

LECTURE NINTH.

THE DISCOVERABLE AND THE REVEALED.

It seems natural, nay inevitable, that false revelations, which have descended from remote, unscientific ages, should be committed to a false science. Natural phenomena, when of an extraordinary character, powerfully impress the untutored human mind. In operating, through the curiosity or the fears of men, upon that instinct of humanity,—never wholly inactive in even the rudest state,—which cannot witness any remarkable effect without seeking to connect it with its producing cause, they excite into activity in the search the imaginative faculty,—always of earlier development than the judgment in both peoples and individuals, and which never fails, when so employed, to conduct to delusions and extravagances. And this state of mind gives birth simultaneously to both false religion and false science. Great tempests, inundations, eclipses, earthquakes, thunder and lightning, famine and pestilence, the births of monsters, or the rare visitation of strange fishes or wild animals, come all to be included in the mythologic domain. Even the untutored Indian “sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind.” And when an order of priesthood springs up, a portion of the leisure of the class