

challenge the attention. They are not enough to produce conviction—but they should be enough to prompt and to stimulate inquiry. They do not unveil the objective truth—but they bring the ethical principle into play. They do not bring light to the spirit—but they bring to the test its love for the light or its love for the darkness. They do not form the materials of such a proof as should carry the assurance of the mind, but they at least form the materials of such a precognition as should set it on a busy and desirous search after its own immortality; and make it hail the arrival from whatever quarter of any offered manifestations. There is not as much light in the theology of nature as should satisfy and inform the spirit of man—but certainly as much as should utterly condemn the spirit's lethargy. It cannot fetch down the secret of heaven's economy to earth—but it puts the earth into a state of ripeness and responsency for heaven's revelation.

27. Perhaps the first tendency of the youthful spirit, is to ascribe a sufficiency and a strength to Natural Theology which do not belong to it. It is at this period that the mere plausibilities of the subject are most likely to be sustained as proofs—and that such agreeable reasonings as those of Addison in his Spectator, about the aspiring and the indefinite capacities of progress in man, will be held enough to warrant our confident expectation of immortality. But after that we have entered on a severe discipline of thought, and have exchanged the imaginative for the experimental or the historical—we are apt to discard the specula-