

or as shall leave our heedlessness wholly inexcusable.

39. There is a confused imagination with many, that every new accession, whether of evidence or of doctrine, made to the Natural, tends in so far to reduce the claims or to depreciate the importance of the Christian Theology. The apprehension is, that, as the latter was designed to supplement the insufficiency of the former,—then, the more that the arguments of Natural Theology are strengthened, or its truths are multiplied, the more are the lessons of the Christian Theology unneeded and uncalled for. It is thus that the discoveries of reason are held as superseding, or as casting a shade of insignificance, and even of discredit, over the discoveries of revelation. There is a certain dread or jealousy, with some humble Christians, of all that incense which is offered at the shrine of the Divinity by human science—whose daring incursion on the field of theology, it is thought, will, in very proportion to the brilliancy of its success, administer both to the proud independence of the infidel, and to the pious alarm of the believer.

40. But, to mitigate this disquietude, it should be recollected, in the first place, that, if Christianity have real and independent evidence of being a message from God, it will be all the more humbly and respectfully deferred to, should a previous natural theology have assured us of His existence, and thrown the radiance of a clear and satisfying demonstration over the perfections of His character. However plausible its credentials may be, we should