

22. But, to mitigate this disquietude, it should be recollected, in the first place, that, if Christianity have real and independent evidence of being a message from God, it will be all the more humbly and respectfully deferred to, should a previous natural theology have assured us of His existence, and thrown the radiance of a clear and satisfying demonstration over the perfections of His character. However plausible its credentials may be, we should feel no great interest in its statements or its overtures, if we doubted the reality of that Being from whom it professes to have come; and it is precisely in as far as we are preoccupied with the conviction of a throne in heaven, and of a God sitting upon that throne, that we should receive what bore the signatures of an embassy from Him with awful reverence.

23. But there is another consideration still more decisive of the place and importance of Christianity, notwithstanding every possible achievement by the light of nature. There are many discoveries which, so far from alleviating, serve but to enhance the difficulties of the question. For example, though science has made known to us the magnitude of the universe, it has not thereby advanced one footstep towards the secret of God's moral administration; but has, in fact, receded to a greater distance, from this now more hopeless, because now more complex and unmanageable problem than before. To multiply the data of a