as the present, is beyond our comprehension. Religion gives this partial account of it, that the Character of Virtue and Piety <sup>must be</sup> are necessary Qualifications for a future state of Security and Happiness ; and that the present state was intended to be a School of Discipline for improving in ourselves that Character. This Intention of Nature is rendered highly credible by observing ; that we are made for Improvement of

all Kinds : that it is a general appointment of Providence, that we cultivate practical Principles and form Habits of action, so as to become fit for what we were wholly unfit for before : that Childhood and Youth is naturally appointed to be a state of Discipline for mature age : and that the present World is peculiarly fitted for a state of moral Discipline.

*CHAP. VI.*—It has been shown that all objections from Necessity, against Religion, and against the notion of moral Government and of a Probation state, are vain and delusive.

*CHAP. VII.*—God has in his natural Government suggested an answer to all our short-sighted objections against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of his moral Government.

These things, which, it is to be remembered, are matters of Fact, ought to awaken mankind, and make them reflect upon their Condition. The credibility of Religion from Experience and Facts here considered, should afford sufficient Motives to Religion, and ought to make men live in the general Practice of Virtue and Piety. The Plea of ungovernable Passion on the side of Vice is no reason, and is but a sorry excuse; for men in their temporal concerns are inured and necessitated to govern their Passions. But the proper motives to Religion, are the proper Proofs of it, from our moral Nature, from the presages of Conscience, and from our natural Apprehension of God under the character of a righteous Governor and Judge; a Nature Conscience, and Apprehension given us by Him: and from the confirmation of the dictates of Reason, *by Life and Immortality brought to light by the Gospel.*

END OF THE FIRST PART.

## PART II.

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### OF REVEALED RELIGION.

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#### CHAP. I.

##### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

IN the present chapter is made, an Inquiry into the Importance of Christianity, which, as the Author observes, is no improper Introduction to a Treatise concerning the Credibility of it. Two opinions of the adversaries of Revelation are advanced; in refutation of which Opinions, Christianity is considered under a twofold important View, I. As a Republication and external Institution of natural Religion: and under this Head is shown its Importance, considered merely as subservient to natural Religion. II. As containing an account of a Dispensation of things, not at all discoverable by Reason. By way of illustration are added two Deductions, in one of which is stated, the Distinction between positive and moral Precepts in Religion; and by the other Deduction we are taught, the ground of the peculiar preference which the moral Duties of Religion claim, when they interfere with its positive Duties.

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*What two Opinions, adverse to Revelation, are examined in the present chapter?* 1. Some persons pretending the sufficiency of natural Light, avowedly reject all Revelation, as, in its very notion, incredible and fictitious. 2. Others neglect and overlook Revelation, as of small importance, provided natural



Religion be kept to. With little regard, either to the Evidence of Revelation, or to objections against it.

*By what observations, is the absurdity of the first Opinion made appear?* Its extravagance will appear by considering, the state of Religion in the heathen world before Revelation; and the present state of Religion in Countries which have borrowed no light from it: by considering the Doubtfulness, Ignorance, and Inattention of men in general. And even admitting, that the generality of men could reason out the System of natural Religion: yet there would still be occasion for Revelation, to teach natural Religion in its genuine simplicity, void of superstition, and to be a standing admonition of it. Nor would it be more extravagant to affirm, that men are so completely happy in the present life, that it implies a contradiction to suppose they could be more so.

*By what specious reasoning is the second Opinion supported, by its Advocates?* The only design of Revelation, say they, must be to establish the moral System of Nature, and to enforce the practice of natural piety and virtue: but it is immaterial whether these things are believed and practised, upon the Evidence and Motives of Nature or of Revelation.

*Why does the second Opinion require the more particular consideration?* Though it be not the same with the other, yet it borders close upon it, and at length runs up into it. And its consideration will farther show the extravagance of the other Opinion, and the truth of the observations already made in answer to it.

*How, at first sight, is it apparent, that Christianity is not an indifferent thing?* It is not an indifferent thing whether we will obey or disobey God's commands, unless we can be assured of all the Reasons for them, and that those Reasons have now ceased. And this is a thing impossible.

*Under what two Heads, is it proposed to show more distinctly the Importance of Christianity?* By considering it, I. As a Republication and external Institution of natural Religion, adapted to the present circumstances of mankind, and intended to promote natural Piety and Virtue. II. As containing an account of a Dispensation of things, not discoverable by Reason, in consequence of which several distinct Precepts are enjoined us.

*With regard to the first Head, how is Christianity a Promulgation of natural Religion?* It instructs mankind in the moral System of the World: that it is the work of an all-perfect Being, and under his Government: that virtue is his law; and that there will be a future righteous Judgment.

*In what respect, does Christianity teach natural Religion in its genuine Simplicity?* It teaches it free from Superstition, with which it was corrupted and in a manner lost.

*What sort of a Promulgation of natural Religion is Revelation?* An authoritative Promulgation of it, affording the Evidence of Testimony for its truth.

*How does it appear, that the Scripture Revelation, besides proving revealed Religion, is also applicable to the proof of natural Religion?* As the Law of Moses and Gospel of Christ, afford the only Evidence of the one: so also they afford additional Evidence and a new practical Proof of the other; for they afford additional Evidence of God's general Providence as moral Governor of the World. And thus natural Religion is as much proved by Revelation, as if its proof had been the sole thing designed.

*And why do the Miracles and Prophecies recorded in Scripture, prove God's general Providence over the World, as our moral Governor and Judge?*  
 1. This character of the Author of Nature is connected with and implied in that Dispensation. 2. This character is taught and insisted upon, by those

who wrought the Miracles and delivered the Prophecies.

*This additional Proof of natural Religion, by Miracles and Prophecies, may be liable to objection as a matter of Speculation : but why not as a practical thing ?* Suppose a person to teach natural Religion to a Nation wholly ignorant of it ; the gift of Prophecy and the power of working Miracles would add Credibility and Authority to his teaching. Suppose too, a man placed by nature in the most advantageous situation with regard to Religion ; to him it would be a great Confirmation, to find that moral system of things distinctly revealed, which he from principles of Reason may be supposed to have believed in.

*Christianity is a Promulgation of the law of Nature, with new Light ; how so, and in relation to what particular Doctrines ?* Life and Immortality are eminently brought to light by the Gospel. The great Doctrines of a Future State, the danger of a Course of Wickedness, and the Efficacy of Repentance, are not only confirmed, but taught, particularly the latter, with a light to which that of Nature is but darkness.

*Christianity is important, as an external Institution of natural Religion ; and here, what does a visible Church imply ?* It is a Society distinguished from common ones, and from the rest of the world, by peculiar religious Institutions ; by an instituted method of Instruction ; and by an instituted form of external Religion.

*What separate and distinct advantages, have miraculous Powers and a visible Church afforded to Christianity ?* Miracles served at first, for the Introduction and Establishment of Christianity : a visible Church was intended to continue it, and carry it on throughout all ages.

*What are the Ends or Reasons, for the Institution of a visible Church ?* 1. To prevent the sinking and forgetting of Christianity, which in a few

ages must have happened to a considerable degree, had its first Founders only taught, and by miracles proved Religion to their Cotemporaries, 2. That, by admonition, instruction, and the public exercise of Religion; *the body of Christ* might be *edified*, i. e. trained up in Piety and Virtue for another state.

*By what similitude, does the Author show the Tendency of a visible Church, towards promoting natural Religion?* A visible Church was instituted: to be, like a City upon a Hill, a standing Memorial of our duty to our Maker: to call men continually by Example and Instruction to attend to it: and by the Form of Religion ever before their eyes, to remind them of the Reality: to be the Repository of the Oracles of God: to hold up the Light of Revelation in aid to that of Nature, and propagate it throughout all generations.

*What farther Tendency, has a visible Church to promote natural Religion?* As being an instituted method of Education, intended to be of more peculiar advantage to those who would conform to it.

*From these observations, how does the reason and importance of positive Institutions obviously appear?* The advantages of a visible Church could not be secured without positive Institutions, since the visibility of the Church consists in them.

*OBJ.* That Christianity has been perverted, and has had but little good Influence.

*ANS.* Such objections cannot be admitted except upon principles of Atheism, because the Manifestation of the Law of Nature by Reason has also been perverted. The good effects of Christianity have not been small; nor have its supposed ill effects been any at all: and even these were either aggravated or done on pretence. In natural Religion, as well as in Christianity, it is a first Principle, that the Dispensations of Providence are not to be



judged of by their Perversions, but by their genuine Tendencies, if men would do their part.

*Why is Christianity important in a practical sense?* It is the very scheme of the Gospel that each Christian should, by his Profession and Practice, contribute towards continuing it and carrying it on.

*How may we briefly recapitulate the particulars, in which Christianity is important, considered merely as subservient to natural Religion?* As a Promulgation of natural Religion, in its genuine Simplicity. As an authoritative Promulgation of it. As a Promulgation of it with new Light. And as an external Institution of it.

*But Christianity is chiefly important, as considered under the Second general Head; and here, what Instance does Baptism afford, of Precepts enjoined us by Revelation?* We are commanded to be baptized, not only in the name of the Father, but also of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

*Whence arises the importance of our Duties to the Trinity?* Not from positive command merely, but also from their Offices and their relations to us.

*What are their different Offices, and how is their relation to us discovered?* God is Governor of the World upon the evidence of Reason: Christ is the Mediator between God and Man upon the evidence of Revelation: and the Holy Ghost is our Guide and Sanctifier also upon the evidence of Revelation.

*Why ought not the manner in which the Relation is made known, whether by Reason or Revelation, make any alteration in our Duty?* Because our Duties arise out of the Relations themselves, not out of the manner in which we are informed of them.

*Religion is either internal or external; in what consists internal Religion?* In an inward principle, to be exerted in such and such inward Acts of the Mind and Heart.



*If Religion be considered as internal, what will be the Essence of natural Religion, as distinguished from revealed?* The Essence of natural Religion consists in religious regards to God the Father Almighty. And the Essence of revealed Religion consists in religious regards to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

**QUESTION.** “What are the inward religious regards, appearing obviously due to the Son and Holy Spirit; as arising, not merely from command in Scripture, but from the very nature of the revealed Relations, which they stand in to us?”

**ANS.** The religious Regards of reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope.

*Whether the manner of expressing this inward Worship, and the inward Worship itself, be matter of pure revealed command?* In what external manner this inward worship is to be expressed, is a matter of pure revealed command: But the internal Worship itself, is no farther matter of pure revealed command, than as the Relations they stand in to us are matters of pure Revelation.

*How does the Author apply the combined force of the preceding observations, to refute the advocates of the second Opinion?* Such persons forget that Christianity, even what is peculiarly so called, as distinguished from natural Religion, has yet somewhat very important even of a moral nature. They forget that Revelation informs us of somewhat new, in the state of mankind and in the Government of the World: as acquainting us with Relations, which could not be otherwise known. They should recollect that it points out the only means of obtaining spiritual Assistance. And upon supposition of the Truth or Credibility of Christianity, the treating it lightly, is the most presumptuous rashness, and may be attended with the most serious even natural Consequences.

*Whence appears the truth of the observation, that Christianity, as distinct from natural Religion, has somewhat very important of a moral Nature? The Office of our Lord being made known, and his Relation to us, the obligation of Duty to him is moral; since it arises before external command immediately out of his Office and Relation itself.*

*For what End are the two following Deductions added? In order to illustrate the foregoing observations, and to prevent their being mistaken.*

**FIRST DEDUCTION.** Hence we may clearly see, where lies the Distinction between what is positive and what is moral in Religion.

*What is the Distinction between moral and positive Precepts in Religion? Moral Precepts are those, the Reasons of which we see: Positive Precepts are those, the Reasons of which we do not see (g).*

*What is the Distinction between moral and positive Duties? Moral Duties arise out of the nature of the thing itself, prior to external command. Positive Duties do not arise out of the nature of the case itself; but from external command: nor would they be Duties at all, but for such command.*

*By what Instance is it shown, that the manner in which the Relation is made known does not constitute a Duty positive? Baptism in the name of the Father is as much a positive Duty as Baptism in the name of the Son; since both arise equally from revealed command: though our Relation to the Father is made known by Reason; and our Relation to the Son by Revelation.*

(g) This is the Distinction between moral and positive Precepts, considered respectively as such. But since positive Precepts have somewhat of a moral Nature, we may see the Reason of them, in this View. So far as they are alike, we discern the Reasons of both: So far as they are different, we discern the Reasons of the former, but not of the latter. [see Note in Original.]

*And by what Instance is it shown, that the manner in which the Relation is made known, does not constitute a Duty moral?* Gratitude as immediately becomes due to Christ, as being the voluntary Minister of the Gospel Dispensation; as it is due to God from his being the Foundation of all Good: though the first is made known by Revelation only; the second by Reason.

*What is the twofold consideration of positive Institutions?* Positive external Institutions founded on natural Religion, as Baptism in the name of the Father: and positive external Institutions founded on revealed Religion, as Baptism in the name of the Son and Holy Ghost.

**SECOND DEDUCTION.** From the Distinction between what is moral and what is positive in Religion, appears the Ground of that peculiar Preference, which the Scripture teaches us to be due to the former.

*Why should positive Institutions in general, as distinguished from this or that particular one, have the nature of moral commands?* Since the Reasons of positive Institutions in general appear: though we should not see the Reasons why such particular ones were instituted rather than others. As for instance, the external worship of God is a moral Duty, though no particular mode of it be so.

*In instituting a Comparison between positive and moral Duties, what Caution is to be observed?* That they be compared together no farther than as they are different; no farther than as the one are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the others are moral, or arise out of the apparent Reason of the thing, without such external command.

**QUESTION.** Supposing a moral and positive Precept enjoined by the same Authority, to come in competition, and that in certain cases it is im-

possible to obey both; which then is to be obeyed?

*Whence does it appear, that the strict and logical, though less practical, way of deciding by Reason, warrants the preference to be given to the moral Precept?* 1. There is an apparent Reason for the preference and none against it; since we see the Reason of the moral, but not of the positive Precept. 2. The positive Institutions enjoined by Christianity are Means to a moral End: and the End must be acknowledged more excellent than the Means. 3. The observance of positive Institutions is no religious obedience at all, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral Principle.

*Why does the more practical and less strict way of deciding by Reason, warrant the same preference?* Since the whole moral Law is as much matter of revealed command, as positive Institutions are, they are upon a level in this respect. But the moral Law is moreover written upon our Hearts, and interwoven in our Nature; and this is a plain intimation which is to be preferred.

*Besides the above determinations (by Reason,) how may the Question be determined from other considerations?* *First.* Though mankind have in all ages been prone to place their Religion in peculiar positive Rites by way of Equivalent for obedience to moral Precepts; yet without making any Comparison between them, the Nature of the thing shows all Notions of that kind to be utterly subversive of true Religion: as they are also contrary to the whole general Tenor of Scripture; and to its most express particular Declarations, that nothing can render us accepted of God, without moral Virtue. *Secondly.* Upon mentioning together positive and moral Duties, the Scripture always puts the stress of Religion upon the latter, and never upon the former. *Thirdly.* Our Lord himself has taken Occasion to make the Comparison between positive Institutions and moral Precepts;



and he has determined expressly and in Form, which shall have the Preference when they interfere.

*Upon what Occasions did our Lord institute the Comparison, and what was his general answer?* When the Pharisees censured him, for "eating with Publicans and Sinners;" and also when they censured his Disciples, for "plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day." His determination was; "I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice."—*Hos. vi. 6.*

*Why, indisputably, does the manner of expression render the above determination general?* Though the Answer had been confined in expression, to the particular case upon which it was given, yet even then by parity of Reason the determination might be inferred to be general. But the sense and literal words are equally applicable to any other Instance of a Comparison between positive and moral Duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. The determination is stronger too; for if Mercy is to be preferred to positive Institutions, scarce will Justice give place to them.

*It is remarkable, that on both occasions there is a Declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of the words which are quoted; why cannot this refer to their literal meaning?* It is scarcely possible for the most ignorant person, not to understand the literal sense of the Passage: and understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their condemning the guiltless, which it is said (*Matt. xii. v. 7.*) a right understanding of it would have done.

*What therefore does this Declaration imply?* That the Pharisees had not learnt from it as they might, wherein the general spirit of Religion consists: that it consists in moral Piety and Virtue as distinguished from Forms and ritual Observances. This the divine application in the Gospel abundantly proves.



*How does it appear, that the above preference is no permission, to run into the opposite extreme, or to neglect the positive Duties of Religion when they do not interfere with its moral Duties? It is great presumption to make light of any Institutions of divine appointment. And commands merely positive, admitted to be from God, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them.*

*By what observations does the Author conclude this his inquiry, into the importance of Christianity, whether considered as subservient to natural Religion, or as entirely above it? The account now given of Christianity, most strongly enforces upon us the Obligation of searching the Scriptures, &c. If in Revelation there be found any Passages, the seeming meaning of which, is contrary to natural Religion; we may conclude, such seeming Meaning not to be the real one. But it is not any degree of a Presumption against an Interpretation of Scripture, that such Interpretation contains a Doctrine, which the light of Nature cannot discover; or a Precept which the law of Nature does not oblige to. [See an occasional Sermon, preached by the Author, before the Incorporated Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts. In this Sermon are to be found, most of the things mentioned in the present chapter.]*

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## CHAP. II.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THIS chapter is, in the Original, distributed into three general Heads. I. That there can be no peculiar Presumption from Analogy, against the general Scheme of Christianity. This is proved, by an Argument which logicians call, negative Induction, or a syllogism disjunctive from the enumeration of the parts, in which we deny the conclusion, from having proved the negative of all the different cases, in which it could be supposed to hold. II. That there is no Presumption against a Revelation as miraculous, at the beginning of the World. The question in this case is shown, not to be a question about a Miracle, but a question about a matter of Fact, or about the exertion of an ordinary, or of an extraordinary Power. III. That there is no objection against Miracles; nor against a Revelation after the settlement, and during the continuance, of a Course of Nature.

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*What is the Author's method, in the second Part of his Treatise?* Having shown the Importance of the Christian Revelation, and our obligations to attend to it upon supposition of its truth or credibility, *chap. 1.* The next thing in order, is to consider, the supposed Presumptions against Revelation in

general, *chap. 2.* To consider the objections and prejudices against the Christian Revelation in particular, *chaps. 3. 4. 5. 6.* For it seems the most natural Method, to remove these Prejudices; before we proceed to consider the positive evidence for Christianity, and the objections against that Evidence. [*See the Original chap. 7.*]

*What is the Presumption, from the Analogy of Nature, which is commonly supposed against Miracles?* That stronger Evidence is necessary to prove their truth and reality, than would be sufficient to convince us of other Events or Matters of Fact.

I. *What does the general Scheme of Christianity imply?* That God created and invisibly Governs the World by Jesus Christ; and by him will hereafter judge it in righteousness. And that good men are under the secret Influence of his Spirit.

*By what Argument is it shown, that there is no Presumption from Analogy, against the general Scheme of Christianity?* If the Analogy of Nature raises any presumption against the general Scheme of Christianity, it must be, either because it is not discoverable by Reason or Experience: or else because it is unlike the known Course of Nature, which is discoverable by Reason or Experience. But Analogy raises no Presumption against the truth of this Scheme, upon either of these accounts.

*First. Why does Analogy raise no Presumption against the Scheme of Christianity, as not being discoverable by Reason or Experience?* Innumerable things in the Scheme of Nature and Dispensations of Providence, past, present, and to come, are in like manner beyond the reach of our natural Faculties. That part of the Scheme open to our view, is but a point, in comparison to the whole plan of Providence.

*Secondly. Why does Analogy raise no Presumption against the Scheme of Christianity, as being unlike the known Course of Nature?* There is no

Presumption from Analogy, that the *whole* divine Government naturally unknown, and *every thing* in it, is like to any thing in the divine Government naturally known ; and therefore no Presumption against any thing in the former, upon account of its being unlike to any thing in the latter. And we see, as well in the natural as in the moral Government of the World, things much unlike ; and we ought not therefore to wonder at such unlikeness between things visible and invisible. However the Christian and Natural Schemes are by no means entirely unlike.

*How are visible and invisible Miracles distinguished from each other ?* The notion of a Miracle, considered as a Proof of a divine Mission, is understood by every one. Invisible Miracles, the Incarnation of Christ, for Instance, being secret, they cannot be alleged as a Proof of such a Mission ; but require to be themselves proved by visible Miracles. Revelation itself is miraculous ; and Miracles are the Proof of it.

II. There can be no peculiar Presumption from the Analogy of Nature, against a Revelation considered as miraculous at the beginning of the World : *why no such Presumption as is implied in the word miraculous ?*

For a Miracle, in its very notion, is relative to a Course of Nature ; and implies somewhat different from it as being so. Now either there was no Course of Nature at that time : or if there were, we are not acquainted, with what the Course of Nature is upon the first peopling of Worlds. And therefore it is not a question about a Miracle, but a common question of Fact, and admits of the Report of Tradition, like other matters of Fact, of equal antiquity.

Or thus : When mankind was first placed in this state, there was a Power exerted, totally different from the present Course of Nature. Now whether

this Power, to which we cannot properly apply the word *miraculous*, stopped immediately after it had made man, or went on in giving him a Revelation, is a question about the manner and degree in which an ordinary Power exerted itself.

Or suppose the Power exerted in the formation of the World, be called miraculous ; the case will not be different : since it must be acknowledged that such a Power was exerted. For supposing it acknowledged, that our Saviour spent some years in a Course of Miracles : there is no more presumption against his having exerted this miraculous Power in a certain degree greater, than in a certain degree less ; in more or in fewer Instances.

*Independently of the authority of Scripture, what Evidence have we, that there was a Revelation at the beginning of the World ?* There is no Presumption against it from the Analogy of Nature. The whole of History and Tradition reports, that Religion came into the world by Revelation. And the state of Religion in the first ages, supposes and implies that Revelation was its original.

*Of what importance is it to prove, that there was a Revelation at the beginning of the World ?* As this is a Confirmation of natural Religion ; so it tends to remove any prejudice against a subsequent Revelation.

III. It may be objected, that there is some peculiar presumption from Analogy against Miracles ; particularly against Revelation, after the Settlement, and during the Continuance, of a Course of Nature.

*In general, why can there be no presumption from Analogy, against a Revelation as miraculous, after the settlement of a Course of Nature ?* Before we can raise an *Argument* from Analogy, for or against a Revelation considered as miraculous, we should be acquainted with a similar or parallel case. And nothing short of the history of a World in like



circumstances with our own, can be a parrallel case : and even this, being a single Instance, a presumption from it, must be infinitely precarious.

*More particularly, why can there be no presumption from Analogy, against Miracles ?*

**FIRST.** There is very strong presumption against common speculative truths, and against the most ordinary Facts, which yet is overcome by almost any proof. The question therefore whether there be any peculiar presumption at all from Analogy, is of no consequence ; since there is no presumption of such Degree, as to render Miracles incredible.

**SECONDLY.** Leaving out the consideration of Religion, the presumption against Miracles, is less than against common Facts, before any Evidence for either.

**THIRDLY.** Taking in the consideration of Religion, we see distinct Reasons for Miracles. And this gives a positive credibility to their history, in cases where these Reasons hold.

**FOURTHLY.** Miracles must not be compared, to common natural Events : but to the extraordinary Phenomena of Nature, such as, Comets, the power of Magnetism, and that of Electricity. And as distinguished from such phenomena, there is no peculiar presumption against Miracles.

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## CHAP. III.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THIS chapter obviates objections in general, against Christianity considered as a Matter of Fact. Its general Design is to show, that objections against Christianity itself, are frivolous, as distinguished from objections against its Evidence.

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*What are the various objections against Christianity, which are here collected into one View? Objections, against the Scheme of Christianity; against the whole manner in which Christianity is put and left with the World; against several particular Relations in Scripture, chap. 5.; against Revelation, from its light not being Universal, and from its supposed doubtful Evidence, chap. 6. Objections from the Deficiencies of Revelation, from things appearing to men, Foolishness, and from its containing Matters of Offence. Objections against the prophetic parts of Scripture, in consequence of the rashness of Interpreters, and the hieroglyphic and figurative language in which they are expressed.*

*What is the Author's general observation, in answer to all objections against Christianity, considered as a Matter of Fact? Upon supposition of*

a Revelation, it is highly credible beforehand, that we should be incompetent judges of it to a great degree: and that it would contain many things apparently liable to great objections, in case it be judged of otherwise than by the Analogy of Nature.

*With what Caution, is this observation urged?* With great Caution of not vilifying the Faculty of Reason; for it is not here asserted, that a supposed Revelation cannot be proved false, from internal Characters. And it is also allowed that Reason ought to judge of the meaning, morality, and evidence of Revelation. [See the Conclusion.]

*What internal Characters are mentioned, as sufficient to prove a supposed Revelation to be false?* Either Immoralities or Contradictions.

*How is it proposed, to carry into effect the general Design of the chapter; or to prove that objections against Christianity are frivolous, as distinguished from objections against its evidence?* Some observations are first offered as applicable to the whole of Christianity; and then the same observations are applied to Inspiration in particular.

*What does the natural Dispensation of Providence imply?* That God governs the World and instructs his Creatures, according to certain rules in the course of Nature; known by Reason and Experience.

*And as additional thereto, what does the revealed Dispensation imply?* That God by Revelation, instructs men in things concerning his Government, which they could not otherwise have known, and has reminded them of things, which they might otherwise have known: and has attested the truth of the whole by Miracles.

*How does the Analogy of the natural Dispensation, render it credible, that we are incompetent judges of the revealed Dispensation?* If both Dispensations have the same Author, if they coincide, and together make up one Scheme of Providence:

our being incompetent judges of the one, renders it credible that we are also incompetent judges of the other.

*Whence appears the absurdity, of judging of Revelation, otherwise than by Experience and Analogy ; or whence does it appear, that the objections of an incompetent judgment are frivolous ?* The constitution and course of Nature, upon or after Experience, is found vastly different, from what before Experience would have been expected ; and such as men fancy, there lie great objections against.

*By what supposed case, is the same thing illustrated ?* Suppose a Prince to govern his dominions in the wisest manner possible, by common known Laws ; and suppose him in some Instances to govern in a different manner : one of his subjects who was an incompetent judge of the common and ordinary Rules of his Government, must also be an incompetent judge of the extraordinary Rules, or of the manner and degree in which the common Laws should be suspended or deviated from.

*How may these observations be applied, to Inspiration in particular ?* As we are in no sort judges beforehand, respecting the Laws, Degrees, or Means of that Instruction naturally afforded us : so neither are we judges of the method and proportion in which supernatural light and Instruction would be afforded us.

*In what particulars, consists our Ignorance, before Experience, in respect to natural knowlege ?* We are ignorant, of its Degree or Kind ; how far each man could obtain it, by his own Reason ; how far men would be enabled to communicate it ; whether its Evidence would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful ; whether it would be equally convincing to all ; and whether it would be given at once or gradually.

*What are the analogous particulars of our Ignor-*

*ance, before experience, in respect to supernatural knowledge?* We are ignorant beforehand, of its Degree; how far miraculous Interpositions would be made, to qualify men for communicating it; whether its Evidence would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; whether its Evidence would be the same to all; whether the Scheme should be revealed at once or gradually; whether it should be committed to writing; or left to be handed down by verbal Tradition.

*OBJ.* "That a Revelation in some of the above Circumstances, one, for Instance, not committed to Writing, and thus secured against the danger of Corruption, would not have answered its Purposes."

*ANS.* What Purposes? It would not have answered all the Purposes which it has now answered; but it would have answered others, or the same in different degrees. And which of these were the Purposes, we could not have determined beforehand. It must therefore be quite frivolous to object as to any of the forementioned Respects, against its being left in one way rather than another: For this would be to object against things, because they are different from Expectations, which have been shown to be without Reason.

*What therefore is the only Question, concerning the Truth of Christianity?* Whether it be a real Revelation; not whether it be attended with every Circumstance which we should have looked for.

*And what is the only Question, concerning the Authority of Scripture?* Whether it be what it claims to be; not whether it be a Book of such sort, and so promulged, as weak men imagine it should be.

*Against the Authority of Scripture, what are the common objections, which are here enumerated?* Obscurity, seeming Inaccuracy of style, various



Readings, and early Disputes about the Authors of particular parts.

*Why are such objections, of little or no weight?* Though they had been much more considerable in Degree; yet they could not overthrow the Authority of Scripture unless the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord, had promised, that the Book containing the divine Revelation, should be secure from these things.

*How does it appear that no objections whatever, can overthrow a Revelation of such kind, as the Christian claims to be?* As there are no objections against the morality of Revelation, so no objections can overthrow Revelation, except such as can show, that there is absolutely no proof at all, of Miracles, of its miraculous obtaining in the World, or of Prophecy. If any proof remain of any of these, Religion, as to Practice, will be on the same footing as before.

*REMARK.* There are several ways of arguing, which, though just with regard to other Writings, are not applicable to Scripture: at least not to the prophetic parts of it.

*What Instance of the truth of this Remark?* We cannot argue that this cannot be the sense of any particular passage of Scripture, for then it would be expressed under a more apt Figure or Hieroglyphic: yet we may argue thus with respect to common Books

*What is the reason, of this Difference in arguing with respect to Scripture and other Writings?* In Scripture we are not, as we are in common Books, competent judges, how plainly, or under how apt an image, the true sense ought to have been represented. The only Question is, what appearance there is that this is the sense; and scarce at all how much more determinately it might have been exprest.

*OBJ.* "But is it not self-evident, that internal

“Improbabilities of all kinds, weaken external probable Proof?”

*ANS.* Doubtless. But to what practical purpose can this be alleged, since internal Improbabilities which rise even to moral Certainty are overcome by the most ordinary Testimony: and since we scarcely know what are Improbabilities as to the matter before us.

*Thus far has been considered, the first part of the Author's general observation, [that we are incompetent judges, and that the objections of an incompetent judgment are frivolous;] how is the second part of his observation, more fully expressed; and by what reasoning is it supported? That if men will pretend to judge of Scripture by preconceived Expectations; the Analogy of Nature shows beforehand, that it is highly credible, and probable, that they will imagine they have strong objections against it, however unexceptionable it really be. For so, prior to Experience, men would think they had strong objections against their whole course of natural Instruction.*

*How does it obviously appear, that our natural mode of Instruction, would seem liable to strong objections, if judged of before Experience? If the Instruction afforded to Brutes by Instincts and Propensions, and to men by these together with Reason, were a matter of probable Proof, and not of certain Observation; it would be rejected, in many instances as incredible, merely upon account of the Means by which such Instruction is given.*

*In illustration hereof, what is the Instance, derived from Astronomy and Medicine? Would it not be thought highly improbable, that men should have been so much more capable of discovering and ascertaining, the laws of Matter and of the planetary motions, than the causes and cures of Diseases, wherein human life appears so much more nearly concerned.*

*What Instance, derived from Invention?* How capricious and irregular this way of Information? to be in an instant and unexpectedly made acquainted with a thing, which for years we have in vain been seeking

*What Instance, derived from Language?* Its imperfections are innumerable. It is in its very nature inadequate, ambiguous, and liable to abuse both from neglect and design.

*What Instance, derived from the Sagacity and Foresight of Brutes?* It would be thought impossible that Brutes, should in many respects, act with a Sagacity and Foresight often superior to what is used by men.

The Author in the next place proceeds, to apply these observations to a particular objection, and he observes that they are in like manner applicable to others of the like kind, and to almost all objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its Evidence.

*PARTIC. OBJ.* Because some persons, in the Apostolic Age, exercised miraculous Gifts in a disorderly manner; this is made an objection against their being really miraculous: for it is thought that such Gifts should have been committed to other sort of persons: or that these persons should have been endued with Prudence, or have been restrained and directed in the use of them, by miraculous Interpositions.

*ANS.* It is to be supposed that the person had the same power over the miraculous Gift, as he would have had over it, in case it had been the effect of Habit or Study: and therefore would use it in the same manner, either regularly or irregularly, upon proper or improper occasions. We are incompetent judges in what degrees and manners, God should miraculously interpose: upon supposition of his doing it in some degree and manner. In the natural Course of Providence,

superior Gifts and Talents are not always bestowed upon persons of Prudence. Our natural Instruction is not always given in a manner most suited to recommend it; but often with Circumstances apt to prejudice us against it.

*In what other respects, is there a great resemblance, between the light of Nature and of Revelation?* Practical Christianity is plain and obvious, like the ordinary Rules of conduct in our temporal affairs. The more accurate knowledge of Christianity, like many parts of natural and civil knowledge, may require exact thought. The Hindrances of natural and supernatural knowledge, are the same. The way of advancing them, is the same, *i. e.* by pursuing hints and intimations, which are generally disregarded by others.

*How does Analogy show it not to be incredible, that Scripture, though so long in the possession of mankind, may contain many truths yet undiscovered?* The same Phenomena, the same Faculties of Investigation, by which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been lately made, were equally in the possession of mankind long before. And possibly, Events as they came to pass, may be intended to open and ascertain several parts of Scripture.

*OBJ.* That this Analogy between natural and supernatural light fails in a material Respect: for natural knowledge is of little or no consequence.

*ANS.* But we have been speaking of the general Instruction, which Nature does or does not afford us. Besides, some parts of natural knowledge are of the greatest consequence. But suppose the Analogy did, as it does not, fail in this Respect; yet it might be abundantly supplied from the whole Constitution and Course of Nature: which shows that God does not dispense his Gifts according to our notions of their advantages and consequences. And this in general, with his method of dispensing



knowledge in particular, would make out an Analogy full to the point.

*OBJ.* "Scripture represents Christianity as an expedient to recover a lost World, to supply the Deficiencies of natural light. Is it then credible that this supply should be so long withheld, and then be made known to so small a part of mankind : should be so deficient, obscure, and doubtful, and be liable to the like Perversions and Objections as the light of Nature itself?"

*ANS.* Without determining how far this in Fact is so. It is by no means incredible, that it might be so, if the light of Nature and of Revelation be from the same hand. Revelation is a supply to natural light, in like manner as natural Remedies are a supply to natural Diseases : yet these Remedies are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. The same Principles which would lead us to conclude that natural Remedies must be certain, perfect, and universal, would lead us likewise to conclude, that there could be no occasion for them ; *i. e.* no Diseases at all. Therefore, our Experience that there are Diseases, shows it beforehand credible that these Remedies may be, not certain, nor perfect, nor universal ; because it shows, that the Principles upon which we should expect the contrary are fallacious.

*What is the just consequence, from all these things?* Not that Reason is no judge of what is offered us as of divine Revelation. This would be to infer that we are unable to judge of any thing, because we are unable to judge of all things. Reason can and ought to judge of the Meaning, Morality, and Evidence, of Revelation.

*First. In what sense ought Reason to judge, of the Morality of Scripture?* Not whether it contains things different from what we should have expected from a wise and good Being : but whether it contains things plainly contradictory to Wisdom,



Justice, and Goodness: plainly contradictory to what natural light teaches us of God.

*Whether is there any objection to the Morality of Scripture, as containing things contradictory to Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness?* There is no objection upon this account, but such as would equally conclude that the Constitution of Nature is contradictory to Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness.

*What sort of Precepts, have afforded the most plausible pretence, for asserting that Revelation contains Immoralities?* There are some Scripture Precepts requiring Actions, which without the Precept would be immoral or vitious.

*How may such Precepts be vindicated?* The Precept changes the whole nature of the Action, by showing that not to be unjust or immoral, which prior to the Precept must have been so. And though a Course of external acts, which without the command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached Commands have no such natural Tendency.

*From the Distinction between mutable and immutable Morality, how is it manifest, that the Precept may change the nature of the Action?* None of these Precepts are contrary to immutable Morality. Precepts requiring acts contrary to immutable Morality, [*e. gr.* to cultivate Principles, and act from the Spirit, of Treachery, Ingratitude, &c.] would be immoral, because the Precept does not alter the nature of the case or of the action: But it would be quite otherwise in Precepts requiring only the doing of an external action, [*e. gr.* the privation of Property or Life, the right to which, arises solely from the grant of God.]

*Whence arises, the whole Difficulty of the Precepts in question, and the consequent absurdity of objections made to them?* The whole Difficulty arises from their being Offences; and from their being liable to be perverted: but objections upon

this account are not objections against Revelation ; but against the whole notion of Religion as a Trial ; and against the general Constitution of Nature.

*Secondly. In what sense ought Reason to judge of the Evidence of Revelation ?* [See chap. 7. in the Original.]

*In what terms does the Author express, the Consequence of the foregoing observations ?* The Question upon which the truth of Christianity depends, is scarce at all, what objections there are against its Scheme, since there are none against the Morality of it ; but what objections there are against its Evidence : Because it has been shown, that the objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its Evidence, are frivolous.

*Upon the whole, whence appears the unreasonableness and little weight, of the way of objecting, which is used throughout the present chapter, i. e. of objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its Evidence ?* Little or no weight is to be laid upon a way of objecting, which when applied to the general Constitution of Nature, Experience shows not to be conclusive. It is resolvable into Principles, and goes upon Suppositions, which mislead us to think, that the Author of Nature would not act as we experience he does ; or would act, in particular cases, as we experience he does not in like cases.

*From what other consideration, may the unreasonableness of this way of objecting, be farther proved ?* It will appear yet more evidently when it shall be shown, that the chief things objected against are justified by distinct, particular, and full Analogies, in the Constitution and Course of Nature. [Chap. 4. latter part. Chap 5. 6.]

*How does it appear, that the foregoing observations do not at all imply, that we can have no presumptive proof of the truth of a supposed Revelation ; whether it proceeds, for instance, from Enthu-*

*siasm and Policy?* When a supposed Revelation is more consistent with itself, and has a more general and uniform tendency to promote virtue, than could be expected from Enthusiasm and political Views ; this is a presumptive Proof of its not proceeding from them, and so of its truth : because we are competent judges, what might have been expected from Enthusiasm and Political Views.

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## CHAP. IV.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

OBJECTIONS against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of Christianity, are obviated by the same observations, as have been made, (chap. 7. Part I.) to the like objections against the Constitution of Nature. The Author then proceeds to show, that the principal objections, in particular, against Christianity, may be answered, by direct and full Analogies in Nature. One of these objections, made against the whole Christian Scheme of the Gospel, upon account of the apparently round-about Means by which it is carried on, is answered in the present chapter ; and the other objections are considered in the two following chapters.

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*What is the general observation, which, in the preceding chapter, has been made to objections against Christianity, considered as a Matter of Fact? Supposing a Revelation to be made, the Analogy of Nature renders it highly credible beforehand, that it must contain many things, different from expectation, and apparently liable to great objections.*

*OBJ.* That this observation is a very partial answer to such objections ; because it does not show that the things objected against can be wise, just, and good ; much less that it is credible they are so.

*ANS.* It will be shown distinctly, that objections against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of Christianity, admit of the like answer to what has been made (chap. 7. Part I.) to the like objections against the Constitution of Nature.

*What are the three observations, which afford an answer to objections against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of the Constitution of Nature? It is a Scheme, imperfectly comprehended. In it Means are employed to accomplish Ends. It is carried on by general Laws.*

*Upon what ground may the same observations be applied, to the like objections against Christianity? If Christianity be a Scheme and of the like kind with the Constitution of Nature; it is evident the like objections against it, must admit of the like answer.*

*FIRST. Why must Christianity be a Scheme? The moral Government and general Plan of Providence is gradually proceeding, so that finally, every one shall receive according to his Deserts, and truth and right finally prevail: Now Christianity is a particular Scheme under this general Plan of Providence, and a part of it conducive to its completion.*

*What are the various parts of the Christian Scheme, for which, in the Original, Scripture quotations are adduced? The mysterious œconomy of the Recovery of the world by the Messiah. His Incarnation, Passion, &c. The miraculous mission of the Holy Spirit. The invisible government of the Church. His second coming to judgment. And the re-establishment of the kingdom of God.*

*Why must Christianity be a Scheme, which is imperfectly comprehended? The Scripture asserts it to be so; and to all the purposes of judging and objecting, our Ignorance is as great as in the Constitution of Nature; and is as much an answer to objections against the perfection of the one, as against the perfection of the other.*

*SECONDLY. In the Christian Dispensation, Means are used to accomplish Ends; how does this observation tend to remove objections against Christianity? It shows the credibility that the things objected against, however foolish they appear*



to men, may be the very best Means of accomplishing the best Ends; and that their apparent Foolishness is no presumption against this, in a Scheme so incomprehensible.

*THIRDLY. How does it appear, that the Christian Dispensation may have been carried on by general Laws?* This will require to be more distinctly made out; in order to which it will be proper to consider, upon what ground the Course of Nature is said to be carried on by general Laws.

*Whether is it accurately true, that the whole Course of Nature is reducible to general Laws?* Some Laws in Nature are known, as for Instance, several general Laws of Matter; and a great part of the natural behaviour of living Agents, is reducible to general Laws. But innumerable other Laws in Nature, are so unknown that we call the Events accidental which come to pass by them.

*Upon what ground is it concluded, that the whole Course of Nature is carried on by general Laws?* By Analogy: for seeing that part is carried on by general Laws, we conclude this of the rest.

*Upon what ground is it concluded, that the Christian Dispensation may have been by general Laws?* Analogy is a just ground, if not to conclude, yet to apprehend, to render it credible, that God's miraculous Interpositions, may have been by general Laws of Wisdom.

*What Instances show, that the general Laws in the Christian Dispensation, are no more unknown than in the Course of Nature?* That some die when born: that others attain extreme old age: that one man should excel another in Understanding; these and the like we cannot reduce to any laws at all.

*How does this observation, that Christianity is carried on by general Laws, tend to remove objections, upon account of the permission of Irregularities?* There is no more reason to expect that every Exigence, as it arises, should be provided for by

these general Laws of miraculous Interpositions, than that every Exigence in Nature should be provided for by the general Laws of Nature.

*How does it distinctly appear, that objections against Christianity admit of the like answer, as the like objections against the Constitution of Nature? The appearance of Deficiencies and Irregularities in Nature, is from its being a Scheme, incomprehensible, wherein Means are used to accomplish Ends, and which is carried on by general Laws. And it is probable that there would be the like appearance of Deficiencies and Irregularities in Religion, i. e. Christianity would be liable to the like objections as the frame of Nature, and would therefore admit of the like answer.*

*What is the full and satisfactory answer, (as mentioned in the Author's Conclusion,) which the above three observations suggest, to objections against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of Christianity? That as partial Views give the appearance of wrong to things which upon farther consideration, and knowledge of their other Relations, are found just and good : so it is credible from the above observations, that the things objected against the Wisdom and Goodness of the Christian Dispensation, may be rendered Instances of Wisdom and Goodness, by their reference to other things beyond our View.*

*The objections against Christianity as a matter of Fact, and the objections against the Wisdom and Goodness of it, having been now obviated ; what is the next thing in order? To show that the principal objections, in particular, against Christianity, may be answered, by particular and full Analogies in Nature. As one of these objections is made against the whole Scheme of Christianity, it is here distinctly considered by itself.*

*OBJ.* “ That the Gospel Scheme seems to suppose, God was reduced to the necessity of a long

“ series of intricate Means, in order to accomplish  
 “ his Ends, the Recovery and Salvation of the  
 “ World : In like sort as Men, for want of Under-  
 “ standing or Power, are forced to go round-about  
 “ ways to arrive at their Ends.”

*ANS.* The Means may be tedious in our manner of conception : but there must be somewhat in the matter quite beyond our comprehension. Men may act by Means and Ends ; but we are ignorant how far things are considered by the Author of Nature under the single notion of Means and Ends. Men are impatient and for precipitating things : but the Author of Nature is deliberate, and has a Plan of things, requiring various and progressive systems of Means, and length of time for the execution.

*What are the particular and full Analogies in Nature, which afford the answer to the above objection ?* The whole natural world and Government of it, is not a fixt but a progressive Scheme, in which Means take up a length of time to obtain their Ends. For Instance, the change of Seasons, the ripening of Fruits. The gradual growth, of Vegetables, and of animal bodies. Rational Creatures form their Characters by gradual accession of knowledge. Our Existence too is successive, and one state of life is appointed to be a preparation for another.

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## CHAP. V.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

**THIS** chapter is, in the Original, distributed into eight parts or Sections : I. All presumptions against the general notion of a Mediator between God and Man, are removed, by the Analogy of Nature. II. The possibility is shown, that future Punishments may be in the way of natural Consequence. III. It is shown, that the Analogy of Nature gives ground to hope, that the Consequences of Vice might be prevented, by some provision made for that purpose. IV. Natural light shows, that nothing which we could do ourselves, could prevent the punishments of Vice from actually following. Natural light shows, that Repentance alone, and by itself, is wholly insufficient to do away Sins. V. Revealed light, fully satisfies us, in respect to the future unprevented consequences of Wickedness; it both confirms and teaches the Efficacy of Repentance, with a degree of light, to which, as has been elsewhere observed, the light of Nature is but darkness. VI. The Scripture account, of the particular manner of Christ's Interposition in the Redemption of the World, or his office as Mediator, is set forth : and the three heads under which Divines usually treat of this his office, are distinctly enumerated. The usual order is that of Prophet, Priest, and King : the Author mentions the second head last, only in reference to objections against it, which objections he in the last place removes. VII. Answer is made to two objections against the Atonement of Christ ; the one, that we do not see the Necessity or Expediency of it ;

the other, that it represents God as indifferent whether he punished the innocent or the guilty. VIII. The reason that we do not see the Expediency of Christ's Atonement is farther accounted for, by observing that this relates to the divine Conduct, and not to our Duty, in regard to which none can plead want of Information. The reader can easily trace this eightfold division, which it would be inconvenient to have retained.

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*How does it appear, that there is no presumption or objection from the light of Nature, against the general notion of a Mediator, between God and Man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity?* God's visible government of the world is by the Instrumentality and Mediation of others; and that part of his invisible government may be in the same way, is at least as credible as the contrary. All living Creatures are brought into the world, and their life is preserved, by the Instrumentality of others. We experience that God does appoint Mediators to be the Instruments of Good and Evil, of Justice and Mercy, to us. The objection referred to is urged, not against Mediation in that high, eminent, peculiar sense in which Christ is our Mediator; but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a Mediator at all.

*Before entrance is made, into the revealed doctrine of the Redemption of the world, what supposition is to be distinctly noticed?* That the world is under God's proper moral government, or in a state of Religion.

*Whether do the future Punishments of Wickedness, follow in the way of natural Consequence?* There is no absurdity in supposing that they may follow in a way analogous to that, in which many



miseries, and temporal punishments, follow certain courses of action at present: *i. e.* in the way of natural Consequence.

*What is meant by saying, that future Punishments follow in the way of natural Consequence? That they follow according to some general Law already established in the Universe, from God's original Constitution of the world; from the nature he has given us, and from the condition in which he has placed us. Instance; a person trifling on a precipice by natural Consequence falls down, &c.*

*What Offence might arise, from even supposing that future Punishments follow by natural Consequence? And how may this offence be prevented? Good persons may be offended at it; as if this were taking the execution of Justice out of God's hands and giving it to Nature. But they should remember, that when things come to pass according to the Course of Nature, this doth not hinder them from being His doing, who is the God of Nature. And Scripture ascribes to divine Justice punishments known to be natural.*

*Whether is this Supposition, or rather this mode of speaking, necessary to the Author's reasoning? It is only used for Illustration: for as it must be admitted that future Punishments are not a matter of arbitrary appointment, but of Reason, Equity, and Justice; so it amounts to the same thing, whether they follow by natural Consequence, or in any other way.*

*Whether, from Analogy, does the divine Government appear so severely strict as to leave no room for Pardon, or for having the penal consequences of Vice prevented? The Analogy of Nature gives ground to hope that provision might have been made, perhaps originally, for preventing the future consequences of Vice from following inevitably and in all cases. For in natural Providence, provision is made that all the bad consequences of our actions,*

should not always follow, but should in certain degrees be prevented.

*What Instance both of Severity and Indulgence, does the constitution of Nature afford us? As the Author of Nature permits Evil: so he has provided Reliefs, and in many cases perfect Remedies for it; Reliefs and Remedies even for that Evil which is the fruit of our own misconduct.*

*Whether a more severe Constitution of things might not have been really good? We cannot say. For Instance, had the world been so constituted as that it should have been no more in human power to have prevented Misery from naturally following in any Instance, than in all: yet no one can say that this might not have been really good.*

*In the original Constitution of the world, what Instance have we of Compassion as distinct from Goodness? That provision is made by Nature, that we may and do, to so great a degree prevent the bad natural Effect of our Follies; this may be called Compassion as distinct from Goodness in general.*

*How does the Author intimate the general inattention, and misapprehension, of Mankind, with regard to the pernicious Consequences of Irregularity and Vice? Many will wonder at finding it spoken of as at all doubtful, that the ruinous consequences of vice might be prevented. The generality of mankind have scarce any apprehension at all concerning the matter. And some serious persons may have spoken unadvisedly concerning it.*

*How does Experience show these pernicious Consequences, if unprevented? The bad consequences of Irregularity will be greater, in proportion as the Irregularity is so. And the greater Instances of Vice, are incomparably greater than these Irregularities. The effects of Vice in the present world, are often extreme misery, irretrievable ruin, and even death.*

*Whether, judging from natural light, would any*

*thing we ourselves could do, alone and of itself prevent the future consequences of Vice?* We cannot say; for we do not know, all the Reasons which render future Punishment necessary; nor all the natural Consequences of vice, nor in what manner they would follow if unprevented.

*In reference to this question, what Opinion does the Author examine, as commonly urged against the doctrine of a Mediator?* The Opinion that Repentance and Reformation alone and by itself may be sufficient to expiate Guilt, and to prevent the future Consequences of Vice.

*How is this Opinion contradicted, by the whole Analogy of Nature?* People in their temporal Capacity ruin their Fortunes, and bring on Diseases: now sorrow for the past and behaving well for the future, may not indeed be useless, but is wholly insufficient of itself to prevent the natural consequences of their Follies. Men's natural Abilities of helping themselves are often impaired: or they are forced to be beholden to the Assistance of others. And the same may be the case in our religious Capacity.

*How is it contrary to all our notions of Government?* In civil Government it appears absurd to suppose, that Reformation alone would in all cases prevent all the judicial bad consequences of having done Evil: and though it might prevent them in some cases, yet we could not determine in what degree and in what cases it would do so.

*And why is it also contrary to the general sense of Mankind?* This appears by the general prevalence of propitiatory Sacrifices over the heathen world.

*To this darkness, or this light of Nature, what is the supply?* Revelation comes in, and satisfies every doubting fear concerning the future unprevented consequences of vice.

*What Supposition does Revelation make, con-*

*cerning the state of the world?* It supposes the world to be in a state of ruin. This Supposition seems the very foundation of the Christian Dispensation, and which if not proveable by Reason, yet is not contrary to it.

*What additional Information does Revelation afford, concerning the Efficacy of Repentance, and concerning the Means by which Pardon of Sin is to be obtained?* It teaches that Pardon is not obtained immediately upon Repentance, or by the sole Efficacy of it: but teaches at the same time, what Nature might justly have hoped, that there is room for an Interposition; and that God hath mercifully provided this Interposition, to prevent the destruction of the human kind.

*In what words does Scripture express this Interposition, and the Conditions upon which it is offered?* God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish. *John* iii. 16. Belief being here understood, not in a speculative, but a practical sense.

*What are the comparisons which, upon this occasion, illustrate the Goodness of the Almighty, as also the Love of his Son, towards mankind?* God gave his Son in the same way of Goodness, though infinitely higher in degree, as he affords some persons the friendly Assistance of their fellow Creatures in order to prevent their temporal ruin. And our Saviour compares his own Love to human Friendship. Though all comparisons in the case must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated. [See, in the Note of the Original, various unimportant questions, which the Author leaves undetermined.]

*Whether does it imply any thing inconsistent with divine Goodness, to have appointed that Sinners should have perished, but for certain Interposition to prevent it?* If there be any such appearance,



upon first thought; a second will entirely remove it. For neither would it be inconsistent with divine Goodness, supposing that the whole Creation must have perished, were it not for something appointed to prevent that ruin.

*OBJ.* That Christianity supposes Mankind to be in a state of Degradation.

*ANS.* There will be little reason to object to this Supposition, if we consider, the miseries and wickedness of the world; the wrongnesses which the best experience within themselves; and, that the natural appearances of human degradation were so strong, that the heathen moralists inferred it from those appearances. The Occasion of it, was the Crime of our first Parents: And this is particularly analogous to what we see in the daily course of natural Providence: as the Recovery of the world by Christ has been shown to be so in general.

*How does Scripture represent Christ's Office, of Mediator between God and Man?* He is the light of the World; the Revealer of the will of God, in the most eminent sense. He is a propitiatory Sacrifice; the Lamb of God: He is our High-Priest. And, which seems of peculiar weight, he is described beforehand in the Old Testament, under the same characters of a Priest and an expiatory victim.

*OBJ.* That Christ's Atonement is merely by way of allusion to the Sacrifices of the Mosaic Law.

*ANS.* The Apostle on the contrary asserts, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the legal Sacrifices were allusions to the final Atonement, to be made by Christ: that the levitical Priesthood, was a Shadow or Type of the Priesthood of Christ; in like manner as the tabernacle made by Moses, was a Copy of that shown him in the mount.

*What passages, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, does the Author cite, upon this occasion?* The Law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very



image of the things, *Hebr. x. 1.* The Priests that offer gifts according to the Law, serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God—see that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount, *Hebr. viii. 4. 5.* It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Wherefore he saith, Sacrifice and offering [i. e. of bulls and of goats,] thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me—Lo I come to do thy will O God—By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all, *Hebr. x. 4. 5. 7. 9. 10.* Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without Sin, unto salvation, *Hebr ix. 28.* [Without sin, i. e. without bearing sin, without being a Sin-offering.]

*How, from a variety of Scripture expressions, does it appear, that there was an Efficacy in Christ's Atonement, additonal to, and beyond, mere Instruction, Example, and Government of the Church?* Scripture declares that he died for the Jews; that by the Efficacy of his death, he should collect the children of God: that he redeemed us from the curse of the law: that he is our Advocate, Intercessor, and Propitiation. That he is the Author of Salvation. That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself: that he destroyed him that had the power of death. That God hath highly exalted him, and hath committed all power and judgment unto him.

*Under what three heads, do Divines usually treat Christ's Office as Redeemer?* *First.* He was by way of eminence The Prophet, that should come into the world. *Secondly.* He has a Kingdom which is not of this world. *Thirdly.* He offered himself a propitiatory Sacrifice, and atoned for the Sins of the world.

*First. In what respects, was he eminently The Prophet?* He published anew the Law of Nature.

**He taught us authoritatively. He gave to the moral System of Nature, the additional Evidence of Testimony. He revealed distinctly the manner in which God would be worshipped; and revealed also, the Efficacy of Repentance, and a future state of Rewards and Punishments.**

*Secondly. What Memorials are there, of his invisible kingdom?* He founded a visible Church, to be a standing Memorial of Religion, and Invitation to it: Over this he exercises an invisible Government, “for the perfecting of the saints, for “the edifying of his body.” All persons who live in obedience to his laws, are members of this Church; and for these he is “gone to prepare a place,” &c.

*Thirdly. In reference to the Priesthood of Christ, how is the great Atonement itself represented, as distinguished from those expiatory Sacrifices, which were merely in allusion thereto?* Expiatory Sacrifices were commanded the Jews, and obtained amongst most other nations, from Tradition; and probably their original was Revelation. They were continually repeated. “But now once in the “end of the world Christ appeared to put away sin “by the Sacrifice of himself.”

*Whether do any objections remain, with regard to the above heads?* All objections against the two first, have been obviated in the beginning of the chapter. And the third head is mentioned last, in regard to what is objected against it.

*Whether does our Author profess, to explain how, and in what manner, Christ's Atonement had such peculiar Efficacy, in obtaining Pardon of Sin?* This is not pretended. For Scripture has not explained it, but has left somewhat in the matter mysterious and unrevealed. And we are much in the dark, as to the manner in which the ancients understood Pardon to be obtained by Sacrifices.

*What are the dangerous extremes, which have arisen, from too great a curiosity in this respect?*

Some persons have gone beyond what the Scripture has authorised. Others, because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the World, to his Instruction, Example, and Government of the Church : and thus denying any Efficacy in it for obtaining pardon of Sin.

*What is the doctrine of the Gospel, upon this subject?* That Christ not only taught the Efficacy of Repentance, but rendered it of the Efficacy which it is, by what he did and suffered for us : That he revealed to Sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and also put them in that capacity.

*OBJ.* That we do not see how, or in what manner, the Sacrifice of Christ could be conducive to the Ends, which it is said to have obtained.

*ANS.* As our Ignorance with regard to the means, manner, and occasion of future Punishments, shows that we are not judges antecedently to Revelation, whether a Mediator was or was not necessary : so also the like Ignorance shows, that upon supposition of the necessity of a Mediator, we are not judges antecedently to Revelation, of the whole nature of his office. And therefore no objection can be urged against any part of that office, until it can be shown positively, not to be requisite to the Ends proposed ; or that it is in itself unreasonable.

*OBJ.* That the doctrine of Christ's being appointed to suffer for the sins of the world, represents God as being indifferent whether he punished the innocent or the guilty.

*ANS.* 1. This is not an objection against Christianity merely, but concludes as much against the Constitution of Nature : since in the daily course of natural Providence, it is appointed, that innocent persons should suffer for the guilty. 2. This method of our Redemption is unanswerably justified, from its apparent natural Tendency ; its Tendency to

vindicate the Authority of God's Laws, and to deter his Creatures from sin.

*How does it appear, that the first of these answers, cannot be evaded?* The infinitely greater importance of the appointment objected against in Christianity, does not prevent its being an appointment of the same kind. And the objection would be even stronger against the Constitution of Nature: because under God's natural Government we are commanded, and even necessitated, to suffer for the faults of others; whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary.

*What are the different considerations, which vindicate vicarious Punishments, from all appearance of Injustice or Inhumanity?* Upon the completion of the moral Scheme, every one shall receive according to his personal deserts. But during the progress of this Scheme, vicarious punishments may be fit and necessary. And being familiarized to see one man suffer for another, men are not shocked at it.

*Into what unwarrantable Conclusions, are men unavoidably led, by such objections?* The reason of insisting on objections of this kind is, either that men do not consider God's settled and uniform appointments as His appointments at all: or else they forget, that vicarious Punishment, is a providential appointment of every days experience: and then, from their ignorance of the more general Laws of Nature, and not seeing how Christ's sufferings could contribute to the Redemption of the world, unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will; they conclude his sufferings could not have contributed to it in any other way.

*And, considering the above objection, as an objection against Christianity, or as it is, an objection against the Constitution of Nature, what is its amount?* It amounts to no more in Conclusion than this, that a divine appointment cannot be necessary or expedient, because the objector does

not discern it to be so ; though he must own himself incapable of judging in the matter.

*Whence appears the great absurdity of denying, or objecting against, certain things in Scripture, because we cannot see the Necessity or Expediency of them ?* To argue from our Ignorance that certain Dispensations cannot be from God, because we cannot see the reasons for them, is highly absurd : still more so, when the things objected against, are analogous to the Dispensations of Providence, which are matter of daily experience. And the absurdity is still farther heightened by the consideration, that we are not actively concerned in the parts, the Expediency of which cannot be understood ; for these relate to the divine Conduct, which is a very different subject from our Duty, with respect to which none need plead want of Information.

*And why, after all, can there be no objection against the Precepts of Christianity, in consequence of any supposed obscurity in them ?* They contain nothing hard to be accounted for ; though if there were, a divine command ought to impose the strongest obligation to obedience. The reasons of all the Christian Precepts are evident.

*What reason for positive Institutions ?* They are necessary to keep up and propagate Religion.

*What reason for the internal and external Worship of Christ ?* This Worship arises out of what he has done and suffered for us, out of his Authority, and the Relation he stands in to us.



## CHAP. VI.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

IN the present chapter it is designed, to examine the objections against Revelation, from its want of Universality, and from the supposed Doubtfulness of its proof. Distinct and satisfactory answers, are made to each of these objections; and it is proved, that the things objected against, are justified by the whole Analogy of Nature. The supposed Doubtfulness of the Evidence of Revelation, is sometimes turned into a positive argument against its truth; hence the principal part of the chapter, is intended for the consideration of those Sceptics, who complain of the Doubtfulness of the Evidence of Religion. The Author, supposing that there is ground for the complaint, proves, in three practical Reflections, that even this state of Scepticism, could not excuse men, from religious obligations. The ground of the complaint is, in its turn, inquired into; but the result of the inquiry is, that the fault may be our own, and that the general proof of natural Religion, and of Christianity, is level to the meanest capacity.

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*What are the two objections against Revelation, to be considered in the present chapter? The objection from the supposed Doubtfulness of the proof of Revelation. And the objection from its not being universal.*

*How is the former of these objections, turned into a positive argument against Revelation? If the*

Evidence of Religion appears doubtful, this itself turns into a positive argument against it : because it cannot be supposed, that if it were true, it would be left to subsist upon doubtful Evidence. [*In the 8th chapter, this argument will be found distinctly stated.*]

*Upon what weak suppositions, do the above two objections depend?* That God would not have bestowed any favor at all on us, unless in the Degree we imagine might be most to our particular advantage. That it cannot be thought God would bestow a favor upon any, unless he bestowed the same upon all.

*What is the Author's observation, in answer to those Sceptics who object to Revelation, in consequence of the supposed Doubtfulness of its Proof?* They should consider, what that Evidence is, upon which they act, with regard to their temporal Interests : that our Nature and Condition require us in our daily concerns, to act upon Evidence much lower than probable ; and to engage in pursuits when the probability is greatly against success, if there be only a possibility that we may succeed. [*Here the Author assigns various causes of the Doubtfulness, wherein consists our temporal Interest, which causes are justly disregarded, upon account of the appearing greater advantages in case of success.*]

*What are the answers, to those who object against Revelation, because of its light not being universal?* They should observe, that the Author of Nature, in numberless Instances, bestows that upon some, which he does not upon others, who seem equally in need of it. That God has made such variety of Creatures, is indeed an answer to the objection. But, that God appears to bestow all his Gifts, with the most promiscuous variety both of degrees and kinds among Creatures of the same Species, is a more obvious and full answer to it. [*See the Conclusion.*]

*As neither the Jewish nor Christian Revelation have been universal ; so, at different times, both Revelations have had different degrees of Evidence : from what expressions, does the latter of these observations appear ?* The Jews who lived during the succession of Prophets, *i. e.* from the time of Moses till after the Captivity, had higher Evidence of the truth of their Religion, than those had, who lived in the interval between the Captivity and coming of Christ. And the first Christians had higher Evidence of the Miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, than what we have now. They had also a strong presumptive proof of the truth of it, of which we have little remaining.

*What proof of Christianity, had the primitive Christians, of which proof we have little remaining ?* The presumptive proof from the Influence which it had upon the lives of the generality of its professors.

*What proof of Christianity, may we or future ages have, which the primitive Christians could not have had ?* The proof from the conformity between the prophetic History, and the state of the world and of Christianity.

In the Original may be found, at some length, a supposed general account, of the various degrees of Evidence, and of the different situations, in respect to revealed light ; which account is applicable to the most unequal situations of different persons and countries, Heathens, Persians, Christians, &c.

*Now supposing that the account referred to, is somewhat of a true account ; how does the Author reconcile all Difficulties and Objections, which might seem to arise, in consequence of such various religious situations ?* All this would be perfectly uniform and of a piece with the conduct of Providence in the Distribution of its other Blessings. There would be nothing in all this, but may be paralleled by manifest analogies in our temporal Capacity.

*What is the equitable consideration, which vindi-*

*cates the moral Administration, from all shadow of Harshness or Injustice, in consequence of these unequal religious situations? Every one shall be dealt equitably with: no more shall be required of any one, than what might have been equitably expected of him, from the Circumstances in which he was placed: i. e. "every man shall be accepted according to what he had, not according to what he had not,"* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

*What wrong inference from this passage of Scripture, does the Author prevent? This doth not imply, that all person's condition here, is equally advantageous with respect to Futurity. It is no more a Reason why persons should not endeavour to get out of their Darkness, than why ignorant and slow people should not endeavour to learn, or should not be instructed.*

*What, in general, may be the account or reason of these things? It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the same wise and good Principle, whatever it was, which disposed the Author of Nature to make different Kinds and Orders of Creatures, disposed him also to place Creatures of the like Kinds, in different situations: And that the same Principle which disposed him to make Creatures of different moral Capacities, disposed him to place Creatures of like moral Capacities in different religious situations; and even the same Creatures, in different periods of their being. And the account or reason of this, is also most probably the account, why the constitution of things is such, that Creatures of moral Natures, for a considerable part of their life, are not subjects of Morality and Religion.*

*What, in particular, is the account of these things? As to this, we must be greatly in the dark, were it only that we know so very little even of our own case. Our present state may be the consequence of somewhat past, which we are wholly ignorant of:*

as it refers to somewhat to come, of which we know little more than is requisite for practice.

*How does it appear, that men's religious situations would not be equal, though Revelation were universal?* From men's different capacities of understanding, from the different lengths of their lives, from their difference of temper and constitution; their religious situations would be widely different, and the disadvantages of some in comparison of others, would be altogether as much as at present.

*To whom does the Author address the practical Reflections, which are now to be enumerated?* They may deserve the serious consideration of those persons, who think the Circumstances of mankind or their own, in respect to the Evidence of Religion, a ground of complaint.

*FIRST REFLEC.* The Evidence of Religion not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's Trial in the religious sense: as it gives Scope for a virtuous exercise or vitious neglect of the understanding, in examining or not examining into that Evidence.

*What is meant by saying, that the Evidence of Religion is not obvious?* That Religion is not intuitively true, but is a matter of deduction and inference; that a conviction of its truth is not forced upon every one, but left to be, by some collected with heedful attention to premises.

*In what may consist, the moral Probation of those fully convinced of the truth of Religion?* Their Probation may be whether they will live in obedience to its Precepts; or in a vitious neglect of its Practice.

*In what may consist, the moral Probation of those not fully convinced of the truth of Religion.* Their Probation may be, whether they will set themselves upon a serious and impartial examination of Religion, upon its System and Evidence being proposed to their thoughts; or whether they will vitiously neglect any such examination.



**SECOND REFLEC.** Though the Evidence of Religion should seem doubtful in the highest degree ; yet even this serious doubting apprehension, joined with the consideration of its importance, will put men into a general state of religious Probation ; and will as really lay them under obligations, as a full conviction that it is true. [For it will give occasion, to consider farther the important subject ; to preserve a sense that we may be under the divine moral Government ; and to refrain from all immorality and profaneness. And such conduct will tend to improve in them, that character which the practice of Religion would, in those fully convinced of its truth.]

*By what Instance, is the truth of this Reflection illustrated?* A person really in doubt, whether such a person had not done him a great favor, could not consider himself, in point of gratitude in the same situation, as if he had no such doubt, or was certain of having received no such favor.

*And why, with regard to the Rule of Life, can there be no great difference, between those who really doubt, and those fully convinced, of the truth of Religion?* Their hopes, fears, and obligations, will be in various degrees : but as the subject-matter of their hopes and fears is the same ; so the subject-matter of their obligations is not so very unlike.

*Why, in point of religious Example, is the Sceptic particularly accountable?* Some persons from a character of Understanding, or a situation of Influence in the world, may do infinitely more harm or good by their Example with regard to Religion, than they can do by acting well or ill in all the common intercourses amongst mankind.

*What is the proper ground, of these several observations?* That doubting implies some degree of Evidence for that, of which we doubt ; thus no person would be in doubt concerning the truth of a

number of Facts accidentally entering his mind, and of which he had no Evidence at all.

*Whether does an even chance imply any Evidence?* This case is equivalent to all others, where there is such Evidence, on both sides of a question, as leaves the mind in doubt concerning the truth.

*Are there any degrees, between no Evidence at all, and that degree of it, which affords ground for Doubt?* There are as many intermediate degrees, as between Doubt and Demonstration. And it is as real an imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced by a lower degree of Evidence when discerned, as it is, in the understanding, not to discern it.

*THIRD REFLEC.* The speculative Difficulties, in which the Evidence of Religion is involved, are no more a just ground of complaint, than external circumstances of Temptation, or than Difficulties in the Practice of it, after a full conviction of its truth: *i. e.* The same account may be given of the doubtful Evidence of Religion, as of Temptations and Difficulties with regard to Practice.

*And why should neither external Temptations, nor the speculative Difficulties of Religion, afford any just ground of complaint?* They render our state a more improving state of Discipline, by giving occasion to a more attentive and continued exercise of the virtuous principle.

*From the various Circumstances of men's religious situations, how does it appear, that there is no absurdity in supposing, that the speculative Difficulties of Religion may constitute the principal part of some persons moral Trial; may constitute their Probation in all senses?* As the chief Temptations of the generality of the world, are, the ordinary motives to injustice or pleasure; or to live in the neglect of Religion from a frame of mind almost insensible to any thing distant: So there are others, of a deeper sense as to what is invisible and future; who, from

their natural Constitution and external condition, may have small Temptations and Difficulties in common life. Now when these latter persons have a full conviction of the truth of Religion, its practice is to them almost unavoidable. Yet these persons, may need Discipline of a higher degree ; Or may be required to give a farther manifestation of their character to the creation of God, than such an easy practice of Religion would be.

*What are the Circumstances, in men's situations in their temporal capacity, analogous to those concerning Religion ?* In some situations, the chief difficulty with regard to conduct, is not the doing what is prudent when it is known ; but the principal exercise is Recollection, and being guarded against deceit. In other situations, the principal exercise is Attention, in order to discover what is the prudent part to act.

*Hitherto it has been supposed, that the alleged Doubtfulness of the Evidence of Religion, is not our own fault : but what are the various reasons, which prove, that the fault may possibly be on our own part ?* We find neglect, levity, carelessness, passion, prejudice, &c. do hinder us from being rightly informed in common subjects ; and they may in like manner, and perhaps in some farther providential manner, hinder us with respect to moral and religious subjects.

*How does it appear, that the fault may be our own, although the Scripture declares, that every one shall not understand ?* It makes no difference by what providential conduct this comes to pass ; whether the Evidence of Christianity was designedly so left, that those desirous of evading moral obligations should not see it ; and that honest-minded persons should see it : Or whether it happened by any other means ; makes no difference in the matter. [See the Note, in the Original.]

*Whence does it appear, that the general proof of*

*natural Religion, is level to common men?* Common men, are capable of being convinced upon real Evidence, that there is a God who governs the world, and this proposition is the foundation of natural Religion: they also feel themselves to be of a moral nature, and accountable Creatures. [*For various arguments, in proof of the existence of a Supreme Being, see the Introduction.*]

*Whence does it appear, that the general proof of Christianity, is, in like manner, level to common men?* As Christianity entirely falls in with men's natural sense of things; so common men may be persuaded, and made to see, that there is Evidence of Miracles, and many appearing completions of Prophecy.

*Whether this general proof, of natural and revealed Religion, be liable to objections?* Though this general proof be liable to objections, and run up into difficulties, which cannot be answered so as to satisfy curiosity; yet we can see that the proof is not lost in these difficulties, or destroyed by these objections.

*Whether is the thorough Examination of Religion with regard to objections, the business of every man?* This requires knowledge, time, and attention; and therefore cannot be the business of every man: but it ought to be considered by such as have picked up objections from others, and take for granted they are of weight against Religion.

*OBJ.* That if a Prince or common Master were to send directions to a servant, he would take care, that they should always bear the certain marks, whom they came from, and that their sense should be always plain: so as that there should be no possible Doubt, concerning their Authority or Meaning.

*ANS.* The proper answer to all this kind of objections is, that, wherever the Fallacy lies, it is even certain we cannot argue thus with respect to Him, who is the Governor of the world: and par-



ticularly that he does not afford us such Information with regard to our temporal interest. However, there is a full answer to this objection, from the very nature of Religion. The Prince absolutely desires such an external Action should be done, without concerning himself with the Motive or Principle upon which it is done: *i. e.* he regards only the Thing's being done; and not at all the Doing of it, or the Action. Whereas the whole of Morality and Religion consisting merely in Action itself, there is no sort of parallel between the cases. But if the Prince be supposed to regard only the action; *i. e.* only to desire to exercise or prove the Understanding or Loyalty of a servant; he would not always give his Orders in such a plain manner.

*The divine will with regard to Religion, may be considered either as absolute or conditional; why is it conditional?* The divine will is not absolute; for then it would be in our power to contradict it: But the whole Constitution of Nature affords certain Instances of its being conditional, that if we act so and so, we shall be rewarded, if otherwise punished.

*Upon the whole, why can there be no peculiar Difficulty in supposing, that our moral Probation may be in the respects above objected against?* There is no Pretence against it from the reason of the thing: since Ignorance and Doubt afford Scope for Probation in all senses, as really as intuitive conviction and certainty. We find too by Experience, that the like is frequently our Probation in our temporal capacity.

*How does the Author prevent offence, by pointing to the proper force and design of the preceding observations?* Several of these observations may well seem strange, perhaps unintelligible to good men; but if persons for whose sake they are made think so; persons who object as above and throw off all regard to Religion under pretence of want of Evidence; they are desired to consider, whether



their thinking so, be owing to any think unintelligible in these observations, or to their own not having such a sense of Religion, as even their state of Scepticism does in all reason require? It ought to be forced upon the reflection of these persons, that our nature and condition require us in the daily course of life, to act upon Evidence lower than probable; and to engage in pursuits, when the probability is greatly against success, if it be credible, that possibly we may succeed in them.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

THE chief objections which may be made against arguing from the Analogy of Nature to Religion, are collected, and are satisfactorily answered. In the Original, these objections are condensed into one general objection, which is here subdivided, lest the reader should lose sight of that part of it, to which the reasoning immediately refers. The author reminds us, that, in his method of arguing, he reasons, not upon his own principles, but upon the principles of others. He employs the lowest concessions of his adversaries, to reform their errors, and to convince them of their serious obligations to morality and Religion. His proof of Religion, is derived from Experience and Facts ; it does not involve the abstract principles of Liberty and moral Fitness. And thus the believer, is left to rejoice in the superior light of the Gospel ; whilst the unbeliever, is taught the vanity of all attempts to disprove a Religion, against which, we are assured, the powers of darkness shall never prevail.

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*Having collected the chief objections against arguing from the Analogy of Nature to Religion, what observation does the Author make, with regard to the whole objection ? Its plausible appearance is owing to half views, to undeterminate Language, and to the deficiencies and abuse of words. [The*

*propriety of this observation will fully appear, after the answer is made, to each objection separately considered.]*

*OBJ.* “That it is a poor thing to solve Difficulties in Revelation, by saying, that there are the same in natural Religion, when what is wanting is to clear both of them, of these their common, as well as other their respective Difficulties.”

*ANS.* The having all Difficulties cleared, may be the same, as requiring to comprehend the divine Nature, and the whole plan of Providence. To argue from natural to revealed Religion, is no more a poor thing, than numberless other ways of probable deduction are so. The epithet poor is as properly applicable to the whole of human life, *e. gr.* That even the most eminent Physician should have so little knowledge in the cure of diseases, is a poor thing, but not in comparison of having no skill at all. But it is of great consequence to show, that objections urged against Revelation are as much levelled against natural Religion; for thus we prove the objectors to argue against moral Providence, while they would seem to argue only against Revelation. Nothing more is taken for granted in this second Part of the Treatise, than was in the first, *i. e.* the existence of an Author of Nature; and Christianity is vindicated, not from its Analogy to natural Religion, but chiefly, from its Analogy to the constitution of Nature.

*OBJ.* “That it is a strange way of convincing men of the obligations of Religion, to show them, that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits.”

*ANS.* Religion is a practical thing, and consists in such a determinate course of life; as there is reason to think, is commanded by the Author of Nature, and will, upon the whole, be our happiness under His Government. Now if men can be persuaded, that they have the like reason to believe

this, as to believe, that care of their temporal affairs, will be to their advantage; this, with the infinitely superior interest which Religion proposes, will be an argument for the Practice of it. But the proper force of the argument referred to in the objection, lies in another place. For it is said, that the proof of Religion is involved in such inextricable Difficulties, as to render it doubtful; and this is turned into a positive argument against the truth of Religion.

*How may this positive argument, against the truth of Religion, be stated?* If Religion were true, it would not be left doubtful, and open to objections: therefore that it is thus left, not only weakens its Evidence, but also shows it to be false, or is a general presumption of its being so.

*What is the observation, which is an answer to this argument?* From the natural constitution and course of things, we must in our temporal concerns, almost continually, and in matters of great consequence, act upon Evidence of the like kind and degree to the Evidence of Religion. [See chap. 6.]

*Why is this observation, a just and conclusive answer to the argument?* Because it shows, that it is according to the conduct of the Author of Nature, to appoint we should act upon Evidence like to That, which this argument presumes He cannot be supposed to appoint we should act upon: It is a general Instance of somewhat in His dealing with us, similar to what is said to be incredible.

*OBJ.* “ That it is a strange way of vindicating  
 “ the Justice and Goodness of the Author of Na-  
 “ ture, and of removing objections against both, to  
 “ which the System of Religion lies open, to show  
 “ that the like objections lie against natural Provi-  
 “ dence; 1st. 2dly. 3dly. ;—That this is a way of an-  
 “ swering objections against Religion, without even  
 “ pretending to make out, that the System of it, or

“ the particular things in it objected against, are  
 “ reasonable ; *4thly*.—Especially when it is con-  
 “ fessed, that Analogy is no answer to objections  
 against Wisdom, Justice and Goodness.”

*ANS.* This Treatise is designed, not to vindicate the character of God, but to show the obligations of men ; not to justify His Providence, but to show us our Duty. For,

*1st*, It is not necessary to justify the Dispensations of Providence against objections, any farther than to show, that the things objected against may be consistent with, and even Instances of, Justice and Goodness. And this will appear by considering, that the moral Government is a Scheme, incomprehensible, in which Means are used to accomplish Ends, and which is carried on by general Laws. [*See chap. 4. Part II.*]

*2dly*, The objections are not endeavoured to be removed, by showing that the like objections, allowed to be conclusive, lie against natural Providence : but these objections being shown to be inconclusive, the things objected against, considered as Matters of Fact, are shown to be credible, from their conformity to the Constitution of Nature.

*3dly*, This would be of weight, even though those objections were not answered. For Religion implies several Facts ; for Instance, the Fact, that God will hereafter reward and punish men for their actions ; the observation that his present Government is by Rewards and Punishments, shows that future Fact not to be incredible.

*4thly*, Though objections against the Reasonableness of the System of Religion, cannot be answered without entering into the consideration of its Reasonableness ; yet objections against the credibility or truth of the System, may. Because the System of Religion is reducible into what is properly matter of Fact : And the probable truth of Facts, may be shown without consideration of their Reasonable-



**ness.** It is not necessary to prove the Reasonableness of every Precept and Dispensation. And the obligations of Religion are made out, by proving the Reasonableness of its Practice.

*5thly,* Though Analogy be not an immediate answer to such objections ; yet it is an immediate answer to what is intended by them, which is, to show that the things objected against are incredible.

*OBJ.* “ That when analogical reasoning is carried to the utmost length, it will yet leave the “ mind in a very unsatisfied state.”

*ANS.* It is acknowledged, that the foregoing Treatise is far from satisfactory : but so would any natural Institution of Life appear, if reduced into a System, together with its Evidence. The Evidence of Religion being admitted real, those who object against it, as not satisfactory, *i. e.* as not being what they wish it, plainly forget the very condition of our being, for satisfaction, in this sense, does not belong to man. They also forget the very notion of Religion, which presupposes a certain degree of Integrity, in those who embrace it. The material question is, not whether the Evidence of Religion, be satisfactory as to the purposes of curiosity, but whether it suffice for Probation. And the practical question need never be, whether the motives and evidence for a Course of action be satisfactory : but whether it be such, that our moral Faculty determines it to be prudent.

*OBJ.* “ That it must be unaccountable ignorance of mankind, to imagine men will be prevailed with to forego their present Interests and Pleasures, from regard to Religion upon doubtful Evidence.”

*ANS.* Religion is intended for a Trial and Exercise of the morality of each person’s character, who is a subject of it ; and Religion as a Probation, has had its Ends upon all persons, to whom it has been proposed with Evidence sufficient in Reason to in-

fluence their Practice. The objection is not to the purpose of the present Treatise ; for its purpose is, to show how, in Reason, men ought to behave ; not how, in Fact, they will behave. But the objection referred to, allows the things insisted upon in this Treatise to be of some weight : hence it is probable the Treatise will have some influence, and this is the same reason in kind, though not in degree, to lay it before men, as there would be, if it were likely to have a greater influence.

*The proposed objections being thus obviated, what farther account does the Author give us, of his argument, and of the Principles upon which it proceeds ?* With respect to the whole of the foregoing objections, I have argued in this Treatise upon the Principles of others, [*i. e.* notwithstanding these Principles, even admitting them to be true.] Thus I have argued upon, or notwithstanding, the Principles of the Fatalists, and have omitted two Principles of the utmost importance, namely the abstract Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness ; and in endeavouring to avoid these, have been sometimes obliged to express myself in a manner, which will appear strange, to such as do not observe the reason for it. But the general argument here pursued does not at all suppose, or proceed upon, the Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness.

*In what point of view, is Religion considered by the Author ?* The abstract Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness being omitted, Religion can be considered in no other view, than merely as a question of Fact : and in this view it is here considered.

*Why may revealed Religion, be considered as a question of Fact ?* It is obvious, that Christianity and the proof of it are both historical.

*Why is natural Religion, properly a matter of Fact ?* That there is a righteous Governor of the

world, is a matter of Fact: And this proposition contains the general System of natural Religion.

*In what consists the Distinction, between the present proof of Religion, and the proof usually given, in other writings?* Several abstract truths, and in particular the Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness, are usually taken into consideration in the proof of it: whereas it is here treated of, only as a matter of Fact.

*By what explanation is it shown, that the proof of Religion, may involve both abstract truths and matters of Fact?* That the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, is an abstract Truth: but that they appear so to our mind, is only a matter of Fact. So likewise that there is, in the nature of things, an original standard of Right and Wrong in actions, independent upon all Will, but which unalterably determines the will of God, to exercise That moral Government over the world which Religion teaches, *i. e.* finally to reward and punish men respectively as they act right or wrong; this assertion contains an abstract Truth, as well as Matter of Fact.

*How is the explanation continued, in order to show, that we may have a conclusive practical proof of Religion, and of its obligations, exclusively of the Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness?* Suppose in the present state every man, without exception, was rewarded and punished, in exact proportion, as he followed or transgressed That sense of Right and Wrong, which God has implanted in every man: this would not be an abstract truth, but only a matter of Fact. Thus God having given mankind a moral Faculty, the object of which is actions, and which naturally approves some actions as Right and of Good-desert, and condemns others as Wrong and of Ill-desert; that He will, finally and upon the whole, reward the former and punish the latter, is not an assertion of an abstract Truth,

but of what is as mere a Fact, as his doing so at present would be.

*Though the Author's proof of Religion, may not have the same force, as the proof from the above two principles ; yet it has the practical advantages, of being conclusive upon the most Sceptical Principles, and of being the less difficult. To this effect, what are the words of the Original? Matter of Fact must have been admitted, if any thing was, by those ancient Sceptics, who would not have admitted abstract Truth ; but pretended to doubt, Whether there were any such thing as Truth, or Whether we could depend upon our Faculties for the Knowledge of it, in any case. And though matter of Fact were acknowledged by every one ; yet the abstract Questions concerning Liberty and moral Fitness, have been perplexed with Difficulties and abstruse Reasonings. [The above distinction of Sceptics, is mentioned, in almost the same words, in the Introduction to Locke's Essay.]*

*What is the proper Force of the Author's Treatise, and of his Proof of Religion? To those convinced of Religion upon the proof arising out of the Principles of Liberty and moral Fitness, it will be an additional proof, and a confirmation of it : To such as do not admit these Principles, it will be an original proof. Those who believe, will here find the Scheme of Christianity cleared of objections, and its Evidence peculiarly strengthened. Those who do not believe, will be shown, the absurdity of all attempts to prove Christianity false, and they will also be shown its plain undoubted credibility.*

*And why must this argument from Analogy be, a real one, and undoubtedly of weight on the side of Religion? Religion, both natural and revealed, implying in it numerous Facts ; Analogy, being a confirmation of all Facts to which it can be applied, as it is the only proof of most, cannot but be ad-*

mitted to be a material thing, and truly of weight on the side of Religion, both natural and Revealed: And it ought to be particularly regarded by such as profess to follow Nature, and to be less satisfied with abstract Reasonings.

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## CONCLUSION.

[As to chapter 7, the only one omitted in the second Part, see the Original.]

**CHAP. I.**—Our obligations to inquire seriously into the Evidence of Christianity, and to embrace it upon supposition of its truth, are moral in the highest and most proper sense. For Revelation claims to be the voice of God: and our obligation to attend to His voice, is, surely, moral in all cases. It offers itself with obvious appearances of having somewhat more than human in it. And a miraculous Revelation has a peculiar tendency, to awaken mankind, and to inspire them with Reverence and Awe. Let us then suppose, that the Evidence of Religion in general, and of Christianity, has been seriously inquired into, by all reasonable men amongst us. Yet we find many professedly to reject both, upon speculative principles of Infidelity. Some are not content with a bare neglect of Religion. They deride God's moral Government over the world: and ridicule and vilify Christianity, and blaspheme the Author of it. This amounts to an active setting themselves against Religion; to a positive principle of Irreligion. Others, who are not chargeable with all this profligateness, yet, are in avowed opposition to Religion, as if discovered to be groundless. Their manner of treating Religion must proceed, either from such objections against all Religion, as have been answered in the first Part of this Treatise; or else from objections and difficulties, supposed more peculiar to Christianity.

**CHAP. II.**—To these persons, and to this state

of opinion concerning Religion, the foregoing Treatise is adapted. For all objections against the moral System of Nature, having been obviated, it is shown, that there is not any peculiar presumption at all against Christianity, either considered as not discoverable by Reason, or as unlike to what is so discovered; nor any worth mentioning against it as miraculous.

*CHAP. III.*—The objections being first answered in the view of objections against Christianity as a Matter of Fact, by a general observation, urged cautiously without vilifying Reason, &c.

*CHAP. IV.*—These objections, are in the next place considered as urged, more immediately, against the Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness of the Christian Dispensation, and are shown to admit of the like answer, as do the like objections against the Constitution of Nature; that as partial views, &c. The objections against the Christian Dispensation, and the Method by which it is carried on, having been obviated, in general and together; the chief of them are considered distinctly, and the particular things objected to are shown credible, by their perfect Analogy, each apart, to the Constitution of Nature. Thus; the objection against the Scheme of Providence, in the Redemption of the world, that this should have been effected at once, instead of being effected by such a long series of Means, is answered, by showing, that every thing in the Constitution of Nature is thus carried on.

*CHAP. V.*—As to the particular method of our Redemption, the appointment of a Mediator between God and Man; this has been shown to be analogous to the general conduct of Nature, in appointing others to be the Instruments of Mercy to us. The degrading condition of this world, which the doctrine of our Redemption presupposes, so much falls in with natural appearances, that heathen moralists inferred it from those appearances. The

general Opinion under the light of Nature was, that Repentance and Reformation, alone and by itself, was not sufficient to do away Sin : and daily Experience shows us, that Reformation alone is not sufficient to prevent the present disadvantages and miseries, which, in the natural course of things, God has annexed to folly and extravagance. Yet there is ground to expect, that the Punishments annexed to Vice, may be prevented by some means or other. For we have daily instances of *such Mercy*, in the general conduct of Nature : compassion provided for misery, medicines for diseases, friends against enemies. By a Method of goodness analogous to this, when the world lay in ruin, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. John iii. 16. and Hebr. v. 9.* And though neither Reason nor Analogy should lead us to think, that Christ's Interposition, would be of such peculiar Efficacy for the Recovery of the World ; yet this is no presumption against its being of that Efficacy. For neither would Reason nor Analogy lead us to think, that other particular means would be of the Efficacy, which experience shows they are, in numberless Instances.

*CHAP. VI.*—The objections against Christianity, from its light not being universal, nor its Evidence so strong as might possibly be given us, have been answered by the general Analogy of Nature. That God has made such variety of Creatures, is indeed an answer to the former : But that he dispenses his Gifts in such Variety, both of Degrees and Kinds, amongst Creatures of the same Species, and even to the same Individuals at different times ; is a more obvious and full answer to it. The latter objection is answered from the consideration, that the Evidence upon which we are naturally appointed to act in common Matters, is doubtful in a high degree. And admitting the Fact, that God has afforded to some men, no more

than doubtful Evidence of Religion : the same account may be given of it, as of Difficulties and Temptations with regard to practice. But it requires to be most seriously considered, whether the Doubtfulness complained of be not men's own fault. However, it is certain, that doubting implies a degree of Evidence for that of which we doubt : and that this degree of Evidence, as really lays us under obligations as demonstrative Evidence.

*CHAP. VII.*—It has in general been considered too, what positive Evidence can be alleged for the truth of Christianity, and the objections against it have been estimated.

Deduct therefore, what is to be deducted from the positive Evidence of Religion, upon account of any weight which may be thought to remain in these objections : and the practical consequences, upon the most Sceptical Principles will be, *1st.* That immorality is greatly aggravated, in persons who have been made acquainted with Christianity : because the moral System of Nature, which Christianity lays before us, approves itself, almost intuitively, to a reasonable mind upon seeing it proposed. *2dly.* That there is a Middle, between a full satisfaction of the truth of Christianity, and a satisfaction of the contrary ; which middle state of mind, consists in a serious doubting apprehension, that it may be true : and this serious apprehension that Christianity may be true lays persons under the strictest obligations, of a serious regard to it, throughout the whole of their life. *3dly.* It will appear, that blasphemy and profaneness, with regard to Christianity, are without excuse.

END OF THE SECOND PART.







