

with those of gravity, and declared that all these were but steps in our advance towards a first cause. Between us and this first cause, the source of the universe and of its laws, we cannot doubt that there intervene many successive steps of possible discovery and generalization, not less wide and striking than the discovery of universal gravitation: but it is still more certain that no extent or success of physical investigation can carry us to any point which is not at an immeasurable distance from an adequate knowledge of Him.

CHAPTER VII.

On Final Causes.

WE have pointed out a great number of instances where the mode in which the arrangements of nature produce their effect, suggests, as we conceive, the belief that this effect is to be considered as the *end* and *purpose* of these arrangements. The impression which thus arises, of design and intention exercised in the formation of the world, or of the reality of *Final Causes*, operates on men's minds so generally, and increases so constantly on every additional examination of the phenomena of the universe, that we cannot but suppose such a belief to have a deep and stable foundation. And we conceive that in several of the comparatively few cases in which such a belief has been rejected, the averseness to it has arisen from the influence of some of the causes mentioned in the last chapter; the exclusive pursuit, namely, of particular trains and modes of reasoning, till the mind becomes less capable of forming the conceptions and making the exertions which are requisite for the apprehension of truths not included among its usual subjects of thought.