

on my part, as I have no design to be in the least degree unfair in dealing with the doctrines of the Bible, or the positions of opponents. I will now proceed, with your kind permission, to consider your reply.

In the pamphlet in question I stated the Christian argument from design to prove the existence of a personal God, in syllogistic form, which you quote and accept as fairly stated, as follows:—

Whatever manifests design must have had a designer ;
The world manifests design ;
Therefore, the world must have had a designer.

This is the gist of the Christian argument from design to prove a God. In my reply to Wendling I did not enter into an elaborate argument to confute the above reasoning, thinking it unnecessary, as the design argument is not much relied upon of late by Theists ; but to show its absurdity I gave what you are pleased to call, ironically, “a final demonstration,” by simply carrying out the Theist's logic a little further, as follows:—

Whatever manifests design must have had a designer: God, in his alleged personality and attributes, manifests design: Therefore, God must have had a designer.

Now, if the integrity of this syllogism ~~it~~ is unimpeachable, the conclusion is certainly fatal to the monotheist, as it proves a thousand Gods as well as one. You, of course, perceive this, and at once attempt to impeach the minor premise. The major premise, being the Theist's own proposition, you, of course, accept ; and I contend that the obnoxious minor premise is equally as sound as the other, on the Theist's own showing ; for if anything in the Universe manifests design, the God of the bible, in his person and attributes, manifests it. You say “we are not favored with an explanation of the minor premise of this syllogism. But we can see in it only one of two meanings—either it affirms the fitness of the Divine attributes as towards each other, or as towards the work of creation. Such fitness certainly exists; but it lacks one *essential* characteristic of the fitness of nature. It has no *beginning*—it always was.” To which I reply the fitness of the universe always was : *it* had no beginning ; for the Universe is eternal. If fitness, having no beginning, can exist in a God, fitness, having no beginning, can exist in the Universe. Hence, if fitness is no evidence of design “unless it can be shown that it had a beginning,” as you admit, the fitness of the universe which is eternal is no evidence of design. Or formulate the argument thus :—

Fitness is no evidence of design, “unless it is first shown that it had a beginning :”

The fitness of the Universe cannot be shown to have had a beginning ;
Therefore, the fitness in the Universe is no evidence of design.