

PREFACE.

THE Science of Theology in its most general meaning, as comprehensive both of the Natural and the Revealed, might, in respect to the order of its topics and propositions, be presented to the disciple in two different ways—so as, if not to affect the substance of its various arguments, at least to affect the succession of them. According to the first way, a commencement is made, as if at the fountain-head of the whole theme, with the being and the constitution and the character of God; and then from this point of departure, a demonstration is carried forward in the footsteps of the history of the divine administration, from the first purposes of the uncreated mind to the final issues of His government in eternity. This most frequently is the course of those Christian writers, who attempt the construction of an entire system of Theology. They descend from the heights of the eternity that is past; and, often, it is not till they have bestowed their treatment on such ante-mundane topics as the mysteries of the divine essence and the high pre-ordinations of God, that