

**GOD IN DISEASE, OR, THE
MANIFESTATIONS OF
DESIGN IN MORBID
PHENOMENA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649594580

God in Disease, Or, The Manifestations of Design in Morbid Phenomena by James F. Duncan

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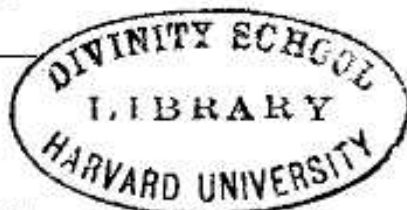
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"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

"Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord."



LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS-STREET.

1851.

DUBLIN: PRINTED BY ALEX. THOM, 87 & 88, ABBEY-STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE view of disease presented in the following pages is believed to be altogether original. Most persons are in the habit of admitting, that the visitation of sickness is the result of the direct appointment of God; but scarcely any one appears to think that such an admission implies the existence of features stamped upon the dispensation, similar to what are to be found in other parts of the Divine proceedings and that are eminently deserving of being studied carefully. The present work is intended to direct attention to the subject, and to unfold, by an analysis of the phenomena of disease, the evidence of design, contrivance, and beneficence, that lie scattered in profusion over every page of this volume of natural history. In executing his task, the author has not hesitated to avail himself of all the light that the progress of pathological science in recent times has placed at his command, while he has endeavoured to guard against introducing into his argument every thing that persons of the most fastidious taste can properly object to. He has also avoided, as far as possible, the use of technical terms, so as to render the work easily intelligible to every class of ordinary readers.

In saying that the views here unfolded are original, it is not intended to be asserted that intelligent physicians, who are accustomed to observe the workings of the great first cause, in what is constantly passing before their eyes, may not have noticed many of the facts which are here presented to the reader. Isolated glimpses of the truth inculcated in these pages have undoubtedly been often obtained, but disease *as a whole*, has never yet, so far as the author is aware, been considered in this light.

Every attempt to investigate and explain the operations of God, when conducted in a right spirit, must be attended with advantage. Familiarity with his works and ways has a necessary tendency to expand and elevate the mind. The more thoroughly we become acquainted with his proceedings, the deeper will be our impression of His unchanging faithfulness, goodness, and truth. It is hoped that the present effort to explore a new region of the Divine proceedings, will be favourably received by every one who is capable of deriving enjoyment from such exalted subjects of contemplation.

Nor is it merely in extending our knowledge of the works of God that the present publication is likely to be useful. It is believed that it may besides have a beneficial effect in correcting certain erroneous opinions that prevail generally, and that exercise an injurious influence on the public

mind. These errors are principally two—the idea, that the visitation of sickness is a casual occurrence; and the idea, that it is a punishment specially inflicted for some previous misconduct. Whoever entertains the first of these opinions labours under a mistake, which necessarily prevents his deriving the slightest benefit from the affliction. Whoever, on the contrary, adopts the second—and this is the case frequently with persons who have been more than usually afflicted—falls into an error of an equally dangerous description: he not only loses the benefit that the visitation is calculated to produce, but also runs the risk of forming a wrong view of the character of God. Whenever a man is led to look upon an attack of illness as the result of a special providence directed against himself, in consequence of some offence he may have committed, his first step naturally is, to examine the records of memory, to see and discover the precise act for which the trial is sent. Should he fail in this, as happens not unfrequently, or should he select some circumstance in his past life which he supposes *may* be the cause of his misfortune, but which appears to his partial judgment to be altogether disproportioned to the severity of the sentence, his mind becomes unhinged, he impeaches the justice of the divine dispensations, and murmurs at a trial, the precise nature of which he does not understand. Such a state of