

start with such propositions as the following: Knowledge is only a perception of the agreement and disagreement of our ideas—we can form no ideas without perception—and we have no perceptions, except through impressions on the organs of sense. If all this be taken for granted, he may soon go on to prove that, out of such beggarly elements, it is impossible to rise to any moral or religious truth; and therefore that all knowledge which is not physical, must be supernatural, and can come to us only by the teaching of revelation. Without stopping to ask whether man, if such were the whole of his immaterial powers, could be a fit recipient for any religious truth, or could ever comprehend it, we may ask the supporters of this hypothesis what account they have to give us of the thousand abstractions which, by our nature, we are compelled to form—of our moral sentiments—of the creative energies of the imagination—of the efforts by which we mount from individual phenomena to the comprehension of general laws, and of the skill by which we elicit from them unknown truths. There are incontestably, in the mind of man, innate capacities for the reception of knowledge according to the measure of his intellectual nature; and to these there are super-added innate active principles (absolutely distinct from the passive reception of impressions from without) whereby he is constrained to fashion the materials of thought into such forms as he is taught to seek after or his soul desires. These active principles are as much a part of the inner man as his eyes and his fingers are portions of the framework of his body. Religion takes these inner powers and capacities for granted. She appeals to them, sets them in a new movement, and makes them the levers