

**A SERIES OF DISCOURSES OF
THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION,
VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH
THE MODERN ASTRONOMY**

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A Series of Discourses of the Christian Revelation, Viewed in Connection with the Modern
Astronomy by Thomas Chalmers

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THOMAS CHALMERS

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CHRISTIAN REVELATION,
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PREFACE.

THE astronomical objection against the truth of the Gospel, does not occupy a very prominent place in any of our Treatises of Infidelity. It is often, however, met with in conversation—and we have known it to be the cause of serious perplexity and alarm in minds anxious for the solid establishment of their religious faith.

There is an imposing splendour in the science of astronomy; and it is not to be wondered at, if the light it throws, or appears to throw, over other tracks of speculation than those which are properly its own, should at times dazzle and mislead an inquirer. On this account, we think it were a service to what we deem a true and a righteous cause, could we succeed in dissipating this illusion; and in stripping Infidelity of those

pretensions to enlargement, and to a certain air of philosophical greatness, by which it has often become so destructively alluring to the young, and the ardent, and the ambitious.

In my first Discourse, I have attempted a sketch of the Modern Astronomy—nor have I wished to throw any disguise over that comparative littleness which belongs to our planet, and which gives to the argument of Freethinkers all its plausibility.

This argument involves in it an assertion and an inference. The assertion is, that Christianity is a religion which professes to be designed for the single benefit of our world; and the inference is, that God cannot be the author of this religion, for he would not lavish on so insignificant a field, such peculiar and such distinguishing attentions, as are ascribed to him in the Old and New Testament.

Christianity makes no such profession. That it is designed for the single benefit of our world, is altogether a presumption of the Infidel him-

self—and feeling that this is not the only example of temerity which can be charged on the enemies of our faith, I have allotted my second Discourse to the attempt of demonstrating the utter repugnance of such a spirit with the cautious and enlightened philosophy of modern times.

In the course of this Sermon I have offered a tribute of acknowledgement to the theology of Sir Isaac Newton; and in such terms, as if not further explained, may be liable to misconstruction. The grand circumstance of applause in the character of this great man, is, that unseduced by all the magnificence of his own discoveries, he had a solidity of mind which could resist their fascination; and keep him in steady attachment to that book, whose general evidences stamped upon it the impress of a real communication from heaven. This was the sole attribute of his theology which I had in my eye when I presumed to eulogise it. I do not think, that, amid the distraction and the engrossment of his other pursuits, he has at all times succeeded in his interpretation of the

book; else he would never, in my apprehension, have abetted the leading doctrine of a sect or a system; which has now nearly dwindled away from public observation.

In my third Discourse I am silent as to the assertion, and attempt to combat the inference that is founded on it. I insist, that upon all the analogies of nature and of providence, we can lay no limit on the condescension of God, or on the multiplicity of his regards even to the very humblest departments of creation; and that it is not for us, who see the evidences of divine wisdom and care spread in such exhaustless profusion around us, to say, that the Deity would not lavish all the wealth of his wondrous attributes on the salvation even of our solitary species.

At this point of the argument I trust that the intelligent reader may be enabled to perceive in the adversaries of the Gospel, a twofold dereliction from the maxims of the Baconian philosophy: that, in the first instance, the assertion which forms the groundwork of their argument,

is gratuitously fetched out of an unknown region where they are utterly abandoned by the light of experience; and that, in the second instance, the inference they urge from it, is in the face of manifold and undeniable truths, all lying within the safe and accessible field of human observation.

In my subsequent Discourses, I proceed to the informations of the record. The Infidel objection, drawn from astronomy, may be considered as by this time disposed of; and if we have succeeded in clearing it away, so as to deliver the Christian testimony from all discredit upon this ground, then may we submit, on the strength of other evidences, to be guided by its information. We shall thus learn, that Christianity has a far more extensive bearing on the other orders of creation, than the Infidel is disposed to allow; and, whether he will own the authority of this information or not, he will, at least, be forced to admit, that the subject matter of the Bible itself is not chargeable with that objection which he has attempted to fasten upon it.