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comparison, in many places, we have found that Mr. Metcalf, the English translator, has executed his task with accuracy and faithfulness. The external arrangement of the different parts of the work he has very skilfully changed. In the original, the Scenes are "separated by a profound gulf of Notes and Excursus, which is quite sufficient to drown the interest of the tale." This difficulty has been remedied by arranging the Scenes in succession, by setting the Notes in their several places at the foot of the pages in the narrative, and throwing together the Excursus in the form of an appendix. We may be allowed to say, however, that the book would have gained yet more in the English dress, if the author had taken some liberties with the style of the original, and broken up the many long and involved German sentences. With all their varied merits, the Germans have sadly neglected the cultivation of rhetorical excellence. On the other hand, it seems to us, that the translator has resorted too freely to the process of "lopping," and has left out happy references, and entirely omitted the discussion of matters of considerable importance. We must find fault too, with the numberless abbreviated allusions, which are copied unexplained, into the English work. With the exception of the learned Germans, it is not to be supposed that all scholars are familiar with every author that ever wrote in Greek or Latin, and that an arbitrary abbreviation made of two or three letters, and sometimes of a single letter is enough to suggest at once the name of the writer and of the work, to which reference is made.

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## ARTICLE II.

### NATURAL THEOLOGY.

Furnished by a Society of Clergymen.

It has long been our conviction, that Natural Theology deserves far more attention than it has received from modern divines. In a preceding number of this Review,<sup>1</sup> we expressed our regret that so noble a department of study should have fallen in-

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<sup>1</sup> See an Article on the State of Theological Science and Education in our VOL. III. No. 10.

to such unmerited neglect. It seems to be regarded by many as, at best, a convenient preparative for sacred science, rather than as an enlarged part of the science itself. By others it is regarded as a preliminary study which may be dispensed with, often without loss, sometimes with positive gain. Several of our modern systems of divinity treat this department in a cursory and illogical manner, and some of them overlook it entirely. Dwight has said but little which Charnock had not said before him. Hill, Dick, Knapp, Storr and Flatt, have done very much less in this branch of their science, than had been accomplished by their predecessors. German theology, as a whole, is deficient in this department.<sup>2</sup> Even the systems of German ethics are treatises on biblical theology, rather than on the dictates of our moral sense. We have, indeed, a few recent works on Natural Religion which claim a respectful notice. The Bridgewater Treatises, particularly those of Whewell, Bell, Kidd, Kirby, and Chalmers, are of great value, chiefly however as affording a collection of materials for the formation of a theological system, rather than as of themselves exhibiting such a system in its true proportions. The more extended treatise of Chalmers on Natural Theology is rich in suggestive remark, and affords honorable proof of the comprehensiveness of its author's intellect, the accuracy of his observations, and the extent of his scientific inquiries. The literary world have been too much astonished at the exuberance of Dr. Chalmers' fancy, for a proper appreciation

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Country, in the *Bib. Sac. and Theol. Review*, Vol. I. pp. 743, 744. We stated in that Article, that in examining candidates for license to preach the Gospel, we have found but few individuals who could readily prove the unity of God, or who were sure that a plurality of deities can be disproved by arguments from nature alone; but few who could promptly reply to the philosophical objections by which such arguments may be met; or who could establish and vindicate the benevolence of the Deity on principles of reason; or who had formed settled opinions, and could give the reasons for their opinions on the foundation of virtue, on the nature of the moral sense, and on other fundamental topics in this branch of theology; but few, therefore, who were prepared to contend with atheists and infidels, on principles of reasoning, which must be admitted by even the enemies of the inspired volume.

<sup>2</sup> It is deficient not so much in the number, as in the quality of its treatises on Natural Theology. Some of the German Encyclopaedists give us the names of more than a hundred different modern treatises on the existence of God, and also more than a hundred on the immortality of the soul.—See the *Encyclopaedias of Hagenbach and Pelt*. Compare *Brettschneider's Entwicke- lung* § 58 and § 132. *Hase's Hutterus Redivivus*, § 52—§ 68, and § 129. *Hahn's Lehrbuch des christlichen Glaubens* § 29—50, and § 141—§ 144.

of his philosophical acumen. We think, however, that he has not given so full an analysis as he should have given, of those fundamental principles which must be reasoned upon in Natural Theology, as well as in every other science; and from a failure to recognize these laws of belief, he has formed too low an opinion of the subject on which he so eloquently disourses. He is satisfied with saying, that "the theology of nature sheds powerful light on the being of a God," that "even from its unaided demonstrations we can reach a considerable degree of probability, both for his moral and natural attributes." He declares, however, that "Natural Theology is quite overrated by those who would represent it as the foundation of the edifice" of the Christian religion; that "it is not the foundation, but rather the taper by which we must grope our way to the edifice;" that it is not so much a teacher of religious truth, as an "inquirer or rather a prompter to inquiry" respecting it. We think that many of Dr. Chalmers' views of the religion of nature are less scientific and correct than those of Lord Brougham, and that his Lordship's *Discourse of Natural Theology* has opened a pathway of investigation which our divines will, sooner or later, be persuaded to follow. The compressed energy of many parts of that *Discourse* demand our highest praise. We could also speak in commendatory terms of some other extended treatises, and a few minor essays in this department; but the great majority of modern contributions to Natural Theology do not appear to be the results of a thoroughly logical and independent investigation. Some of them are improvements upon the Natural Theology of Paley, as this work was an advance upon the productions of Ray and Derham. We still need an original, a systematic analysis of the arguments and principles which lie scattered throughout the practical treatises which have been mentioned. We should rejoice to see a republication of Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, of Dr. Samuel Clarke's celebrated *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, and of the *Controversial Papers* which were exchanged between Clarke and Leibnitz. We believe that the mind of our theological public would be occupied more profitably by these discussions, than by such frequent controversies as we now have, on the comparative advantages of the surplice and the black gown, of kneeling with the face directed away from, or towards the congregation. All the departments, whether more or less extensive, of theological study, should be cultivated with system, and with a zeal proportioned to their value. In the science of Medicine

almost every class of phenomena is made the topic of well arranged discussion; and volume follows volume on some of the least important branches of Therapeutics and Surgery. The science of law is elucidated in its minute divisions by learned digests and abstract argument, so that amid the apparent chaos of precedents and statutes, a counsellor perceives a beautiful, strongly compacted system. Why, then, need theologians be left to complain, that the science which ought to be from its simplicity more complete than any other, is left ill-shapen and crude? Why do we not perceive a more vigorous effort of our divines to introduce a method and logical precision into that department of truth, which is now assailed more vigorously than ever by Hegelians, sceptics, materialists, and even by two distinct and highly respectable schools of Christian believers? The fact that this branch of theology is thus assailed by recent scholars, that abundant materials for its advancement have been accumulated in the process of philosophical discovery, and that nearly all other branches of science are in a flourishing condition, should invite us to inquire, whether we need be so dilatory as we have been, in our theological progress, and especially in our attempts to systematize the principles of the religion of nature.

It were easy to indicate several causes of the prevailing indifference to Natural Theology among those men, who ought to be its defenders. Some imagine that Revelation is depreciated, just in proportion as the volume of nature is esteemed. "They argue," says Lord Brougham,<sup>1</sup> "as if the two systems were rivals, and whatever credit the one gained, were so much lost to the other." But the truth is, that an esteem for Natural Religion heightens our reverence for the Bible, just as a respect for the Bible increases the regard of a healthy mind for the teachings of nature. "Whoever," says Bishop Berkeley,<sup>2</sup> "thinks highly of the one can never with any consistency think meanly of the other." Many are inimical to Natural Theology, because they regard it as essentially *philosophical*, and thus at variance with the humble spirit which is fostered by the revealed word. Their theory is, that when a theologian attentively 'considers the heavens, the work of the divine fingers; the moon and the stars which God has ordained,' then he ceases to exclaim, 'What is man that Jehovah is mindful of him, and the son of man that God visiteth him.'<sup>3</sup> Others allow themselves to be regardless of

<sup>1</sup> Discourse of Nat. Theol. Part I. Sec. III.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Philosopher, Dial. V.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 8: 3, 4.

Natural Theology, because they deem its pretended instructions to be mere conjectures, or at the best, obscure and ambiguous hints. We hear so much of the weakness of human reason, and the darkness of human speculations, and the folly of him who puts any trust in his inferences from nature, that we sometimes tremble, lest men refuse to believe anything and adopt the language of Philo in Hume's remarkable Dialogues. "Let us become thoroughly sensible," he says,<sup>1</sup> "of the weakness, blindness, and narrow limits of human reason. Let us duly consider its uncertainty and endless contrarieties, even in subjects of common life and practice. Let the errors and deceits of our very senses be set before us; the insuperable difficulties which attend first principles in all systems; the contradictions which adhere to the very ideas of matter, cause and effect, extension, space, time, motion, and in a word quantity of all kinds, the object of the only science that can fairly pretend to any certainty or evidence. When these topics are displayed in their full light, as they are by some philosophers and almost all divines, who can retain such confidence in this frail faculty of reason as to pay any regard to its determinations in points so sublime, so abstruse, so remote from common life and experience [as are the points of theology]? When the coherence of the parts of a stone, or even that composition of parts which renders it extended, when these familiar objects, I say, are so inexplicable, and contain circumstances so repugnant and contradictory, with what assurance can we decide concerning the origin of worlds, or trace their history from eternity to eternity?" The use which infidels have made of such concessions is well known.

But there are many who will not allow the force of these skeptical reasonings, and yet are neglectful of Natural Religion, because they judge it to be simply needless. While the revealed word is regarded as its "own best witness," sufficient of itself, without any anterior proof of our moral relations, to establish all its claims to our homage, why, it is asked, should we postpone our enjoyment of its clear light, for the sake of groping our way amid the obscurities of nature, feeling after God, if haply we may find him. But this, and many other objections to the cultivation of Natural Theology proceed, we think, from a confused view of the whole system of sacred science; of its

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<sup>1</sup> See Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, Part I. p. 19. 2d London edition.

ground-work, its dependences, its internal structure, its external influence and aims. In proportion to the clearness with which we perceive the mutual relations of the various branches of theology, shall we feel the impropriety of neglecting that extensive department of it, which precedes the written revelation, and which our subsequent remarks may still more clearly prove to be neither hostile to the Bible, nor deleterious in its moral influence, nor uncertain in its teachings, nor unnecessary either to the mind or heart of a Christian, to the defence, or even to the existence of any sound theological system.

Having thus alluded to the prevailing neglect of the teachings of nature on religious themes, and also to some of the causes of that neglect, we will next endeavor to define the province of Natural Theology. The term *Natural Theology* is used by some for the genus, of which *Natural Religion* is a species. Bishop Butler sometimes employs it in this sense, and speaks of Natural Religion as that part of Natural Theology, which more immediately concerns our own race. Other writers, as Lord Brougham, suppose that Natural Theology denotes the science, of which Natural Religion expresses the subject. A third and large class of divines, influenced in part by the etymological meaning of the terms, speak of Natural Theology, as designating exclusively the truths relating to God; and Natural Religion, as designating exclusively the truths respecting the duties which moral beings owe to their Creator. A still larger class, as Clark, Bentley, Derham, Hume, and sometimes Paley use the two terms as interchangeable and synonymous. But these definitions are not in reality so diverse from each other, as they may at first appear. The two terms are not synonymous, but they differ only in the comparative degrees of prominence which they give, to the Creator on the one hand, and to the moral creation on the other. Thus, it is impossible to consider the character and moral government of God, without also considering the subjects whom he morally governs; and it is impossible to consider the duties of these created agents to their great Ruler, and the consequences of their fulfilling or neglecting these duties, without also considering the character and government of the Ruler himself. Natural Theology, therefore, denotes that class of truths which relate to God, his being, perfections, government and purposes; all considered without a prominent reference to the duties and destination of man. But Natural Religion reverses this order of thought, and denotes that class of truths which respect the duties of men toward their Cre-

ator, and the consequences of discharging or violating these duties; all considered without a prominent reference to the attributes of God and the plans of his government. In each case, there is and must be a reference more or less indirect to that which is not made the prominent object of regard. Bishop Butler, for example, treats of the future existence of man under the head of Natural Religion; but certainly the future existence of man is included in the moral government of God; it is a plan or purpose of Jehovah, and thus indirectly belongs to Natural Theology. Under the same head of Natural Religion he treats of God's moral government, which is doubtless a part of his general plan, of his intentions, and therefore is, not less really than his attributes, an integral part of the theology of nature. Natural Theology and Natural Religion refer to the same classes of truths, but to these classes in different relations. The former has more immediate regard to the qualities and acts of God, which constitute his claim to our homage; the latter has more immediate regard to those duties and prospects of man, which result from the rights and the moral purposes of the Deity. For logical purposes, it is well to make a distinction between the terms; for practical purposes, it is well to remember that one term includes the other. It is not proper to say with Lord Brougham, that one denotes the genus and the other a species; but it is proper to say, that each one in its turn may denote a prominent system of truths, of which the other expresses a subordinate part. If Lord Brougham is accurate in defining theology to be the science, and religion the subject, still the subject involves the science, as strictly as the science presupposes the subject.

Natural Theology has been divided into Ontology, or the science of the Creator's existence and attributes as learned from his works; and Deontology, or the science of our duties toward God considered as our benefactor and righteous governor. In the former department, Natural Theology has relation to all the natural sciences, and also to the various branches of psychology. It must resort to these, as the sources of its proof and illustration. In the latter department, it has relation to human ethics. It is one, and the most important, branch of ethical science. If there were no theology, there would still be a system of duties between man and his fellow creatures; but natural religion includes the higher system of duties from man to God. If there were no theology, the obligations of man to his fellows would receive a certain kind of sanction from his moral nature; but the truths relating to the divine government introduce a more solemn and imperative sanc-



tion to all the duties of man toward his equals, inferiors, and superiors. Natural religion, then, not only forms the chief department of ethics, but likewise adds the most cogent motives to every species of excellence which the ethical code enjoins. It reasserts every obligation which previously rested upon us, and enforces it by those additional sanctions which result from the present and future agency of a just Sovereign.

From these remarks it follows, that the province of Natural Theology is one of great extent. First, it presupposes the certainty of moral distinctions, and discloses the most important applications of the moral code. It implies, that there is a right and a wrong course of action, and teaches what would be praiseworthy and what blameworthy in a supposed Governor of the universe. Secondly, it establishes the fact that there is one and only one God, and that he possesses all the attributes which can entitle any being to the homage and supreme love of moral intelligences. Thirdly, it unfolds our duties to this great Being, and these constitute the chief part of the ethical code; it also imparts new instruction concerning our duties to our fellow men, and superadds the whole authority of the Creator to the demands which were previously imposed upon us by the mere nature and relations of his creatures. Fourthly, it teaches the immortality of the human soul. Fifthly, it proves that God is now exercising both a providential and a moral government over men; and that obedience to his commands is now and ever will be followed by good; disobedience, by evil. In this department, may be included the doctrine of divine purposes, which is a part of Natural, as well as of Revealed Theology.

We are aware that certain theologians will not allow the province of Natural Theology to be thus extensive. Some suppose that the moral distinctions, so far from being presupposed by Natural Theology, are not even recognized by it, and cannot be satisfactorily established without a written revelation. The popular volume entitled "Christian Ethics," which has been introduced as a text-book into some of our literary institutions, was written to prove that "reason and conscience cannot be trusted to, as affording any certain standard either of truth or duty;"<sup>1</sup> that "the science of morals has no province at all independently of (revealed) theology, and that it cannot be philosophically discussed except on theological (biblical) principles."<sup>2</sup> The great argument

<sup>1</sup> Christian Ethics, Lecture II. p. 52. London Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Ethics, Note, p. 367. Boston edition. "I avow without re-

for this theory is, that "if human nature be in a state of depravity, conscience directly or indirectly must partake of that depravity,"<sup>1</sup> and be, therefore, erroneous in its decisions. We entertain a high respect for the divine who has propounded this scheme of Christian Ethics, and we know that he has expressed in it the opinions of some earlier moralists. But with all our veneration for the man, and our gratitude for many of his published volumes, we are constrained to express our decided objections to his theory. It was doubtless well meant, but in our apprehension and in the view, we believe, of our soundest writers on moral philosophy, it leads to consequences which its estimable author would be among the last to approve. Did our limits permit, we might easily show that this theory, first, is at variance with the actual development of ethical science in Pagan lands; secondly, is opposed by the consciousness of every moral being; thirdly, is dishonorable to our moral governor, and fourthly, is contradictory to itself, and involves us in the most fatal skepticism. If the depravity of man utterly disqualify him for ethical reasoning, then it disqualifies him for proving the moral excellence of the Bible. If his mind be so disordered by sin, that he cannot distinguish truth from falsehood in spiritual concerns, then he cannot discern the truth of the Scriptures. His reason is so blinded that he cannot determine whether the standard of morals be right or wrong, whether that which the world calls virtue be really virtue or vice; then, *a fortiori*, he cannot determine whether the external, and more especially the internal evidence for the Bible, be sufficient or insufficient to establish its truth; nor whether the apparent meaning of that sacred volume be worthy of approbation or of censure; nor whether our moral inferences from it be just or unjust; nor whether the attributes which it ascribes to God be perfections or foibles; nor whether the services it requires of us be appropriate duties, or arbitrary exactions. The faculty of judging with regard to moral truth is so perverted, that all its judgments must be uncertain; therefore, says our author, there can be no rational ethics, and therefore, we add, there can be no Christian ethics. When we have established the principle, that our depravity of heart has incapacitated us for moral judgment,

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serve," says Dr. Wardlaw, "that I own no such science as the distinct and independent science of pure ethics, that is, of ethics independent of theology [biblical theology]—of morals independent of religion," [by which is meant, the religion of the Bible].

<sup>1</sup> Christian Ethics, Lecture IV. p. 128 sq. London Edition.

then we have no right to confide in our moral judgment in any case; least of all can we trust it in a question so momentous as that of receiving or rejecting the Bible, a question which involves our highest interests for time and eternity, and which, of course, must excite in the greatest degree the selfishness which incapacitates us to think aright. We may imagine that we have renounced our selfishness in receiving the sacred word, but such a fancy may be the very deception which we ought not to trust. We may deem the evidence for the truth of the Scriptures peculiarly clear, but this opinion may be, above all others, the result of that blinded intellect which has lost the power of distinguishing clearness from obscurity. Our judgment that we are sinners, is the act of a mind so perverted as to be untrustworthy. Our decision that we are obligated to perform certain deeds and to avoid others, is a decision which we are incompetent to make; for the conscience is as incapable of ascertaining the right, as the will is of practising it. This is the legitimate result of a theory, which was intended to honor the very book whose authority it undermines. We turn with relief from the skepticism which it fosters, to the positive teachings of some Pagan moralists, and rejoice to find them breathing forth a nobler spirit than we are sometimes able to discover even among Christian philosophers. We see no skepticism and no want of a power of moral judgment in Cicero, when he says: "Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturae congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quae vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat; quae tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest. Nec vero, aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus. Neque est quaerendus explanator aut interpres ejus alius. Nec erit alia lex Romae alia Athenis; alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister, et imperator omnium Deus ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator; cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernabitur, atque hoc ipso luet maximas poenas, etiamsi cetera supplicia quae putantur effugerit." So decisive are many passages of this author and of Plato in favor of the true ethical system, that some commentators have supposed these passages to have been interpolated by Christian copyists. The conjecture is an idle one, but it illustrates the internal evidence which some Pagan writings

exhibit of that inspiration from above, which enlightens in a greater or smaller degree every man who cometh into the world.

There is another class of writers, who admit that Natural Theology includes a certain portion of ethical science, and yet deny that it embraces the doctrines of the existence and attributes of the Deity. Even Kepler and Pascal supposed, that the being of a God cannot be inferred from the phenomena of the universe. "Quis est tam vecors" says a Pagan sage, "qui cum suspexerit in coelum, non sentiat Deum esse?" Such testimony however is easily rebutted by men who are eager to depreciate the Religion of Nature. Some of them have endeavored to prove that the fact of the divine existence has not been even recognized by Pagans, and also that Pagans have derived their knowledge of this fact from scriptural traditions. But against such self-contradictory reasoning we need not contend. We simply remark, that with those divines who exclude the existence and character of Jehovah from the province of Natural Theology, we may soon terminate our dispute, by referring them to the very volume whose teaching they profess to receive implicitly, and which asserts in Rom. 1: 20 the cardinal truth which this class of its believers pretend to disbelieve. If they defer to divine authority, they must admit, that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, are understood by the things which are made, are manifest in the minds of men, and have been shown to them by Him who left men without excuse, even while they were left without the Bible.

There is still another class of writers, even Locke is among the number, who admit that God's existence and attributes and our consequent obligations, may be proved by the unaided reason, and yet they exclude the immortality of the soul from the province of Natural Theology. They deem it impossible to prove our future existence from the creation, or even from the admitted attributes of the Creator, and are thus in singular opposition to the ancient Platonists, who regarded the eternal continuance of our being as the more obvious doctrine of Natural Theology, and inferred from it the divine existence as the less direct intimation of nature. It is said that much of the reasoning employed by Pagan writers to prove the soul's immortality is unsound. This is a fact, and yet by no means invalidates their right to believe in the conclusion which they deduced illogically. There are many truths, the proof of which lies so near to us that we overlook it. Believing a proposition firmly, we are satisfied with the

mere pretence of an argument for its support; and searching in the distance for proof which can only be found in immediate contact with us, we discover reasons for the belief which, long before we had discovered them, was yet fully established in our minds; and yet we deem these reasons sufficient to uphold the doctrine, although in point of fact, the doctrine does not make trial of their strength by resting upon them. If they were the props on which our belief was in reality founded, their weakness would be obvious at once; but as they have nothing to sustain, their insufficiency is the less apparent; our belief continues, notwithstanding the frailness of the arguments which make a show of upholding it, and thus the very defects of the proof illustrate the strength of the conclusion which remains firm in despite of them. That the immortality of the soul has been firmly believed by men destitute of a written revelation, will not be denied by fair minded scholars. It probably would never have been doubted, had not some learned, though injudicious controversialists, as Leland and others, deemed it necessary to magnify the importance of the Bible by undervaluing the attainments of heathen sages. The singular attempt of Warburton to prove, that the authority of the Mosaic writings is evinced by their not teaching the doctrine of a future state, led him to an equally paradoxical attempt to show, that the phraseology of Pagan sages furnishes no valid evidence of their belief in the soul's immortality. But each of these efforts was abortive; and if each had been successful, such a kind of success would have resulted in even greater evils than have come from the want of it. The fact, then, that our existence in a future world has been an article of faith among Pagan philosophers, indicates that this doctrine is an appropriate part of Natural Theology. But even if it had not been thus believed by heathens, it ought to have been; and the arguments which convince the unaided judgment of its truth, are also reasons for classifying the doctrine among the teachings of nature. These arguments may be conveniently arranged under six different classes; first, the *metaphysical*, which prove that the mind is entirely distinct from the body, and is capable of existing while separate from it; that the mind is not compounded, and will not therefore be dissolved into elementary particles; that, being indiscerptible, it cannot perish except by an annihilating act of God; secondly, the *analogical*, which induce us to believe that the soul will not be annihilated, even as matter does not cease to exist when it changes its form; thirdly, the *teleological*,

which incline us to think that the mental powers and the tendencies which are so imperfectly developed in this life, will not be shut out from that sphere of future exertion, for which they are so wisely adapted; fourthly, the *theological*, which foster an expectation, that the wisdom of God will not fail to complete what otherwise appears to have been commenced in vain, that his goodness will not cease to bestow the happiness for which our spiritual nature is ever longing, and that his justice will not allow the present disorders of the moral world to continue, but will rightly adjust the balances, which have now for a season lost their equipoise; fifthly, the *moral*, which compel us to hope that our virtues will not lose their reward, and to fear that our vices will not go unpunished in the future world, which seems to be better fitted, than the present, for moral retribution; and sixthly, the *historical*, the general belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, the expectations of dying men, the premonitions of the guilty, and the tenacious hopes of the beneficent. All these arguments are in favor of our unending existence, and there are none in opposition to it, and it is an axiom that whatever has existed and now exists, will, unless there be special proof to the contrary, continue to exist.

The preceding considerations are, of themselves, adequate to convince us, that the doctrine of our immortality is true; and if it be merely probable, it has yet an appropriate place in the department of Natural Religion. To dilate upon them as they deserve to be expanded, would swell a single essay into a volume. They have been adduced here, partly to show that Natural Theology includes the doctrine of a future state, and partly to show that it also includes the doctrine of God's righteous moral government over men. This is the fifth department of Natural Theology, according to the classification on p. 248; and most of the arguments which prove that we shall live hereafter, prove equally that we shall be, then as now, the subjects of a moral government. Indeed, the latter truth is the great object for which the former is established; and it is not so much the future state, as the *kind* of a future state, which pagan philosophers have endeavored to prove. They have pursued a correct process of argument in showing, that we see in this life the rudiments, the initial courses, the great outlines of a moral government; that the tendencies of virtue are to promote happiness, and only by a thwarting of its tendencies does it ever result in misery; that the appropriate influence of vice is evil, and the

incidental pleasures which are connected with it, are its temporary concomitants, rather than its legitimate effects; that these arrangements of our constitution in favor of moral goodness, have been instituted by God, and they intimate that he will effect, hereafter, a full development of the tendencies, which are working here under a disadvantage, against every form of sin; that he has already made sufficient manifestations of his holy preferences, and that he has caused the moral faculty within us to foresee, by a prophetic intuition, the rewards which will follow virtue, and the punishments which will follow vice; that our belief in the retributive system of the divine government is irrepressible, and therefore true; that without such a belief, the moral world is a medley of confusion, and with it, all is consistent and clear. Whatever a man may deny in theory, he will be conscious, still, of a lingering faith in the retributive and righteous government of one who "is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and this faith is sufficient, were there nothing else, to justify our classing the doctrine of God's benevolent moral administration, among the departments of Natural Theology.

We have already implied that no well read scholar will deny, at the present day, that the doctrine of the soul's immortality has been believed by heathen moralists. We think that the seventh, eighth and ninth notes appended to Brougham's *Discourse of Natural Theology*, imperfect as they are, adduce sufficient authorities to establish the fact of such a belief. Still, there are many who will not allow, that Pagan sages have cultivated Natural Theology, in any of its departments, so fully as to justify us in assigning to it the extensive province, already marked out. We are told, that Plato sanctioned intemperance on particular occasions; Plato, Cicero and Epictetus recommended idolatry in certain cases; Aristotle and Cicero disapproved of the forgiveness of injuries; Maximus Tyrius forbade prayer; Socrates and Aristotle encouraged the cruel treatment of barbarians or foreigners; Diogenes, Plato, Xenophon, Solon, Cato, Cicero and other eminent philosophers countenanced some of the most odious forms of sensual indulgence; Zeno and Cato both committed suicide. Such errors in ethics and religion are said to prove that Heathen nations have not discovered the cardinal truths of Natural Theology. But even if we admit, that all of them have been thus ignorant, we need not infer that they were unable to accomplish what, in their sinfulness, they have

failed to do. The attainments which man *has* made, are not the criterion of what he *has had the power* to make. If so, all the resources of the race have been already developed. We do not admit, however, that the errors of certain individuals among the heathen are a decisive proof, that the same errors were committed by all the heathen, or need to have been committed by any of them. Notwithstanding these mistakes of particular men, it still remains true, that all the vices above enumerated have been condemned by some Pagan writers; that all the virtues in that list have been enjoined; and that nearly every general duty, presented in the New Testament, has been inculcated by a greater or smaller number of the heathen philosophers. This is demonstrable; and while it proves the goodness of God in thus revealing our duty in the book of nature, it proves also the excellence of the Bible, in that it demands of us all the virtues which are recommended in scattered portions of Pagan ethics, and dissuades us from all the vices which are here and there condemned by heathens, and it never intermingles their mistakes with their right injunctions, but separates with a superhuman skill, the precious from the vile, and adds those distinctive moral requisitions which form the crowning excellence of Christianity. We regret that Pagan philosophers have done so little; but it is not true that they have failed to accomplish much. "It may, we think, be reasonably doubted, whether the conversation recorded by Xenophon, as having occurred between Socrates and Aristodemus, does not leave on the mind a belief of the being and attributes of God, as convincing as the more detailed argument in Paley's Natural Theology. We have not a doubt, that the dying speech of Cyrus is far better fitted to raise the tone of moral feeling in the breast of a young man, and to confirm his faith in the reality of moral distinctions, than the treatise on Moral Philosophy by Paley, though he was an archdeacon." We have heard of, at least, one very excellent sermon that was in great part extracted from Plutarch "*de sera numinis vindicta*." How many passages of the English discourses, preached in the seventeenth century, were borrowed from the writings of Plato, Cicero and Seneca, is known to all. We do not believe, then, that Natural Theology has been so imperfectly cultivated, as many pretend, by the heathen writers; nor if it had been thus partially developed, should we be obliged to admit that there was any necessity for such a failure, or that the truths which Pagans had neglected to discover, were not, after all, discoverable by them, and therefore legitimate portions of Natural Theology.



Having now endeavored to define what truths are comprehended in Natural Theology, we proceed to a consideration of its scientific character. We cannot, with Lord Brougham, apply to it the term *inductive*, for we think that induction has reference to the general truths that are inferred from particular phenomena included under them, and not to truths of a different class from the specific facts which suggest them. We deem it important to establish the scientific character of Natural Theology, because the prevalent style of discussion in this department is too loose and declamatory. Many believe that the mind is so constituted as to receive the truths of this science, when they are suggested by the Bible, but never to have a power of discovering these truths without such a supernatural suggestion. The world is compared to an intricate lock, and the Scriptures are the only key which can open it, and disclose the religious doctrines which had been shut out from our view. When the lock has been thus opened, we may go through the previously impassable door. Natural Theology as such, then, is thought to be a mere series of conjectures. It is singular, that some infidels have admitted the validity of certain proofs of the divine existence, when the same proofs have been disowned by Christians; and in fact almost every objection which atheists have made against these proofs, has been sustained by some believers in the Bible. It is not wonderful, therefore, amid this confusion of opinions, that Natural Theology has been deemed incapable of scientific arrangement and logical proof. Its reputation has been made still lower by the fanciful hypothesis, that all its pretended truths have been borrowed from original revelations, and not inferred from the phenomena of the inner and outer world; by the groundless remark also, that the best of the Pagan reasoners have merely arrived at certain ingenious *guesses*, at a bare wish that the propositions of Natural Theology may be found at last to be true, "*rem gratissimam promittentes magis quam probantes.*"<sup>1</sup> It were well if merely atheists had contended against the scientific character of Natural Theology, but so many Christians have united with them, some contesting the validity of certain parts of the science, others opposing all its parts, that the subject has become one of no ordinary moment. Its importance is yearly increasing. It is becoming more and more fashionable to say with Cousin, that 'the Christian religion is *idealistic*, and takes its grounds in the mind and not in the senses, and therefore neg-

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<sup>1</sup> Seneca, Epist. 102.

lects nature, or regards it under an ideal point of view, and rises to God in the depths of the soul, through reason and the *Word*, employing chiefly the *a priori* argument which is eminently the Christian one.<sup>1</sup> It is also esteemed an accomplishment to be able to say, that 'the existence of God is a necessary conviction, a necessary belief in the analysis of the mind,'<sup>2</sup> and therefore dispenses with logical deduction. As some, therefore, deny all the claims of Natural Theology to be considered a science, and others deny the scientific character of the whole argument *a posteriori*, and a third class deny the validity of that portion of the *a posteriori* argument which is derived from the works of external nature, we deem it important to show, that all these denials are without a proper foundation, and that Natural Theology, comprising the facts of the material and the mental world, is as regular and well established a science as chemistry or astronomy.

A science has been defined to be a system of ultimate truths which, in conformity with the fundamental laws of belief, are proved by subordinate facts. It is not a mere aggregate of phenomena, but the phenomena must be classified under general principles. It is not a mere collection of principles, but a system of truths which are proved to be such by particular phenomena, and which are dependent upon, as well as ulterior to, those phenomena. The ultimate truths thus attested by subordinate facts, and inviting the application of certain fundamental laws of belief, constitute, according to the preceding definition, a regular science.

Now, in order to show that Natural Theology is truly scientific in its nature, let us take some one of its departments, and attempt to develop its philosophical character. For the sake of mere convenience, let us analyze that department which includes the existence and attributes of God. The being, the natural and moral perfections of the Deity, constitute the ultimate truths in this department of the science. They are proved by facts like the following; The existence of matter and finite mind; the changes taking place in them; the adaptations which they exhibit of means to ends; their contrived fitnesses to promote the happiness and the holiness of intelligent beings; the natural and universal tendency of the mind to believe in a Deity, whose "eye is in every place beholding the evil and the good," and who is disposed to reward the one and punish the other. These

<sup>1</sup> Cousin's *Elements of Psychology*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, note, p. 338.

and similar facts are applied to the support of the ultimate truths according to numerous principles of belief, some of which are instantaneously recognized as axioms; others, requiring a longer time for consideration, are at last adopted as incontrovertible; and others are firmly believed in the absence of all proof opposed to them. Among these principles are the following: Every existence has an internal or an external cause; the cause must be adequate to produce the effect, must be superior to the effect, must be present at the production of the effect; every contrivance has an intelligent contriver, a personal author; unity of design, shows a unity in the cause; the tendencies of the effect prove the moral character of the cause; those which lead to the happiness and holiness of the universe prove the moral goodness of their author; those which legitimately lead to the misery, and encourage the persevering sinfulness of the universe, prove the malevolence of their author; what the constitution of the mind obliges us to believe, is true; the propositions which have been held by all men in all ages are presumed to be correct, unless their contrary can be proved.<sup>1</sup> These are some of the principles of belief, which are adopted more or less readily; and in the application of which, the above named facts evince the ultimate truths which constitute a single department of Natural Theology. Its four collateral departments contain a like system of axioms and laws of belief; of particular phenomena, and ulterior general principles. They constitute therefore, a complete science.

But we are bound to consider the various objections which different writers have urged against the scientific character of Natural Theology. Some of these objections, emanating from opposite schools in philosophy, conflict with each other, but they all conspire against the principle which we are endeavoring to establish. First, it is said that the truths of this pretended science, are not cognizable either by sensation or consciousness, and can therefore be no more than plausible conjectures. But the ex-

<sup>1</sup> The argument for the existence of God from the universal assent of man, has been more highly prized by some heathen writers than by many Christian theologians. The latter have often denied the fact of such an assent, but Aristotle says, Πάντες ἄνθρωποι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν.—De coelo 1, 3. Cicero says, Solus Epicurus vidit, primum esse Deos, quod in omnium animis eorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura. Quae est enim gens aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat, sine doctrina, anticipationem quandam Deorum, quam appellat πρόληψιν Epicurus, i. e. antceptam animo rei quandam informationem, sine qua non intelligi quidquam, nec quaeri, nec disputari potest. De natura Deorum. I. 16. See also Tusc. Quaest. 1, 3, and Seneca Epist. 117.

istence of a material substratum, of a mental essence, is not an object either of sensation or consciousness; yet from certain effects produced upon our sensorium we infer a proximate cause, i. e. the subject in which the material qualities inhere; and from certain effects produced within the sphere of our consciousness, we infer a proximate cause, i. e. the subject to which the mental qualities belong; and in both of these cases the subject is beyond the scope of our external or internal senses. On the same principle and in the same way, do we infer an ultimate producer of the same phenomena which we had already ascribed to a proximate efficiency; and there are no more objections to this inference in favor of a *first* cause, than previously existed to our inferences, in favor of what may be termed the *second* causes, the material substratum and the mental essence. It were easy to prove by a process of *reductio ad absurdum*, that we have no knowledge of any efficiency in nature, if we have none of the Efficient Cause of nature.

Secondly, it is said that our ideas of the objects with which Natural Theology is conversant, are too obscure to be classed among the perceptions of scientific truth. But in every science we are compelled to believe in many objects, which we can describe with no more clearness, than we can explain the objects forming the basis of Natural Theology. From certain sensations of the optic nerve we infer the existence of light as a cause of them; but our ideas of light regarded distinctly from the visual sensations are, to say the least, as obscure as our ideas of a Creator; and if our knowledge of him be too indefinite to be called *science*, so likewise is our knowledge of light, and, on the same principle, of heat, of magnetism, of electricity, and indeed of all the agencies which are developed in Natural Science. Even our ideas of the atmospheric air, considered apart from the sensations which compel us to believe in its existence, are, to say the least, as evanescent as are our notions of the Spirit who is made known to us by Natural Theology. If, therefore, our investigations concerning this Spirit be not scientific, there is and can be no complete science.

The two preceding objections have reference to the ultimate truths of Natural Theology. The two following, have reference to the facts by which these truths are established. It is said, thirdly, that some of the most important facts cannot be ascertained by the unaided reason. For example, in order to prove the divine goodness and wisdom, we must prove not only

an intelligence, but an intelligent adaptation of means to ends. Now the great object of the creation cannot be learned, it is said, from the creation itself; and therefore, as the end is unknown, we cannot see a skilful adaptation of means to it. But we reply, first, that even the physical world alone displays innumerable fitnesses of means to useful ends; and from its wonderful adaptations we have philosophical reasons for inferring, that its author possesses such a degree of wisdom and goodness as surpasses our powers of comprehension. We reply, secondly, that the relations of the physical to the moral world, and the whole structure of the moral system, teach us the great design of the created universe, the tendencies of all things to promote the welfare of moral beings in this world, and more especially in the world to come. These tendencies are the proof of goodness and wisdom in their author. The existence of them has been already indicated in our attempts to show, that we are immortal beings, and subjects of a righteous moral government. No reader of Butler's *Analogy and Sermons*, can doubt that these tendencies are discoverable from nature.

The fourth objection against the scientific character of Natural Theology is, that the facts on which it is founded do not belong to one distinct science, but are portions of natural, mental and moral philosophy. But this objection concedes one part of the very truth which it opposes. It implies that the facts of Natural Theology have a scientific character. This cannot be denied. The phenomena of the material world, the laws and operations of mind, the moral judgments and instincts are clearly ascertained in their respective sciences, and these form the premises for certain new deductions which constitute Natural Theology. Thus is Natural Theology a more comprehensive science than any other. It includes all others, and superadds to them a new class of truths. It refers all other sciences to Him, who made the objects with which all are conversant. It draws one inference from them all, in favor of their author. It adds one step to every deductive process; this additional step is a scientific one; the antecedent process was scientific; the whole, then, is scientific. The present objection, therefore, instead of proving that Natural Theology is not a real science, proves only that it is the queen of all the sciences except the revealed; that it is, with this exception, the true *scientia scientiarum*. All the merely human sciences are imperfect without this. They all tend to this, were originally designed for its illustration, and are obvious-

ly deficient, when they do not furnish some facts or principles, tributary to our clearer apprehension of the Divine being and character. It were idle to pretend, that, because the facts which sustain the ultimate truths of Natural Theology, belong at first to subordinate branches of study, they cannot therefore be transferred to this science. On such reasoning, we must deny the scientific character of anatomy and physiology; for these include portions of chemistry, of electricity, dynamics, optics and pneumatics. Often are many sciences found to be tributary to one extensive system of truths; and this system, instead of becoming less entitled to the scientific name because it comprehends various subordinate systems within itself, becomes for this very reason more worthy of such an appellation. The only difference, in this regard, between physiology and Natural Theology is, that the former rests upon the basis of a few other sciences, and makes a few advances upon them, while the latter rests upon the basis of all other sciences, and crowns all with additional truths, distinct indeed from the dogmas of tributary philosophical systems, yet logically consequent upon them.

A fifth objection to the scientific character of Natural Theology concerns not the ultimate truths which compose it, nor the facts from which they are inferred, but the first principles of belief according to which the inferences are drawn. It is said that some of these principles are false. The maxim, for example, that every contrivance must have proceeded from an intelligent personal cause is denied. We are told that mere animals adapt means to ends; and this adaptation, if it prove that they possess a certain degree of intelligence, does not prove that they have a real personality. We must admit that the habitations of the ant and beaver, ingeniously contrived as they may be, are yet the results of instinct, rather than reason; why then may not the world, contrived as it is still more ingeniously, be the result of a correspondently higher instinct, which is yet entirely inferior to reason? This is one of the arguments suggested by Mr. Hume, in his Dialogues concerning Natural Religion.<sup>1</sup> It has been often repeated by infidels, although sometimes with the appearance of being in jest rather than in earnest. We are, therefore, surprised as well as mortified in finding that it has been seriously reiterated and endorsed in recent days, by some Christian theologians. From the fact that brutes have a power of adapting means to ends, and even of contriving to meet unexpected

<sup>1</sup> Hume's Dialogues, Part VII.

emergencies, certain believers in the Bible have deemed it necessary to infer, that all the wonderfully framed systems of matter furnish no proof of a rational and personal, in distinction from a merely instinctive cause. But these theologians have yielded, too soon, to the sophistries of skeptical writers, from whom such objections are borrowed. There is an essential difference between the contriving powers exhibited by the mere animal, and those which are necessary to explain the phenomena of nature. The difference is in kind, as well as degree. The phenomena of nature presuppose a power of abstraction and generalization; a power of originating contrivances which are altogether different from those actually adopted. The brute has no such power. It does not abstract nor generalize, nor can it invent courses of action which are out of the limited sphere in which it is impelled by instinct. The specific variations of plan, which are ascribed to such animals as the elephant and the dog, are as really instinctive, as is the plan when unvaried, which they are constitutionally fitted to pursue. The contrivances displayed by these animals are themselves phenomena of nature, and prove the existence of a contriver, who caused these phenomena through the medium of an animal instinct which he likewise produced. We do not ascribe an ingenious work of animals to their original invention, which presupposes a power of analyzing the various properties of the materials used in the work, and of comparing the various methods which may be adopted for effecting the desired end; but we ascribe this ingenious work to the inventive power of Him, who gave them an instinct which was contrived for the mechanical performance of the specific operations assigned to it, and which is a wonderful substitute for reason. The fact that this instinct is fitted to meet certain unforeseen emergencies, only proves that it is an instinct of enlarged compass. We infer directly from the structure of a human habitation, the existence of a human mind capable of abstracting and generalizing the phenomena which it perceives; and from the properties of this mind we infer the divine existence. But our reasoning is different, when we examine the structure of a bee's habitation. We infer directly from these waxen cells the existence of a God who contrived them, and who produced them through the animal instinct which he also contrived. These cells are constructed according to mathematical principles which their inventor must have understood; therefore the bee was not their inventor. The world over, and throughout all time, have the sides of these

cells been inclined at an angle of one hundred and twenty degrees; and the parallelograms of the roof, at the angles of one hundred and ten, and also of seventy degrees; and this inclination is exactly that which is proved, by the *fluxional calculus*, to be best fitted for expedition and ease and economy of building. But even *men* did not discover this fact until the time of Newton; and yet the mathematical principles which he first developed, have been the undeviating rule for the bee-hive during six thousand years in all countries, in all emergencies. It is unphilosophical to believe, that this rule has been universally applied by accident. The application of it, then, is proof of a mind capable of mathematical reasoning. This mind must have personality. The bee is admitted to be incapable of such reasoning, to have no personality; its pretended contrivances, then, are not its own original inventions. They are as direct proofs of a God, as if they were not produced through the medium of animal instinct. The axiom, then, that contrivance proves an intelligent and personal contriver, is not refuted or even opposed by the works of the animal creation. It proves that these works, as well as the animals which produced them, were directly contrived by God. It proves that the contrivances of nature and the contrivances of mere animals, cannot be contrasted with one another, as some have unphilosophically endeavored to contrast them; for they are all the contrivances of God. When we have referred the curious operations of brutes to instinct, we have not satisfied the demands of the mind. We still crave and insist upon the idea of a reasoning and generalizing contriver, both for the instinct and for its operations. If a man think that he has accounted for these operations, by the reference of them to a merely instinctive cause, he cannot have meditated much upon the fundamental principles of his belief, nor upon the nature of moral evidence. He overlooks, or else disputes an important axiom; and in either case, violates a philosophical law.

As it has been said by those who entirely or partially disbelieve in the scientific character of Natural Theology, that contrivance does not afford proof of a rational and personal contriver, so it has been said that the peculiar tendencies of the contrivance afford no proof of the peculiar character of the contriving mind. Thus is denied another fundamental axiom of what claims to be an established science. It is maintained, for example, that beneficence does not require us to infer the goodness of its author. He may be the cause of a useful arrangement, and yet may not



have benevolently designed its usefulness. In reply to this objection we need only say, that an axiom cannot be proved by any argument more evident than itself; that this, and indeed, every other axiom relating to the divine cause, is assumed and instinctively felt to be true in our habitual processes of reasoning with regard to human causes, and we cannot repress the belief that by "their fruits we shall know them." If this axiom be false, we have but little proof of goodness in any of our fellow men, for we are constitutionally inclined to infer their character chiefly from their actions. It is said that "beneficent contrivances *may* not have been the result of goodness." But this remark implies, that moral, as distinct from demonstrative truth must exclude the possibility of its opposite. Now the province of moral reasoning is not to prove what may or may not be, but what is; and when it leads to a conclusion that the earth will continue to revolve on its axis, it is not shown to be unworthy of credit by the fact, that the world may be made to discontinue its diurnal motion. The objector adds, that useful adaptations in the *material* world do not prove the benevolence of their author, but a spiritual quality can be inferred from none other than *spiritual* effects, and nothing but a mental phenomenon can evince a mental cause. We can only say in reply, that all the world reason otherwise. Universally, men infer qualities of mind from manifest adaptations in matter. We derive no inconsiderable knowledge of the Egyptian genius from the pyramids; and of the primitive American character, from structures like those of Yucatan. No one questions this axiom except in Natural Theology; and the fact that all men believe it in common life, proves that it is unphilosophical to question it in our reasonings on religion. There is no one property by which the mind of a true theologian is more distinguished, than by his readiness to admit those familiar principles which not only do, but also must, guide the speculations of the majority of our race.

There is still another fundamental law of belief, which has been denied by the opposers of Natural Theology. They have said, that we have no right to believe in the superiority of a cause to its effect, or in the ability of a cause to produce more than it has done already. They sometimes assert, that we have no right to believe the cause different in *kind* from the effect; but if so, the Creator of matter must be material, and the ultimate author of any evil cannot be entirely good. It has even been asserted, that "if there be anything in reference to which

we are not formed in the image of God, in respect to the *kind* of faculties which we possess, then so far forth as these faculties exist in him, he is no God to us." Now there is in the Deity a power of creating matter; but we have no *kind* of power to create matter. Can we not, however, form some idea of a Creator? Must we believe that he is unable to will a globe into existence, simply because he has not imparted to us a creative efficiency? But the objector insists, that if a cause be able to effect something different in kind from itself, we have no right to think it capable of producing more in *degree* than it has already produced. He reasons from the Newtonian maxim, that we must not ascribe an effect to more causes than are necessary to produce it. But he misapprehends this maxim. From the fact that we cannot infer a particular phenomenon to have been the effect of a greater exertion than was needful to produce it, he leaps to the inference, that the producing cause cannot be known to possess more power than it has actually been known to exercise. But the two propositions are essentially diverse, and neither is a proof or a consequent of the other. When we perceive the exertion of a power, we constitutionally believe that the power is not exhausted, that it can again accomplish what it has done once; and a second exertion of the power incites us to a more confident belief that it can perform a third and a fourth time, what it has already repeated. When we see an effect easily produced, we instinctively infer that still greater effects may be produced by the same cause; and when we discover such an efficiency as is exhibited in the creation of one world, we are constitutionally impelled to believe, that the Creator of one has power to create another and a larger world, that he can create a universe, that he can do anything which is an object of power, that he is omnipotent. The principle, that an acting cause which has already astonished us by its efficiency, can yet accomplish more than it has done, lies at the basis of innumerable practical convictions, and is as truly a scientific principle, as the axiom that the course of nature will continue as it has been.

It is not pretended, that all the fundamental principles of belief which are applied in Natural Theology, must be adopted as soon as they are apprehended by the mind. Some of them require a prolonged consideration. They are instantaneously admitted, perhaps, by higher intelligences than we are, and they are always admitted without proof by such as believe in them at all. The fact that we must sometimes meditate upon them be-

fore we yield to their authority, is a sign of our obtuseness, not of their want of claim upon our belief. They do not in all cases *force* our assent, but they appeal to our candor, and our sensitiveness to the merest glimpses of light. It may be added, that a nice sense of their truth, and a sacred deference to them in difficult investigations, are sometimes the last and rarest attainments of a philosophical mind, the *criteria* which distinguish a moral reasoner from a mere advocate or declaimer. It is from a habit of disregarding our constitutional tendencies to believe certain fundamental principles of Natural Theology, that sacred science has suffered more than from any other intellectual defect.

The last objection, which now claims our notice, to the scientific character of Natural Theology, is the imperfect state in which it is at present developed, and particularly the want of logical system in its arrangements. We are willing to allow, that the facts with which it is conversant are not well methodized. The fundamental principles which regulate its deductions, are not exhibited in lucid order. Its advocates differ among themselves with regard to the authority of its axioms even. For example, when Hume would refute the theistical argument from contrivance to a contriver, he contends that this argument, if it have any solid basis, must be founded entirely on experience; but the experience of man does not extend so far as to the making of worlds, and therefore can afford no ground for inferring that the adaptations of matter were designed by a skilful intelligence. Dr. Reid replies to this objection by insisting on the self-evident truth, that, apart from all experience, the fitnesses of means to ends oblige us to believe in a designing cause. Dr. Chalmers, in his treatise on Natural Theology, overlooks this axiom, and replies to Hume on the skeptic's own ground. He reasons as if the adaptation of parts to a whole, can entitle us to believe in an intelligence which adapted them, solely because we have hitherto observed, that such a regular combination of parts has been the result of a combining intelligence. This argument is indeed a valid one, but the elucidation of it is unscientific. It is founded on the principle, that the course of nature is uniform, and since regular combinations of means to ends have, so far as we have observed, resulted from an intelligent contriver, therefore they have resulted from such a cause, in regions and at times which were without the sphere of our observation. But this is not the *only*, nor even the *main* principle on which we should oppose the skepticism of Hume. It is perfectly consistent with the original

principle developed by Dr. Reid, and should not appear to usurp its place. We admit, then, that the laws of belief which govern our reasonings in Natural Theology, ought to be made more conspicuous, recognized more distinctly as authoritative, and exhibited in a more scientific order than they have been. The facts also which we apply, in conformity with these laws, should be more systematically classified, and their connection with the ultimate truths of the science should be made to appear more indissoluble, than they are at present. Still, this want of logical arrangement is not so much an objection against the scientific character of Natural Theology, as of its defenders. When we concede the fact that the science has not been fully developed, we see no reasons for inferring that it is, on this account, no science at all. Time will soon remove this objection, we trust. Every advance of human philosophy is adding to the materials of Natural Theology. All the phenomena which are learned by chemists, geologists, astronomers, and metaphysicians are new data for that science which comprehends all others within itself, and connects them all, by a single new link in their chain of relationships, with Him who is the first and the last of causes. Every improvement in the logical art has also a direct tendency toward the perfection of that system of truths, which embraces all the reasonings of men, and makes them all converge to the proof of our future eternal connections with the Spirit of justice and love. We have exalted hopes for the science of Natural Theology, because we believe in the progress of the mind, and in the subserviency of all the sciences to each other. Already has a firm belief in the existence of an all-wise contriver of the universe, led to many discoveries in the lower departments of knowledge; and these discoveries have developed new proofs of that wisdom which constitutes one great object of the higher department of knowledge, and a belief in which led to the very investigations which afterwards corroborated that belief. In the history of human learning, there is scarcely one more interesting fragment than the reply of Harvey, when asked by Boyle "what induced him to think of the circulation of the blood." He answered, "that when he took notice that the valves in the veins were so placed, that they gave free passage to the blood toward the heart, but opposed the passage of the venal blood the contrary way, he was incited to imagine, that so provident a cause as nature had not placed so many valves without design; and no design seemed more probable than that, since the blood could

not well, because of the interposing valves, be sent by the veins to the limbs, it should be sent through the arteries, and return through the veins whose valves did not oppose its course that way." This is but one of numerous instances, in which a faith in the designing providence of nature has directed the mind to researches, illustrating still more fully the foresight and the wisdom which were, at first, so fully believed in as to incite the mind to new proofs of their existence and greatness. This is the cumulative progress of science, and thus, it is hoped, will Natural Theology develop its own resources, augmenting its materials of proof, and arranging them with increased precision as their value is the more distinctly seen.

We have thus far been content to say, that the truths of Natural Theology are susceptible of scientific arrangement and proof. But we might go further, and affirm that they are sustained by a clearer argument, than are the truths of some other sciences whose authority no one questions. When the comparative anatomist demonstrates, from a single bone, that the animal to which it belonged must have had cloven feet, and branching horns, and must have been a graminivorous and ruminating animal; when from that one, it may be a fractured part of the osseous system, perhaps a tooth scarcely distinguishable from a bruised piece of limestone, he determines the size, the form, the food, the movements, the habits, the dispositions and all the characteristics of whole genera of extinct animals, we are delighted with his philosophical skill. When there were given to Cuvier, "*pele mele* the mutilated and incomplete fragments of a hundred skeletons, belonging to twenty sorts of animals, and it was required that each bone should be joined to that which it belonged to," he then examined the laws of the animal system, and, guided by the analogies of nature as it is now exhibited, he described the whole configuration and character of these species, once living but long since hardened into rock. "I have no expressions," he says, "to describe the pleasure experienced in perceiving, that as I discovered one character, all the consequences more or less foreseen of this character were fully developed. The feet were conformable to what the teeth had announced, and the teeth to the feet, the bones of the legs and thighs and everything that ought to reunite these two extreme parts were conformable to each other. In one word, each of the species sprung up from one of its own elements."<sup>1</sup> Now if it were for the interest of a man to deny the

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<sup>1</sup> Bakewell's Introduction to Geology, pp. 235, 236.

validity of this analogical reasoning, could not far more plausible objections be invented, than were ever urged against the deductions of Natural Theology? Is not the inference which we draw from the complicated structure of the Saurian monster, in favor of an intelligent cause of that structure, more logical than the inference which *Cuvier* draws from a mere fragment of a bone, in favor of the minute history of the whole manner of life which that monster once pursued? Yet comparative anatomy is a science, claiming our high admiration. We simply aver, that some of its truths, and also some of the truths of Geology and of other sciences, are incapable of such luminous proof, as are certain departments of Natural Religion. It is to be remembered, that these departments adopt the same principles and processes of argumentation which are employed in other sciences; and often they conduct these processes with much more caution and from more unquestionable data. It is also to be borne in mind, that the conclusions of Natural Theology are sustained by our moral sense. We are compelled to believe some of them, even if we can evade by sophistry the arguments which corroborate them. Conscience forces certain doctrines upon us. The guilty man may reason himself into an apparent atheism, but he fears a righteous punishment in the future world. He cannot expel this apprehension; and thus he believes in the hereafter which he has endeavored to disprove, in the punishment of his sin, in the righteousness of the moral Governor who is to punish him. This testimony of conscience is a scientific proof of the facts attested. What our moral nature compels us to believe, we are logically bound to believe. We place great confidence in this argument. It confirms all the other proofs, and is a distinct evidence, in itself, in favor of the doctrines of Natural Theology. It establishes the character of this science, as one whose propositions are the last to be abandoned. We believe, in fact, that they are not abandoned, even by the very men who imagine themselves to have become atheists and skeptics.

We do not wish to be considered as endorsing all that has been said by some writers, on the moral argument for the truths of Natural Theology. This moral evidence is not to be regarded as superseding the intellectual, still less as in conflict with it. We must reason from the structure of the conscience and heart and will, as we reason from the material world to which our inner nature presents numberless analogies; and we must superadd to these valid forms of deduction that original and inexpressible

testimony, which the moral sense gives in favor of the truths which we can otherwise establish, but which will be, in some measure, believed and felt even when our reasoning powers cease to defend them. In these truths we retain a faith which no argument can eradicate. This instinctive faith is one of those provisions of nature, by which she doubly and trebly guards the most important of her works from harm. It is itself a contrivance, which proves a moral contriver; and is also an impulsive, and in one sense an instinctive cause of our belief in the goodness of that contriver.

The preceding remarks on the character of Natural Theology as a science, indicate many of its uses, and induce us to particularize some of them. First, it interests the mind in the works of nature. It makes us familiar with certain principles, which we desire to see illustrated by outward phenomena. Facts always derive a new importance from their connection with principles. If even the philosopher's stone has excited the alchemist to useful discoveries in science, much more must a religious truth incline all who believe it, to seek for its illustrations among the processes of nature. When we believe, for example, that the wisdom of Jehovah is to be proved by the contrivances which promote the happiness of his sentient universe, we feel a new interest in all those complicated adaptations which can thus be employed as arguments for a great truth. We also feel incited to examine the conformations which are said to result in the misery or disquiet of any individual or species. Natural philosophers have often committed the error of reasoning from the obscure phenomena of nature, as if there were not a vast majority of plain phenomena which can interpret such as are dark. They have objected to the awkward, and even to the cruel contrivances of some departments of creation, as if the obvious benevolence and wisdom of the great plurality of contrivances, should not logically require us to suspend our judgment, in cases which appear to be exceptions to the general law. The spirit enkindled by Natural Theology prompts to a correction of this error. It has already led to numerous discoveries of skill, in arrangements which had previously been deemed inappropriate; of usefulness, in those which had been pronounced injurious. Buffon and even Cuvier, for example, have described the *Ai* and the *Unau* and other members of the tardigrade family, as "attempts of nature in which she seems to have amused herself by producing something imperfect or grotesque." "Modern trav-

ellers," says Sir Charles Bell,<sup>1</sup> "express their pity for these animals. Whilst other quadrupeds, they say, range in boundless wilds, the sloth hangs suspended by his strong arms, a poor ill-formed creature, deficient as well as deformed, his hind legs too short, and his hair like withered grass. His looks, motions and cries conspire to excite pity; and as if this were not enough, they say that his moaning makes the tiger relent and turn away. This is not a true picture: the sloth cannot walk like other quadrupeds, but he stretches out his strong arms,—and if he can hook on his claws to the inequalities of the ground, he drags himself along. This is the condition which authorizes such an expression as 'the bungled and faulty composition of the sloth.'" But the researches of men interested in Natural Theology have made it evident, that this animal was not designed for crawling upon the earth, and his want of conveniences for the creeping process is not more objectionable, as a mal-formation, than is our want of the apparatus for flying. He was made for moving among the branches of trees, and he is admirably formed for obtaining his food, and escaping from his enemies, in this his natural situation. "When he reaches the branch or the rough bark of a tree," says Bell,<sup>2</sup> "his progress is rapid. He climbs, hand over head, along the branches till they touch, and thus from bough to bough and from tree to tree. He is most alive in the storm, and when the

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<sup>1</sup> Bell, on the Hand, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> On the Hand, p. 32. The history of the speculations of men with regard to this animal corroborates the remark, that the objections which have been urged against the proofs of Natural Theology, arise from ignorance rather than knowledge; that they are not so properly objections against the theological argument, as they are defects in the materials for illustrating it, and that the progress of science is constantly augmenting the resources of the theologian. It was not until the publication of Waterton's Travels, that the sloth ceased to be a chief support to the reasonings of men who desired to prove the unscientific character of Natural Theology. Since the publication of those Travels, Dr. Buckland has written on the "Adaptation of the Structure of Sloths to their peculiar mode of Life," and has shown that this animal "adds another striking case to the endless instances of perfect mechanism and contrivance, which we find pervading every organ of every creature, when viewed in relation to the office it is destined to fulfil." Even if the peculiar relations of this animal had not been discovered, it would certainly be unphilosophical to believe in the imperfection of its mechanism; for such imperfection is contrary to the analogies of nature, and, as other instances of apparent defect have been previously shown not to be, really, what they were in appearance, so might this instance be supposed to be capable of an explanation, and to require, therefore, a suspension of judgment, rather than a positive decision on one side or the other.



wind blows and the trees stoop, and the branches wave and meet, he is then upon the march." This is but a single, and a humble specimen of the Creator's works in which Natural Theology has inspired a fresh interest, and prompted to new discoveries, by connecting every minute phenomenon with the most important of truths.

Nor is it merely for the study of material adaptations, that this comprehensive science awakens a new enthusiasm. It is still more intimately connected with the phenomena of the soul. We derive our first notions of the infinite intelligence, from the spiritual exercises of which we are conscious. The laws of the mind and the heart prove the same truths which are taught by the material universe, and they establish some propositions which the external world alone will not even suggest. It is to be regretted that Ray, Derham and Paley have made so few references to mind, in their proof of the being and the attributes of God. Their reason probably was, that the contrivances in the material world are more visible and tangible, than the laws of spirit, and are therefore better adapted to arouse the attention of ordinary readers. The favorite argument of Dr. Chalmers, also, which is founded on the calculation of chances, derives its chief force from the multitude of separate parts which are combined in one whole, and the complicated adjustments of anatomy are better fitted for this argument, than are the simple collocations of astronomy; and these collocations are more appropriate to the refuting of the doctrine of chance, than are the still more undivided laws of mind.<sup>1</sup> Still there are other processes of argument which are illustrated by mental and moral phenomena, more forcibly than by such as are material. We are grateful to Lord Brougham and to Dr. Chalmers, for their important contributions to this department of our science;<sup>2</sup> and we believe that future writers on this subject, will extend their researches still further into the systems of psychology and ethics, and excite an additional interest in these hitherto neglected studies.<sup>3</sup> The mere fact, that the in-

<sup>1</sup> See Chalmers' *Natural Theology*, Book II. Ch. I. We have previously implied, that Dr. Chalmers gives to this argument from the mere collocations of particles, as distinct from the obviously designed arrangement of them, a disproportionate degree of prominence.

<sup>2</sup> See Brougham's *Discourse*, Sections III. and V, and Chalmers' *Natural Theology*, Books III. and IV.

<sup>3</sup> For proof that the ancient philosophers inverted the order of moderns, and reasoned in proof of a God from mental, more than from physical phenomena, see Brougham's *Note on the Psychological Argument from Final Causes*, *Discourse*, pp. 138—142.

vestigations of Natural Theology require of us an intimate acquaintance with all branches of human philosophy, indicates the subordinate advantages of those investigations, their tendency to improve the taste which is made both more delicate and correct by a prolonged observation of material and mental phenomena; to discipline the reasoning powers, which are taxed nowhere so severely as in tracing the connection of human sciences with the divine; to elevate all the faculties and susceptibilities of the soul; for nothing can impart a nobler pleasure or inspire a purer morality, than to watch the movements of a divinity amid the wonder-working causes which himself has originated. Such an interest in the operation of these second causes, as is awakened by their connection with the author of all things, is a never failing source of devotional feeling. Wherever we go, whatever we behold, in whatever state of mind we happen to be, the character of God may be suggested to us, and the countless displays of his goodness may lead us to repentance.

Secondly, Natural Theology augments our interest in the revealed word, as well as in the sciences of matter and mind. It has been shown to be the crown of all those sciences, but they are not more subordinate to it, than itself is tributary to revelation. The value of all studies may be measured by their tendency to awaken our enthusiasm in the examination of the sacred oracles. This is a preëminent advantage of Natural Theology. It reveals to us the mercy of God, and thus excites our curiosity to learn how he can pardon sin. It convinces us of our future existence, and thus makes us inquisitive to ascertain what will be the precise condition of the soul in the eternal world. It discloses many truths which are essential to our moral welfare, but leaves so many relations of those truths unexplained, as to enkindle an intense desire to understand the word which bringeth life and immortality to light. Natural Theology teaches the total depravity of man, the decrees and the justice of God; and is thus a fit preparative for that more glorious Theology which unfolds the gracious, the redeeming, the electing, the regenerating love of the triune Jehovah. There are many dark passages in the volume of nature, which are illustrated by the book of inspiration. The teachings of the former volume are so far confirmed by the latter, so many of its deficiencies are supplied, that the right minded student of the one will feel his knowledge to be incomplete without an acquaintance with the other. Wherever the Bible has been studied, Natural Theology has been cultiva-

ted, not because it could not have been cultivated without the Bible, but because this book has reflected so much light upon nature, as to make the lessons easy and alluring, which were previously more difficult and repulsive. We feel a quickened interest in the Bible, from the fact of its explaining so many enigmas in the creation. Nor is its beneficial influence upon Natural Theology unrequited. There are reciprocal advantages, which make the true hearted interpreter of nature desirous of scriptural knowledge, so that he may estimate aright the various relations and tendencies of science. Numerous are the occasions on which biblical truth is illustrated by such reasonings as those of Plato, Tully and Plutarch. Far more interesting, because more diversified and rich would be the services of the pulpit, if our ministers would imitate the example of their master, and like him lay the exuberant stores of Natural Theology under a heavy contribution to the revealed. As some truths of the Bible confirm, so others are confirmed by, the teachings of nature. The club of free thinkers which rallied around Lord Bolingbroke, are said to have been checked in their opposition to the Scriptures, by the appearance of the Minute Philosopher. They confessed to a high admiration of that work, and were obliged to admit, that he who opposes the principles of the revealed system, opposes at the same time the principles on which the universe is governed. The effect of the *Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, was still more decisive upon the infidel world. Perhaps no work has exerted a greater influence in corroborating the instructions of the Bible. The sacred penmen adopt the same principle of reasoning, which is employed by Berkeley and Butler. Often they assert their doctrines, and then confirm them by references to Natural Theology.<sup>1</sup> If they swailed themselves of this sciences when it was so meagre, how much more should we resort to it when it has become so much more comprehensive. While there are men who disbelieve the

<sup>1</sup> For an illustration of the manner in which the sacred penmen appeal to our natural sense of rectitude, see Ezekiel 18: 25 sq. See also 2 Cor. 4: 2, as expressing the general fact, that the apostles addressed themselves to the moral sense of men. For illustrations of the mode of appeal to other facts of Natural Theology, see Psalms 8: 19: 1-6. 94: 8-10. 97: 6. 98: 1, 2. 104: 24. 107: 23, 24. Matt 5: 45. 6: 26-30. Luke 12: 6, 24. Acts 14: 17. 17: 24-29. Rom. 1: 18-20. 2: 14, 15. Heb. 3: 3, 4. The passages are also numerous, which illustrate scriptural truth by natural phenomena, in such a way as to imply that these phenomena teach the same principle which the Bible asserts, and that an analogy pervades the kingdoms of nature and of grace.

Bible, we should labor to convince them by arguments drawn from what they will and must admit. Every preacher who would silence gainsayers, especially every one who aims to instruct the heathen, must be familiar with the system of truth which the opposers of revelation feel compelled to believe.<sup>1</sup> A true deference to that system will lead a consistent man to acquiesce in the written word. Indeed, in the last generalization, we may say that the written word is so intimately connected with Natural Theology, as to make a real attachment to the latter not so much a preparative for an attachment to the former, as essentially the same thing with it. He who admires the grandeur of Natural Religion, admires the sublimity of the Bible when perceived. He who is enamored of the purity of the one, cannot despise that of the other. The principles of the law are the same in *genus* with those of the gospel. Men may cordially receive some parts of Natural Theology, while they reject some portions of the revealed; so they may be pleased with certain revelations of the Bible, while they are displeased with particular precepts of Natural Religion; but a love to the whole system

<sup>1</sup> The objector sometimes replies, that the simple presentation of the Gospel will disarm men of their Infidelity, sooner than will any labored defence of Natural Religion; that the Moravian missionaries, for example, were successful because they preached Christ and him crucified, and not because they preached the truths relating to the divine existence. We need not answer this objection by saying, as we might, that the permanent success of the Moravian missionaries has been of itself somewhat overrated, nor by denying, as we can by no means deny the fact, that the internal evidence of the gospel is sufficient to dissipate the doubts of some men, and that the authority of the preacher will often secure a belief in his simple testimony. But we may say, with truth, that although some men may be disarmed of their skepticism by the simple exhibition of evangelical doctrine, others cannot be thus won. The internal evidence of scriptural truth is sufficient to convince honest inquirers, but for such as are not honest, more tangible proofs are needed. We say also, that multitudes have been converted from infidelity to Christianity, by arguments from the constitution of nature. This was especially the secret of the success of Dr. Nelson, the celebrated antagonist of American infidels. We add, that where the truths of Natural Theology are not distinctly *avowed as such*, they are often *assumed* in our reasonings with infidels, and some of these truths are the logical grounds of the conversion to Christianity, even when the distinct avowal of them is not chronologically antecedent to such a conversion. We shall not be understood as asserting that the truths of Natural Theology are, of themselves, sufficient to renew the heart; for even the doctrines of the New Testament are, of themselves, inadequate to effect this radical change of our moral nature. We are speaking of that intellectual belief which is the result of accurate ratiocination, and not of that spiritual faith which is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

of truth, as revealed in either volume, is generically a love to the whole system as revealed in both volumes. Infidels have been, at heart, as really hostile to the spiritual truths taught in the book of nature, as to those taught in the Bible; and as they pretended to admire the grandeur of Natural Religion, so they have professed a like admiration for the sublimity of the Scriptures. The justice of God, as learned from the human conscience, cannot be truly revered and adored, without the elements of a heartfelt acquiescence in the scheme of salvation by Christ. So homogeneous is all moral truth, that the Redeemer cannot be thought to destroy one jot or one tittle of the law, as it is written upon the hearts of men by the finger of God. Although men are justified only by faith, yet if they who have not the written law, should do by nature the things contained in the law, they would be justified, according to what they had, not according to what was denied them; and their righteousness, which would in that case, be an obedience to the moral precepts, would be of the same *genus*, though not the same *species*, with the faith without which it is impossible to please God.

But the chief use of Natural Theology remains to be mentioned. It forms the basis on which the written revelation rests. We do not assert that all parts of it are equally fundamental, but certain doctrines which it teaches, are essential preliminaries to a faith in the Bible. Accordingly, the Bible assumes these doctrines, presupposes a belief in them, asserts them for the sake of impressing them on the mind, or recalling them to remembrance, rather than for the purpose of proving them by testimony; and, whenever it attempts to prove them, does it by referring to the same arguments which have been already mentioned as the proofs of Natural Theology. It will not be questioned, that the logical order of our processes is to believe in the existence of a being, before we consider the truth or falsehood of his declarations. It is impossible to learn that he exists, from his merely asserting that he does so, when that assertion is considered, not as an independent fact, but as a mere announcement of a fact. If he should assert that there is no such being as himself, the inference would be as conclusive in favor of his existence from his denial, as it could be from his affirmation. In like manner it is the logical and also the necessary course of our reasonings, to establish the fact of an individual's veracity, before we credit his declarations considered as such. If we believe in his truthfulness, because he himself asserts it, then before we can trust this as-

sertion, we must be convinced of the very attribute which is thus made known to us by testimony. The assertion may itself prove the veracity of the witness, not however when it is regarded as a mere assertion, but when it is regarded as a phenomenon coincident with other phenomena. On the same principle, the entire moral character of a being must be inferred from other circumstances, before it can be proved by his declarations respecting it. It is not allowable to conclude, that he is benevolent, from the simple fact that he professes to be so; but his profession must be compared with his practice, ere such a conclusion can be warranted. Yet the testimony of a being, in favor of his own virtue, may be a proof of that virtue, whenever the testimony can be considered as an event, for the occurrence of which no cause but the truth of the assertion can be assigned. The argument is then derived from it, as an event, not as an asseveration. In the same way the announcement of an individual that he exists, may prove his existence; not when the announcement is viewed simply as such, but when it is viewed as an effect which would be unaccountable on the supposition of the individual's non-existence. From a neglect of this discrimination, has resulted much false reasoning. There are many who say, that the word of God is itself a valid argument for his being and perfections. It is such an argument; for, first, after we have proved his existence and character in the appropriate way, from his works, we may credit the testimony which declares that he is good, and which thus affords additional evidence in favor of the same truth which anterior considerations must have established; and secondly, his word is itself a glorious phenomenon which, like every other effect, exhibits proof of its cause and also of the attributes of that cause. The Bible is thus considered as one of the signs or arguments furnished by Natural Theology, and not as a mere asseveration dispensing with all previous evidence of its title to our credit. The generic distinction between Natural and Revealed Theology is this: the former reasons from certain works to the truths which may be inferred from those works; but the latter reasons from certain words to the truths which are communicated by those words. When it is said, therefore, that the revealed system must be founded on Natural Theology, it is meant, in part, that we must prove the existence and attributes of the supreme Being from what he has done, before we can prove the truth of the declarations purporting to be his. And when it is replied that the Bible is its own proper evidence, and

is itself an effect which must have been produced by a divine author, this reply simply changes the ground of the discussion, and classifies the books of Scripture among the phenomena of Natural Theology, requiring us to reason from them just as we reason from the phenomena of astronomy and physiology. Nor can this conclusion be evaded by asserting, that the Bible is by some men seen and felt to be true, without any conscious process of inference from effect to cause. This alleged intuitive perception of its credibility, is altogether distinct from a trust in its declarations. It precedes such a trust in the order of nature, if not of time, and is the ground on which the belief of those declarations is established. It is an intuitive judgment in favor of the testimony as itself good, pure, holy; and from its inherent excellence we are impelled to the conclusion, as rapid as an intuition, that the testimony is all that it pretends to be, true and divine. This is one of the reasoning processes from effect to cause. Perceiving the moral greatness of the Bible, we intuitively infer the existence of its infinite author.

But when we have thus brought the Scriptures within the province of Natural Theology, it is still useful in the highest degree to investigate the other departments of this science, and employ them as supports, more or less necessary, of the new department which is constituted by the phenomena of revelation. Some of these phenomena are involved in the miraculous agency which is said to have been exerted in proof of the Scriptures. The miracles of the Old and New Testaments may, like other wonderful works, be looked upon as evidences of the being and perfections of God. These few instances, however, of the Creator's miraculous interposition, cannot be deemed so full a display of his attributes, as we find in the innumerable instances of his creative and providential arrangements.<sup>1</sup> Besides,

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<sup>1</sup> Miracles are affirmed by Lord Brougham to be merely evidences of supernatural power, not of goodness. See his Discourse of Natural Theology, Part II. Sect. 3. But the Scriptures frequently appeal to certain miracles, with reason, as indications of moral excellence. It is in vain, however, to pretend that a small number of exceptions to the laws of nature, can be so *decisive* proofs of the Deity's benevolence, as are the laws themselves in their ceaseless operation. It is said, that miracles are not designed to prove directly the goodness of the divine character, but the truth of the revelation, and that this revelation asserts the divine goodness. But the inference in favor of the truth of the Bible from the occurrence of miraculous events, *presupposes* that the author of the Bible and of these events is veracious, and it thus depends on a previous deduction of Natural Theology.

how can these miracles be shown to have occurred? The full proof of them is dependent on the anterior deductions of Natural Theology that there is a God, and that his benevolence may lead him to interpose, in a miraculous method, for the good of his creatures. That some of the main truths relating to Jehovah must be established, before we can be fully convinced of the real occurrence of miracles, has been made evident, we think, by such writers as Brown, Whateley, and Abercrombie.<sup>1</sup> Thus is one department of Natural Theology an essential basis of the external proof in favor of the Bible, even when the Bible is regarded as another department of the same comprehensive science.

But there is likewise an internal proof of revelation. The Scriptures reveal such doctrines, and breathe such a spirit, as betoken a divine original. They are a more wonderful exhibition of wisdom than is to be found in organized bodies, or in the stellular system. As the phenomena of the material and spiritual world are evidences of a higher cause than can be found in created nature, so are the moral phenomena of the Bible too stupendous to be referred to any human or even angelic author. They must be the work of God; they prove his existence and character. Still, even for this proof are the other parts of Natural Theology more or less important. First, they render a valuable aid to the moral argument for the Bible, by affording illustrations and confirmations of it. They are separate vouchers for the same ultimate truths, and the concurrence of testimony is a distinct, peculiar evidence in favor of each of the coinciding witnesses. Secondly, those proofs of the divine existence and character, which are derived from the mere phenomena of the Bible, are met by infidels with numerous objections; and it is not only useful to show that the same objections may be made to the constitution and course of nature, but it is also expedient to break the force of them by proving their futility, before we come to the examination of the written word. It is wise to dissociate the Scriptures, as far as possible, from the cavils of evil-minded men, and to let the argument from nature, rather than from revelation, bear the brunt of skeptical obloquy. It is a dictate of Christian prudence to keep the words of inspired teachers, as far as may be, from being linked in our suggestive processes with the scoffs and banter of licentious writers, and we may in some degree

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<sup>1</sup> See Brown on Cause and Effect, Notes E. and F. Whateley's Rhet. P. 1. Ch. 2. § 4, and 3. § 4. Abercrombie on the Int. Powers, P. 2. S. 3. See likewise Paley's Evidences, (Pref. Consid.) and Erskine on Int. Ev. pp. 110—129.



effect this object by arresting the infidel *in limine*, and vanquishing him before he enters the sacred enclosures. No one can fail to perceive, that the objections of Hume and Paine, Voltaire and Rousseau, Lessing, Strauss and Feurbach may be often answered *in effect*, before we consider the biblical truths which they oppose. We may thus disencumber the Scriptural phenomena of many hurtful associations; may preserve in the popular mind the sacredness and purity of that system, which can often be more advantageously defended while we stand upon its outworks, than when we allow the skirmish of arms within the citadel itself. Thirdly, the whole internal evidence of the Bible is not apparent to all men. Its full force is apprehended only by those, who have cultivated their religious nature to a high degree of refinement. The moral argument for the Bible is delicate, and requires a corresponding sensitiveness in the minds of all who canvass it. But the majority of men are coarse and blunt in their moral sensibilities, and will not appreciate the nice beauties of the word which is too captivating to have been spoken by man. For the majority of minds, then, the argument from nature which is more tangible and more obvious to their gross vision, still remains essential to the proof of the Bible, even when the Bible is regarded as a coördinate part of Natural Theology. What is *necessary* for most men, is *salutary* for all; and thus is it shown, we think, that in every case the science which we recommend is prolific in its intellectual and moral uses. But fourthly, much even of the internal evidence which recommends the Bible to our faith, is dependent upon one branch of Natural Theology. It has already been stated, p. 248, that one office of this science is to disclose the most important applications of the moral code, and teaches what would be right, and what wrong in the Governor of the universe. It reveals to us the standard of perfect virtue, and it is by comparing the Bible with this standard which is ascertained by our moral sense, that we learn the infinite worthiness of the biblical instructions respecting God. The excellence of these instructions is the crowning excellence of the Bible, and constitutes the great argument for its divinity. But it is an argument which presupposes the truth and demonstrates the importance of the theology which is written upon our moral constitution.

It is needless to enlarge upon the numerous collateral advantages of the science which we are considering; for whatever excites our interest in studying the works of God, and connects the

phenomena of the world with their Sovereign Author; whatever awakens our zeal in the search for biblical truth, and impresses us with a sense of the congruity between the teachings of nature and those of grace; whatever constitutes the foundation on which the revealed system must be established, and makes us familiar with those cardinal truths which involve the principle of all others; whatever requires of us such investigations and rewards us with such results, must not only discipline every faculty of the intellect, but also enrich the heart; must exert an influence which, like the author of all science, is omnipresent, and will be everlasting.

We are well aware, that the views which we have now advanced with regard to the province, the scientific character, and the important uses of Natural Theology are not conformed to the standards of some theological parties. There are two conflicting tendencies among divines, in their speculations on this subject. One is a wish to honor the Bible by showing its harmony with the teachings of nature, and by proving, independently of Scriptural aid, the whole system of religious truth. The other is a desire to aggrandize the Bible by showing its necessity, and by proving that the unaided intellect can discover no important theological doctrine. Each of these extremes we regard as unmanly and unphilosophical. The Christian spirit requires us to seek for the truth, and forbids the wish, however politic, to press an argument beyond its natural extent, or, on the other hand, to resist any degree of its natural force. The Scriptures are disparaged, in attempting to prove by them either too much or too little. They are dishonored, whenever we feel obliged to confirm our faith in them by torturing our reason, and urging our way against the instructions of the volume of nature. If we imagine that we can establish every important truth of religion without the Scriptures, we derogate from their usefulness. If, on the other hand, we fancy that we are unable without their aid, to prove any fundamental religious truth, we undermine their foundation; we imply that we could not, without their teachings, feel our moral accountability; that we could not sin against a Deity, because we could not obtain a knowledge of one; that the Bible was not given, therefore, to men who had abused their knowledge, but to men who had received no instruction which they could abuse; that its messages are the result of divine goodness and compassion exercised toward us as miserable beings, but are not the result of divine grace exercised toward us as guilty

beings; for "grace is no more grace," whenever the recipients of it were previously without a known law, by the transgression of which, they could deserve punishment, and thereby could be fit subjects for receiving a gracious favor.

It is a very singular fact, that with all his alleged rationalism, Mr. Locke attempted to make the Bible responsible for certain articles of our belief, on the previous reception of which the authority of the Bible, and indeed of all truth, is dependent. He distinctly affirms, that "concerning the existence of finite spirits, as well as several other things, we must content ourselves with the evidence of *faith*;" "we have ground from revelation and several other reasons, to believe with assurance that there are such creatures" as "finite spirits, and other spiritual beings, besides the eternal God."<sup>1</sup> In order, then, to believe the doctrine that there are finite minds in existence, we must first believe the truth of the Bible. But the Bible presupposes the existence of such minds, and also the existence of an infinite spirit, which is certainly not less difficult of proof, than is the existence of a finite spirit. Now some have regarded it as highly honorable to revelation, that it can thus be made the source of all our knowledge respecting the real existence of human intelligences; but in reality such a supposition renders it impossible for us to entertain a rational faith in the Bible, or even to draw any inference from any premise; for every process of reasoning implies the existence of a mind which reasons; and if that which it presupposes is not, therefore, entitled to our belief, then that which it seems to prove cannot be considered as, therefore, true. All such attempts to make Revelation the basis of those doctrines which are either perceived intuitively, or are learned by instantaneous deductions, result in ultimate skepticism, not merely with regard to the truths of reason, but also with regard to the very existence of a revelation. Mr. Locke himself has frequently rebuked these suicidal efforts to exalt the written word on the ruins of the system which God has revealed from heaven. "Reason," he says, "is natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light, and Fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties. Revelation is natural reason, enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they come

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<sup>1</sup> Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book IV. Ch. II. § 12.

from God. *So that he who takes away reason to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both; and does much about the same as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope.*<sup>1</sup> We deprecate all attempts to force the human mind forward or backward, in order to recommend the written word; for we believe that the highest honor of that word is imparted by the truth, unconstrained, undistorted. Its glory is to be the superstructure, under which lies so magnificent a foundation as the truths of Natural Theology. The more we venerate these truths, so much the greater will be our reverence for the system, which rises sublimely upon and over them. One proof of its divine origin is the fact, that it presupposes so many truths of human reason, and then goes far beyond all which reason can discover; and also that it condescends to remind us graciously of those doctrines which we did "not like to retain in our knowledge," and for our neglect of which it had been just for God to give us up to blindness of mind and hardness of heart. Richard Baxter had no suspicion that he was undervaluing the sacred volume when he said, "I do more than ever of late discover a necessity of a methodical procedure in maintaining the doctrine of Christianity, and of beginning at natural verities as presupposed fundamentally to supernatural truths." Lysicles is introduced in one of Berkeley's Dialogues<sup>2</sup> as making the following acknowledgement: "The belief of God, virtue, a future state, and such fine notions are, as every one may see with half an eye, the very basis and corner stone of the Christian religion. Lay but this foundation for them to build on, and you shall soon see what superstructures our men of divinity will raise from it. The truth and importance of those points once admitted, a man need be no conjurer to prove, upon that principle, the excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion." A similar concession has been often made by infidel writers. They have seen, that the revealed system of truth is ingrafted upon the rational system, and have been far from supposing that the divines who extol the latter, are thereby induced to depreciate the former. There cannot be a more singular charge. No true friend of either system can wish to divorce it from its help-meet. What God has united, let not man separate. Let reason be regarded as the friend, the indissoluble ally of revelation. "Wherefore, to conclude this part, let it be ob-

<sup>1</sup> *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV. ch. 19. § 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. IV.

served," in the words of one<sup>1</sup> who, notwithstanding his disesteem of the theory of final causes, could not yet deny the importance of our science, "let it be observed that there be two principal duties and services, besides ornament and illustration, which philosophy and human learning do perform to faith and religion. The one, because they are an effectual inducement to the exaltation of the glory of God; for as the Psalms and other Scriptures do often invite us to consider and magnify the great and wonderful works of God, so if we should rest only in the contemplation of the exterior of them, as they first offer themselves to our senses, we should do a like injury unto the majesty of God, as if we should judge or construe the store of some excellent jeweller, by that only which is set out toward the street in his shop. The other, because they minister a singular help and preservative against unbelief and error; for our Saviour saith, 'you err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God;' laying before us two books or volumes to study, if we will be secured from error; first the Scriptures revealing the will of God, and then the creatures expressing his power; whereof the latter is a key unto the former, not only opening our understanding to conceive the true sense of the Scriptures, by the general notions of reason and rules of speech, but chiefly opening our belief, in drawing us into a due meditation of the omnipotency of God, which is chiefly signed and engraven upon his works."

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### ARTICLE III.

#### LIFE, CHARACTER, WRITINGS, DOCTRINES AND INFLUENCE OF CONFUCIUS.

By Rev. Ira Tracy, formerly Missionary in China.

As that great nation, which has from the earliest ages, occupied the eastern part of Asia, is becoming more and more an object of admiration and interest to us, it is natural to inquire *what are its peculiarities, and by what process did it come to possess them.* Its greatness, recluseness and singularity, conspire to awaken our curiosity and attract our attention. This curiosity and inte-

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Bacon, Advancement of Learning, Book I.