

if it should appear that those who see further than their fellows into the bearings and dependencies of the material things and elements by which they are surrounded, have also been, in almost every case, earnest and forward in acknowledging the relation of all things to a supreme intelligence and will; we shall be fortified in our persuasion that the true scientific perception of the general constitution of the universe, and of the mode in which events are produced and connected, is fitted to lead us to the conception and belief of God.

Let us consider for a moment what takes place in the mind of a student of nature when he attains to the perception of a law previously unknown, connecting the appearances which he has studied. A mass of facts which before seemed incoherent and unmeaning, assume, on a sudden, the aspect of connexion and intelligible order. Thus, when Kepler discovered the law which connects the periodic times with the diameters of the planetary orbits; or, when Newton showed how this and all other known mathematical properties of the solar system were included in the law of universal gravitation according to the inverse square of the distance; particular circumstances which, before, were merely matter of independent record, became, from that time, indissolubly conjoined by the laws so discovered. The separate occurrences and facts, which might hitherto have seemed casual and without reason, were now seen to be all exemplifications of the same truth. The change is like that which takes place when we attempt to read a sentence written in difficult or imperfect characters. For a time the separate parts appear to be disjointed and arbitrary marks; the suggestions of possible meanings, which succeed each other in the mind, fail, as fast as they are tried, in combining or accounting for these symbols: but at last the true supposition occurs; some words are found to coincide with the meaning thus assumed; the whole line of letters appear to take definite