

THE BRIDGEWATER TREATISES

ON THE POWER WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD

AS MANIFESTED IN THE CREATION

TREATISE II

ON THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO

THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MAN

BY J. KIDD M. D

[FIFTH EDITION.]

THOU MADEST HIM TO HAVE DOMINION OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS;
THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET.

PSALM VIII.

ON THE ADAPTATION OF
EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE PHYSICAL
CONDITION OF MAN
PRINCIPALLY WITH REFERENCE TO THE SUPPLY OF HIS
WANTS AND THE EXERCISE OF HIS
INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES

BY

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LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1837.

TO
HIS GRACE
THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

MY LORD,

HAVING been appointed to write the following Treatise by the late President of the Royal Society, in consequence of your Grace's recommendation, it was natural that I should be desirous of publicly acknowledging the high honour thus conferred upon me.

I therefore request you to accept my respectful thanks for permitting me to inscribe this Treatise with your Grace's name: assuring you that, however inadequately I may have been found to answer your expectation in the execution, I have not applied myself to the task committed to me, without the exertion of much thought, and the strongest desire of so executing it, as to justify your Grace's favourable opinion.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

with the greatest respect,

Your Grace's most obliged

and obedient Servant,

J. KIDD.

Oxford,
March 15, 1833

PREFACE.

THE occasion which gave rise to this and the accompanying Treatises is explained in the following notice: but the Author of the present Treatise thinks it right to add, that, although encouraged by the honour of having been recommended by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, he should have shrunk from his present attempt, had he considered that any exact elucidation of the details of science was required in the execution of it.

As, however, the intention of Lord Bridge-water, and the very extent and diversified nature of the subject, seemed to him almost necessarily to exclude any great exactness of elucidation, and to require a popular rather than a scientific exposition of facts; and as the whole tenour of his pursuits during the last thirty years of his life accorded with the character of the proposed subject; he the more readily undertook a task, to the execution of which he could not but look forward with much pleasure. And if he should in any instance stimulate the reader to examine the question with any portion of the interest and satisfaction with which he has himself examined it, he is confident that he shall not have laboured in vain.

It will be for others to determine whether a judicious selection and a sufficiently natural arrangement of the materials of the following Treatise have been adopted: but to those, who may think that many of the subjects have been treated too cursorily, the Author begs leave to point out the extensive range afforded by so wide a field of inquiry; and the consequent necessity of compression in each particular; the subject of this Treatise being in fact an epitome of the subjects of almost all the others. He also considers it right to state, that it is the immediate object of the Treatise itself to unfold a train of facts, not to maintain a formal argument; to give a general view of the adaptation of the external world to the physical condition of man, not to attempt directly to convince the reader that this adaptation is a proof either of the existence and omnipotence of the Deity, or of his beneficence and wisdom; though undoubtedly it is hoped by the writer, as it was intended by the munificent individual who originally proposed the general subject of this and the accompanying Treatises, that such a conviction, if not already existing, may be produced by its perusal. Without questioning, therefore, on the present occasion, the intellectual powers or the moral motives of those who profess themselves sceptics with respect to either natural or revealed religion, the Author addresses himself principally to those who are believers in both the one and the other. With respect indeed to a disbelief in the basis of natural religion, he must ever feel assured, as in another place he has expressed himself, that, however easy it may be to account for the external profession of a disbelief in God, the supposition of the existence of intellectual atheism involves an intellectual absurdity. With respect to the truth of Revelation, although the subject of this Treatise is not directly connected with that question, he would still wish to consider himself as addressing those chiefly who with himself believe that the objects which surround us in our present state of existence, and which are so obviously intended to advance the general powers and faculties of *Man*, without advancing the powers and faculties of any other animal, are purposely destined to produce an ulterior and higher effect; the nature of which effect is to be learnt from the doctrines of Revelation alone. And he has thought it right to say thus much on the general subject of religion, not merely for the purpose of recording his own sentiments; but that, in professing to address those principally who believe in revealed as well as in natural religion, if on any occasion he should assume the truth of Revelation, he may not be with justice accused of taking that for granted, of which the reader doubts.

NOTICE.

THE series of Treatises, of which the present is one, is published under the following circumstances:

The RIGHT HONOURABLE and REVEREND FRANCIS HENRY, EARL of BRIDGEWATER, died in the month of February, 1829; and by his last Will and Testament, bearing date the 25th of February, 1825, he directed certain Trustees therein named to invest in the public funds the sum of eight thousand pounds sterling; this sum, with the accruing dividends thereon, to be held at the disposal of the President, for the time being, of the Royal Society of London, to be paid to the person or persons nominated by him. The Testator further directed, that the person or persons selected by the said President should be appointed to write, print, and publish one thousand copies of a work *On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation; illustrating such work by all reasonable arguments; as for instance the variety and formation of God's creatures in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms; the effect of digestion, and thereby of conversion; the construction of the hand of man, and an infinite variety of other arguments; as also by discoveries ancient and modern, in arts, sciences, and the whole extent of literature.* He desired, moreover, that the profits arising from the sale of the works so published should be paid to the authors of the works.

The late President of the Royal Society, Davies Gilbert, Esq. requested the assistance of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and of the Bishop of London, in determining upon the best mode of carrying into effect the intentions of the Testator. Acting with their advice, and with the concurrence of a nobleman immediately connected with the deceased, Mr. Davies Gilbert appointed the following eight gentlemen to write separate Treatises on the different branches of the subject, as here stated:

THE REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

ON THE POWER WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD AS MANIFESTED
IN THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE MORAL AND
INTELLECTUAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

JOHN KIDD, M.D. F. R. S

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ON THE ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL NATURE TO THE
PHYSICAL CONDITION OF MAN

THE REV. WILLIAM WHEWELL, M. D. F. R. S

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

ASTRONOMY AND GENERAL PHYSICS CONSIDERED WITH
REFERENCE TO NATURAL THEOLOGY.