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His Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations

VOLUME 2

DAVID HARTLEY

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HIS

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AND HIS

EXPECTATIONS.

In TWO PARTS.

By DAVID HARTLEY, *M. A.*

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PART the SECOND.

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More information

THE CONTENTS OF THE SECOND PART.

INTRODUCTION.

Distribution of the Second Part, Page 3, 4.

CHAP. I.

Of the Being and Attributes of God, and of Natural Religion.

Something must have existed from all Eternity, 5, 6. *There must be an infinite and independent Being*, 6—9. *The infinite and independent Being is indued with infinite Power and Knowlege*, 9—13. *God is infinitely benevolent*, 13—23. *Five Notions of infinite Benevolence considered, and compared together*, 23—30. *There is but one God*, 30, 31. *God is a spiritual Being*, 31—34. *God is an eternal and omnipresent Being*, 34, 35. *God is an immutable Being*, 35. *God is a free Being*,

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David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

Being, 35—37. *Holineſs, Juſtice, Veracity, Mercy, and all other moral Perfections, ought to be aſcribed to God in an infinite Degree*, 37—41. *God is to be conſidered by us not only as our Creator, but alſo as our Governor, Judge, and Father*, 41—45. *The foregoing Evidences for the divine Attributes afford a proper Foundation for Natural Religion*, 45—48. *Natural Religion receives great Light and Confirmation from Revealed*, 48—52. *Religion preſuppoſes Free-will in the popular and practical Senſe*, i. e. *it preſuppoſes a voluntary Power over our Affections and Actions*, 53—55. *Religion does not preſuppoſe Free-will in the philoſophical Senſe*, i.e. *it does not preſuppoſe a Power of doing different things, the previous Circumſtances remaining the ſame*, 56—66. *The infinite Power and Knowlege of God exclude Free-will in the philoſophical Senſe*, 66—70.

CHAP. II.

Of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion.

The Genuineneſs of the Scriptures proves the Truth of the Facts contained in them, 72—77. *The Genuineneſs of the Scriptures proves their divine Authority*, 77, 78. *The Truth of the principal Facts contained in the Scriptures proves their divine Authority*, 79, 80. *Three different Suppoſitions, which may be made concerning the divine Inſpiration of the Scriptures*, 80—84. *The Manner in which the Scriptures have been handed down from Age to Age, proves both their Genuineneſs and Truth*, 84—86. *The great Importance of the Scriptures proves both their Genuineneſs and Truth*, 86—96. *The Language, Style, and manner of Writing uſed in the Scriptures, prove their Genuineneſs*,

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978-1-108-06361-6 - Observations on Man: His Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations: Volume 2
David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

ineneſs, 97, 98. *The great Number of particular Circumſtances of Time, Place, Perſons, &c. mentioned in the Scriptures, prove both their Genuineneſs and Truth*, 99—104. *The Agreement of the Scriptures with Hiſtory, Natural and Civil, is a Proof of their Genuineneſs and Truth*, 104—122. *The Agreement of the Books of the Old and New Teſtaments with themſelves and each other, is an Argument both of their Genuineneſs and Truth*, 122—126. *The Unity of Deſign, which appears in the Diſpenſations recorded in the Scriptures, is an Argument not only of their Truth and Genuineneſs, but alſo of their divine Authority*, 126—136. *Divine Communications, Miracles, and Prophecies, are agreeable to Natural Religion, and ſeem even neceſſary in the Infancy of the World*, 137—141. *The Objections made againſt the Miracles recorded in the Scriptures, from their being contrary to the Courſe of Nature, is of little or no Force*, 142—149. *The hiſtorical Evidences for the Genuineneſs, Truth, and divine Authority, of the Scriptures, do not grow leſs from Age to Age, but rather increaſe*, 149, 150. *The Prophecies delivered in the Scriptures prove their divine Authority*, 150—157. *The Obſcurity of the Prophecies does not invalidate this Proof*, 157—160 *The double Uſes and Applications of the Types and Prophecies are no Objection to the Evidences deducible from them, but rather a Confirmation of theſe Evidences*, 16 , 161. *The Application of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, by the Writers of the New, does not weaken the Authority of theſe Writers, but rather confirm it*, 162—166. *The moral Characters of Chriſt, the Prophets, and Apoſtles, prove the Truth and divine Authority of the Scriptures*, 167—172. *The Excellence of the Doctrines contained in the Scriptures is an Evidence of their divine Authority*, 172—174. *The many Advantages which have accrued to the World from the Patriarchal, Judaical, and Chri-*

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978-1-108-06361-6 - Observations on Man: His Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations: Volume 2
David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

ſtian Revelations, prove the divine Authority of the Scriptures, 174—177. *The wonderful Nature, and ſuperior Excellence, of the Attempt made by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, are Evidences of their divine Authority*, 177, 178. *The Manner in which the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is taught and inculcated in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their divine Authority*, 178—180. *The Doctrine of the neceſſary Subſerviency of Pain to Pleaſure, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their divine Authority*, 180, 181. *The mutual Inſtrumentality of Beings to each other's Happineſs and Miſery, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Argument of their divine Authority*, 182—184. *The divine Authority of the Scriptures may be inferred from the ſuperior Wiſdom of the* Jewiſh *Laws, conſidered in a political Light, and from the exquiſite Workmanſhip ſhewn in the Tabernacle and Temple*, 184. *The Want of Univerſality in the Publication of Revealed Religion, is no Objection to it; but, on the contrary, the Time and Manner in which the Scriptures were written, and delivered to the World, are Arguments for their divine Authority*, 184—187. *The Excluſion of all great Degrees of Enthuſiaſm and Impoſture from the Characters of Chriſt, the Prophets and Apoſtles, proves their divine Authority*, 187—189. *The Reception which Chriſt, his Fore-runners and Followers, with their Doctrines, have met with in all Ages, is an Argument of their divine Authority*, 189—191. *The Reception which falſe Religions have met with in the World, are Arguments of the Truth of the Chriſtian*, 191—195.

CHAP.

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978-1-108-06361-6 - Observations on Man: His Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations: Volume 2
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More information

CHAP. III.
Of the Rule of Life.

SECT. I.
Of the Rule of Life, as deducible from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind.

The Practice of Mankind affords some Direction in respect of the Rule of Life, 197, 198. *The Opinions of Mankind afford a better Direction in respect of the Rule of Life, than their Practice*, 198, 199. *The Rule of Life drawn from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind is favourable to the Cause of Virtue*, 199—207. *This Rule corrects and improves itself perpetually*, 207—210.

SECT. II.
Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Sensation, in forming the Rule of Life.

The Pleasures of Sensation ought not to be made a primary Pursuit, 211—215. *The Pursuit of sensible Pleasure ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Piety, Benevolence, and the Moral Sense*, 215—218. *Practical Rules concerning Diet*, 218—228. *Practical Rules concerning the Commerce between the Sexes*, 228—238. *Practical Rules concerning the Hardships, Pains, and Uneasinesses, which occur in the daily Intercourses of Life*, 238—241.

SECT.

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Frontmatter
More information

SECT. III.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Imagination in forming the Rule of Life.

The Pleasures of Imagination ought not to be made a primary Pursuit, 242—245. *The Pursuit of the Pleasures of Imagination ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense*, 245—248. *Practical Rules concerning the Elegancies and Amusements of Life*, 248—251. *Practical Rules concerning Mirth, Wit, and Humour*, 251—253. *Practical Rules concerning the polite Arts, and particularly of Painting, Music, and Poetry*, 253, 254. *Practical Rules concerning the Pursuit of Science*, 255, 256 *Practical Rules concerning the Ignorance, Difficulties, and Perplexities, in which we find ourselves involved*, 256—258.

SECT. IV.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures of Honour, and the Pains of Shame, in forming the Rule of Life.

The Pleasures of Honour ought not to be made a primary Pursuit, 259—262. *The Pleasures of Honour may be obtained in their greatest Degree, and highest Perfection, by paying a strict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense*, 262—264. *Practical Observations on the Nature of Humility, and the Methods of attaining it*, 264—270.

SECT.

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David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

SECT. V.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Self-interest in forming the Rule of Life.

The Pleasures of Self-interest ought not to be made a primary Pursuit, 271—279. *A strict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense, favours even gross Self-interest, and is the only Method by which the Refined and Rational can be secured*, 279, 280. *Practical Observations on Self-interest and Self-annihilation*, 280—282.

SECT. VI.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Sympathy, in forming the Rule of Life.

The Pleasures of Sympathy improve those of Sensation, Imagination, Ambition, and Self-interest; and unite with those of Theopathy and the Moral Sense: They are self-consistent, and admit of an unlimited Extent; and consequently they may be our primary Pursuit, 283—290. *Practical Rules for augmenting the benevolent Affections, and suppressing the malevolent ones*, 291, 292. *Practical Rules for the Conduct of Men towards each other in Society*, 291—300. *Of the Duties arising from the principal Relations of Life*, 301—308.

SECT.

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Frontmatter
More information

SECT. VII.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Theopathy, in forming the Rule of Life.

The Love of God regulates, improves, and perfects all the other Parts of our Nature, and affords a Pleasure superior, in Kind and Degree, to all the rest; and therefore is our primary Pursuit, and ultimate End, 309—315. *Practical Rules concerning the theopathetic Affections, Faith, Fear, Gratitude, Hope, Trust, Resignation, and Love,* 316—330. *Practical Rules concerning the Manner of expressing the theopathetic Affections by Prayer, and other religious Exercises,* 331—336.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of the Moral Sense, in forming the Rule of Life.

The Moral Sense ought to be made the immediate Guide of our Actions on all sudden Emergencies, 337—339. *Practical Rules for the Regulation and Improvement of the Moral Sense,* 339, 340. *General Corollaries to the Seven last Sections,* 341—346.

SECT. IX.

Of the Rule of Faith.

An Inquiry how far Faith in Natural and Revealed Religion, also in the particular Tenets of Christian Churches, is necessary for the Purification and Perfection of our Natures, 347—358.

CHAP.

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More information

CHAP. IV.

Of the Expectations of Mankind, here and hereafter, in consequence of their Observance or Violation of the Rule of Life.

SECT. I.

Of the Expectation of Individuals in the present Life.

It is probable, that most or all Men receive more Happiness than Misery, in their Passage through the present Life, 359—361. *The Balance cannot be much in favour even of the most happy, during the present Life*, 361—363. *Virtue has always the fairest Prospect even in this Life, and Vice is always exposed to the greatest Hazards*, 363. *And yet it does not seem at all probable, that Happiness is exactly proportioned to Virtue in the present Life*, 364, 365.

SECT. II.

Of the Expectation of Bodies Politic, the *Jews* in particular, and the World in general, during the present State of the Earth.

It is probable, that all the present Civil Governments will be overturned, 366—370. *It is probable, that the present Forms of Church-government will be dissolved,*

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David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

ſolved, 370—372. *It is probable, that the* Jews *will be reſtored to* Palæſtine, 373—375. *The Chriſtian Religion will be preached to, and received, by all Nations*, 376—380. *It is not probable, that there will be any pure or complete Happineſs before the Deſtruction of this World by Fire*, 380, 381.

SECT. III.

Of a future State after the Expiration of this Life.

It is probable, from the mere Light of Nature, that there will be a future State, 382—392. *The Chriſtian Revelation gives us an abſolute Aſſurance of a future State*, 393—395. *The Rewards and Puniſhments of a future Life will far exceed the Happineſs and Miſery of this, both in Degree and Duration*, 395—397. *It is probable, that the future Happineſs of the Good will be of a ſpiritual Nature; but the future Miſery of the Wicked may be both corporeal and mental*, 397—402. *It ſeems probable, that the Soul may remain in a State of Inactivity, though perhaps not of Inſenſibility, from Death to the Reſurrection*, 402, 403.

SECT. IV.

Of the Terms of Salvation.

It follows from the foregoing Theory of our intellectual Pleaſures and Pains, as well as from other Ways of conſidering them, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for pure, unmixed Happineſs, 404, 405. *It follows from the Declarations of the Scriptures, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for the Manſions of*

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David Hartley
Frontmatter
More information

of the Bleſſed, 405—407. *A practical Application of this Doctrine to the real Circumſtances of Mankind*, 407—418.

SECT. V.

Of the final Happineſs of all Mankind in ſome diſtant future State.

It is probable from Reaſon, that all Mankind will be made happy ultimately, 419—425. *It is probable from the Scriptures, that all Mankind will be made happy ultimately*, 426—437.

CONCLUSION.

OBSER-

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In TWO PARTS.

PART II.

Containing Obſervations on the Duty and Expectations of Mankind.

INTRODUCTION.

WHATEVER be our Doubts, Fears, or Anxieties, whether ſelfiſh or ſocial, whether for Time or Eternity, our only Hope and Refuge muſt be in the infinite Power, Knowlege, and Goodneſs of God. And if theſe be really our Hope and Refuge, if we have a true practical Senſe and Conviction of God's infinite Ability and Readineſs to protect and bleſs us, an intire, peaceful, happy Reſignation will be the Reſult, notwithſtanding the Clouds and Perplexities wherewith we

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may ſometimes be encompaſſed. He who has brought us into this State, will conduct us through it: He knows all our Wants and Diſtreſſes: His infinite Nature will bear down all Oppoſition from our Impotence, Ignorance, Vice, or Miſery: He is our Creator, Judge, and King, our Friend, and Father, and God.

And though the tranſcendent Greatneſs and Glorioufneſs of this Proſpect may, at firſt View, make our Faith ſtagger, and incline us to diſbelieve through Joy; yet, upon farther Conſideration, it ſeems rather to confirm and eſtabliſh itſelf on that Account; for the more it exceeds our Gratitude and Comprehenſion, the more does it coincide with the Idea of that abſolutely perfect Being, whom the ſeveral Orders of imperfect Beings perpetually ſuggeſt to us, as our only Reſting-place, the Cauſe of Cauſes, and the ſupreme Reality.

However, on the other hand, it muſt be acknowleged, that the Evils which we ſee and feel are ſtrong Arguments of the Poſſibility of ſtill greater Evils, of any finite Evils whatever, and of their Conſiſtency with the Divine Attributes. All Finites are equally nothing in reſpect of infinite; and if the infinite Power, Knowlege, and Goodneſs of God can permit the leaſt Evil, they may permit any finite Degree of it, how great ſoever, for any thing that we know to the contrary. And this moſt alarming Conſideration cannot but compel every thinking Perſon to uſe his utmoſt Endeavours, firſt for his own Preſervation and Deliverance; and then, in proportion to his Benevolence, for the Preſervation and Deliverance of others.

Nor can ſuch a Perſon long heſitate what Method to take in the general. The Duties of Piety, Benevolence, and Self-government, conſidered in the general, have had ſuch a Stamp ſet upon them by all Ages and Nations, by all Orders and Conditions of Men, approve themſelves ſo much to our Frame and

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Conſtitution, and are ſo evidently conducive to both public and private Happineſs here, that one cannot doubt of their procuring for us not only Security, but our *Summum Bonum*, our greateſt poſſible Happineſs, during the whole Courſe of our Exiſtence, whatever that be.

Theſe are the genuine Dictates of what is called Natural Religion. But we, who live in Chriſtian Countries, may have recourſe to far clearer Light, and to a more definite Rule: The Chriſtian Revelation is atteſted by ſuch Evidences hiſtorical, prophetical, and moral, as will give abundant Comfort and Satisfaction to all who ſeek them earneſtly. A future Life, with indefinite, or even infinite, Rewards and Puniſhments, is ſet before us in expreſs Terms, the Conditions declared, Examples related both to encourage our Hopes, and alarm our Fears, and Aſſureances of Aſſiſtance and Mercy delivered in the ſtrongeſt and moſt pathetic Terms.

Yet ſtill there are Difficulties both in the Word of God, and in his Works; and theſe Difficulties are ſometimes ſo magnified, as to lead to Scepticiſm, Infidelity, or Atheiſm. Now, the Contemplation of our own Frame and Conſtitution appears to me to have a peculiar Tendency to leſſen theſe Difficulties attending Natural and Revealed Religion, and to improve their Evidences, as well as to concur with them in their Determination of Man's Duty and Expectations. With this View, I drew up the foregoing Obſervations on the Frame and Connexion of the Body and Mind; and, in Proſecution of the ſame Deſign, I now propoſe,

Firſt, To proceed upon this Foundation, and upon the other Phænomena of Nature to deduce the Evidences for the Being and Attributes of God, and the general Truths of Natural Religion.

Secondly, Laying down all theſe as a new Foundation, to deduce the Evidences for Revealed Religion.

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Thirdly, To inquire into the Rule of Life, and the particular Applications of it, which refult from the Frame of our Natures, the Dictates of Natural Religion, and the Precepts of the Scriptures taken together, compared with, and cafting Light upon, each other. And,

Fourthly, To inquire into the genuine Doctrines of Natural and Revealed Religion thus illuftrated, concerning the Expectations of Mankind, here and hereafter, in confequence of their Obfervance or Violation of the Rule of Life.

I do not prefume to give a complete Treatife on any of thefe Subjects; but only to borrow from the many excellent Writings, which have been offered to the World on them, fome of the principal Evidences and Deductions, and to accommodate them to the foregoing Theory of the Mind; whereby it may appear, that though the Doctrines of Affociation and Mechanifm do make fome Alterations in the Method of reafoning on Religion, yet they are far from leffening either the Evidences for it, the Comfort and Joy of religious Perfons, or the Fears of irreligious ones.

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