

So far, therefore, as our knowledge goes, astronomy and meteorology are parts of natural philosophy in which we may study the order of nature with such views as we have suggested; in which we may hope to make out the adaptations and aims which exist in the laws of nature; and thus to obtain some light on the tendency of this part of the legislation of the universe, and on the character and disposition of the Legislator.

The number and variety of the laws which we find established in the universe is so great, that it would be idle to endeavour to enumerate them. In their operation they are combined and intermixed in incalculable and endless perplexity, influencing and modifying each other's effects in every direction. If we attempt to comprehend at once the whole of this complex system, we find ourselves utterly baffled and overwhelmed by its extent and multiplicity. Yet, in so far as we consider the bearing of one part upon another, we receive an impression of adaptation, of mutual fitness, of conspiring means, of preparation and completion, of purpose and provision. This impression is suggested by the contemplation of every part of nature; but the grounds of it, from the very circumstances of the case, cannot be conveyed in a few words. It can only be fully educed by leading the reader through several views and details, and must grow out of the combined influence of these on a sober and reflecting frame of mind. However strong and solemn be the conviction which may be derived from a contemplation of nature, concerning the existence, the power, the wisdom, the goodness of our Divine Governor, we cannot expect that this conviction, as resulting from the extremely complex spectacle of the material world, should be capable of being irresistibly conveyed by a few steps of reasoning, like the conclusion of a geometrical proposition, or the result of an arithmetical calculation.

We shall, therefore, endeavour to point out cases and circumstances in which the different parts of the