

**THE PROVINCE OF
REASON IN
RELIGION**

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The Province of Reason in Religion by J. K. Craig

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J. K. CRAIG

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RELIGION**

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PROVINCE OF REASON

IN
RELIGION.

BY
REV. J. K. CRAIG, OXON.

INCUMBENT OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST, BURLY,
NEW FOREST, HANTS.

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TO
ARTHUR PAULET BUTLER,
TRIN. COLL., OXFORD,
THESE PAGES ARE,
WITH GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF PAST SUAVITIES,
AND SANGUINE PRESAGE OF FUTURE EMINENCE,
MOST AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED AND INSCRIBED.

I.

WHEN much of Truth is intricate to trace,
 And the mind shuns too confident to be ;
 When conscience owns that, though from Heav'nly Grace
 Fair Wisdom's light is sued on bended knee,
 Much, yet, remains obscure ;
 Then, prudent, Reason's dictates hear ;
 They will to easier scanned degree
 Reduce, by demonstrations clear,
 The sum of what is dim to see,
 By, first, subtracting from it what is plain and sure.

CONSUMMATE SKILL THIS GLORIOUS UNIVERSE
 HATH PLANNED : who doubteth it ? none but the fool ;—
 Bright structures which nought finite can rehearse,
 Far less hath carv'd them with mechanic tool,
 Or wrought by arm of flesh.
 WHERE DWELLETH, then, THEIR ARCHITECT ?
 Not, surely, in the sea ; where school
 Too rigid from wild song collect
 Grave sages did from lodgings cool
 Make Neptune rise aghast his rebel surge to thresh.¹

Nor dwelleth, sure, th' All Potent underneath
 The earth's dull crust, as bards of Pluto sang,
 In myth ; nor, on its surface, wildest heath,
 Hundreds of leagues its breadths, clouds overhang
 Th' Eternal Throne to screen :

(1) *Graviter commotus, et alto
 Prospiciens, summâ placidum caput extulit undâ.
 Quos ego ————* *Æneid* l. 130 et 139.

Nor drearsome voids, by icebergs shored,¹
 Which ne'er have felt the anchor's fang;
 Nor Afric's sands, wide, unexplored,
 Barred up from man by killing pang
 Of thirst, can of the Godhead Glory be the scene.

All this ev'n Reason kens; and thence concludes,—
 Where else can All creating Majesty
 Its palace courts in radiant amplitudes
 More fitly find than through yon azure sky,
 Beyond all starry rays?
 Thence trav'leth light: not sun nor moon
 Its beams orig'nate; from on high
 Illumined, they transmit the boon;
 Like reservoirs, its wealth supply;
 Like burnished mirrors, each the onward gift conveys.

Hail, rich benignity, that gift of light!
 Worthy of Deity! sweet pledge of love!
 And myriad myriad eyes, all gleaming bright,
 Created ev'ry where its joys to prove,
 Ev'n down in Ocean's bed!
 Truly to Sacred Page by this
 To yield accord it doth behove,
 Which telleth how, in world of bliss,
 "They need no candle; light above
 The sun or moon doth there its clearer lustre shed."

Lo, the first lesson, then, in Truth is here;
 Here safely may the first aspirings rise:
 Begin thy piety, O soul sincere;
 With adoration view the orb filled skies
 And teeming earth around;
 Thyself, thy frame one part of it;
 Look on, and love; admire, and fear;
 Thirst after Deity; commit
 Thy way thereto; nor thought severe
 Thereof, but loving, filial, in thy midst be found.

(1) The very learned but very eccentric Postal is, I think, the only writer who has proposed the theory that the site of the Eden Paradise was the North Pole. What a plausible encouragement to such an enthusiasm of fancy might the Aurora Borealis well be supposed to render!

Creation be thy primer Truth unto!
 It is a full one; read it night and morn;—
 The bending flow'r, of ev'ry form and hue;
 The huge oak, product from the cupped acorn;
 The creatures in the sea!
 Two hundred thousand kinds of plant
 This earthly sphere's bright face adorn;
 And doubly fold,—fly, beetle, ant,—¹
 Are in their blooms or foliage born;
 While o'er its thousand hills all behemoth run free.

Look forth, look down, o'er you wide rolling deep,
 And think what million eyes have sight therein;
 What countless forms its waves and caverns keep,
 In beauty strange; testaceous, coralline;
 Crustaceous stranger still!
 The pearl of price the diver's hand
 Shall from the beds of ocean win;
 While many a stream its golden sand
 And many a gem rolls ruthless in:
 O myst'ry! precious gems, what came ye to fulfil?

Look ev'rywhere; the serpent's giant fold,
 The king of beasts, the humbling, mimic ape,
 The glowworm's lamp or firefly's light behold;
 The nurt'ring corn, or strength reviving grape,
 The mountain's heights survey:
 From ev'ry hill, from ev'ry dale,
 From ev'ry inlet, creek, or cape,
 From ev'ry tongue one strain prevail,
 From ev'ry heart one vow escape,—
 'The Mind that plann'd the worlds be lauded every day!'

Contrast with this the puny skills of man:
 Callicrates, Myrmecides, engage
 Our smile: beneath a fly's wings, lo, ye can
 Build a complete quadrigal equipage;
 Elegiac couplet write

(1) Westwood, Entom. Text Book, p. 54.