

which operate and are in force, even in our state of profoundest ignorance respecting God, there may be grounded three important applications.

15. The first is that all men, under all the possible varieties of illumination, may nevertheless be the fit subjects for a judicial cognizance. Their theology, seen through the hazy medium of a dull and imperfect evidence, may have arisen no higher than to the passing suggestion of a God—a mere surmise or rumination about an unseen spirit, who, tending all their footsteps, was their guardian and their guide through the dangers of the pathless wilderness. Now in this thought, fugitive though it be, in these uncertain glimpses whether of a truth or of a possibility, there is that to which the elements of their moral nature might respond—so that to them, there is not the same exemption from all responsibility, which will be granted to the man who is sunk in hopeless idiotism, or to the infant of a day old. Even with the scanty materials of a heathen creed, a pure or a perverse morality might be grounded thereupon—whether, in those longings of a vague and undefined earnestness that arise from him who feels in his bosom an affinity for God and godliness; or, in the heedlessness of him, who, careless of an unknown benefactor, would have been alike careless, although he had stood revealed to his gaze, with as much light and evidence as is to be had in Christendom. These differences attest what