

5. But as the superiority of the happiness over the misery of the world, affords insufficient premises on which to conclude the benevolence of God, *so long as God is conceived of under the partial view of possessing but this as his alone moral attribute*—when that benevolence is employed as the argument for some ulterior doctrine in Natural Theology, it must impart to this latter the same inconclusiveness by which itself is characterised. The proof and the thing proved must be alike strong or alike weak. If the excess of enjoyment over suffering in the life that now is, be a matter of far too doubtful calculation, on which to rest a confident inference in favour of the Divine benevolence, then, let this benevolence have no other prop to lean upon, and, in its turn, it is far too doubtful a premise on which to infer a coming immortality. Accordingly, to help out the argument, many of our slender and sentimental theists, who will admit of no other moral attribute for the Divinity than the paternal attribute of kind affection for the creatures who have sprung from Him, do, in fact, assume the thing to be proved, and reason in a circle. The mere balance of the pleasures and pains of the present life, is greatly too uncertain, for what may be called an initial footing to this argument. But let a future life be assumed, in which all the defects and disorders of the present are to be repaired; and this may reconcile the doctrine of the benevolence of God, with the