

mena, and these viewed but partially of external nature, apart from the phenomena of our own moral nature or the lessons and the intimations of human conscience ; and certain it is, that observations made on the outer field of society might of themselves afford a much greater amount of instruction, respecting the character of God, than many of our Theists have been inclined to draw from it—particularly those who would limit their attention to but one moral perfection of the Deity, and who expatiate on His benevolence alone. It is this which has, not only limited, but greatly weakened their conclusions. For on looking singly to the good and the evil of life we can infer the divine benevolence only from the balance of the former over the latter. But looking to that good and that evil in connexion with their moral causes, we can, not only more firmly establish the divine benevolence ; but, in conjunction with this, elicit evidence of a very striking character for the righteousness of Him who is the Governor and Parent of the human family.\*

8. When the good and the ill of life are looked to in themselves, and apart from the consideration of their moral causes, they seem wholly incapable of being turned to any theological conclusion which can be at all depended upon. For first it must be

\* See a former chapter on the capacities of the world for making a virtuous species happy—the reasonings of which we do not repeat here—our only motive for reverting to the subject at all being to expose the precariousness of those views, which have reduced Natural Theology to a far more meagre and precarious system of doctrine than is suited to the real strength of its own proper and inherent evidences.