

pain, may be regarded as nature's defensive covering against those exposures from without, which else might injure or destroy it. This is purely a physical adaptation, but it involves a moral adaptation also; for this shrinking and sensitive avoidance, at the first approaches of pain, affords a similiar protection against certain hazards from within—as self-mutilation in the moment of the spirit's wantonness, or even self-destruction in the moment of its despair. But, without enlarging further on specific instances, we shall now advert to one subject, furnished by the history of moral science; and replete, we have long thought, with the materials of a very strong and comprehensive argument.

11. We have already adverted to the objective nature of virtue, and the subjective nature of man, as forming two wholly distinct objects of contemplation. It is the latter and not the former which indicates the moral character of God. The mere system of ethical doctrine is no more fitted to supply an argument for this character, than would the system of geometry. It is not geometry in the abstract, but geometry as embodied in the heavens, or in the exquisite structures of the terrestrial physics—which bespeaks the skill of the Artificer who framed them. In like manner it is not moral science in the abstract, but the moral constitution of beings so circumstanced and so made, that virtue is the only element in which