

Lastly, some men have rejected natural religion through mere fanaticism. They believe our corruption to be so entire, that they deny to the natural man, all perception of the beauty of moral truth—all knowledge of God—and almost shut out from him the faculty of reason. That the powers of natural reason are in a great measure independent of religious light is, however, certain from the fact—that some of the greatest discoveries in exact science have been made by men notoriously not religious. Again, religion herself appeals to reason, and has nothing whereon to rest, if we abrogate all the natural powers of reason. Were this the proper place for the discussion, we might say that man's depravity is in his heart—that it is shewn not so much in the dimness of his moral and intellectual vision, as in love of self, in impurity of thought, and in the want of an inherent power of struggling with temptation and keeping in order the fiercer passions. If we deprive man of all power of moral judgment, does he not cease to be responsible? and do we not seem at one breath both to impugn the justice of God, and to contradict his written word? But with the persons here considered, it is in vain to argue. They may, however, be open to an appeal of another kind. They may see in many christian writings (for example, in the works of Dr Chalmers and the late Robert Hall*)

* In mentioning the name of Hall, I may, I hope, be permitted to state that on reading (now many years since) some of his wonderful discourses, I first learned to doubt the truth of that system which regards utility as the test of moral right. At a time when this doctrine generally prevailed in England, he set himself against it, with a power of moral reasoning—with a subtilty and fervid eloquence, which placed his works at once among the highest productions of the human mind. While this discourse was printing, it was not my wish to look out for authorities;