

outset of a minister's dealings with the most rustic congregations; and, all ignorant as they may be of the proofs by which religion is substantiated, there is still even in their untutored minds such an impression of probability, as if not sufficient to decide the question, should at least summon all their faculties to the respectful entertainment of it.

25. We may thus perceive what that is, on which a teacher of religion finds an introduction for his topic, even into the minds of people in the lowest state both of moral and intellectual debasement. They may have not that in them, at the outset of his ministrations, which can enable them to decide the question of a God; but they have at least that in them, which should summon their attention to it. They have at least such a sense of the divinity, as their own consciences will tell, should put them on the regards and the inquiries of moral earnestness. This is a clear principle which operates at the very commencement of a religious course; and causes the first transition, from the darkness and insensibility of alienated nature, to the feelings and attentions of seriousness. The truth is, that there is a certain rudimental theology every where, on which the lessons of a higher theology may be grafted—as much as to condemn, if not to awaken the apathy of nature. What we have already said of the relation in which the father of a starving household stands to the giver of an anonymous donation, holds true of the relation in which all men stand to the unseen or anonymous God. Though in a state of absolute darkness, and without one token or clue to a