

there existed in his mind, all those conceptions of the great and the graceful, which He hath embodied into a gorgeous universe; and of which every rude sublimity of the wilderness, or every fair and smiling landscape, gives such vivid representation. And in like manner, previous to all government, there existed in His mind those principles of righteousness, which afterwards, with the right of an absolute sovereign, He proclaimed into a law. Those virtues of which we now read on a tablet of jurisprudence were all transcribed and taken off from the previous tablet of the divine character. The law is but a reflection of this character. In the fashioning of law, He pictured forth Himself; and we, in the act of observing His law, are only conforming ourselves to His likeness. It is there that we are to look for the primeval seat of moral goodness. Or, in other words, virtue has an inherent character of her own—apart from law, and anterior to all jurisdiction.

25. Yet the right of God to command, and the rightness of His commandments, are distinct elements of thought, and should not be merged into one another. We should not lose sight of the individuality of each, nor identify these two things—because, instead of antagonists, they do in fact stand side by side, and act together in friendly co-operation. Because two influences are conjoined in agency, that is no reason why they should be confounded in thought. Their union does not constitute their unity—and though, in the conscience of man, there be an approbation of all rectitude, and all rectitude be an obligation laid