

the method of *deduction*. This word had nearly been forgotten, but was wanted, and is again becoming current in the language of philosophy.

In the method of analysis and induction Newton stands without a rival in the history of man; whether we regard the boldness and certainty of his generalizations, or the inventive skill by which he linked together truths before his time sterile and unconnected. In the power of deductive reasoning, he may perhaps have had some equals; but it must ever be difficult to form any just comparison of the intellectual powers of men labouring during distinct periods in the advance of science.

Deductive reasoning is the consummation of exact science, and its importance is shewn in two ways—First, in deducing from first principles, physical truths already known by observation; in which view, it not only offers the highest possible confirmation of the principle from which we start, but it assists and perfects the results of observation. Secondly, in deducing consequences hitherto concealed in the unexplored regions of nature. Such were some of the great secular inequalities, and astronomical periods discovered by Laplace—and such (to quote more recent instances) was the conical refraction brought to light by Professor Hamilton, and the modifications of Newton's coloured rings predicted by Professor Airy before they had ever been exhibited by any experimental test*.

It must however be obvious, that deductive reasoning can never have any value, except when we

* On the effects of inductive and deductive habits of thought on the mind of man, see two very original and beautiful chapters in the latter part of a work published during the past year by the Rev. W. Whewell. *Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural Theology*.