

and to which we are ourselves in bondage. If this be our condition in acquiring natural knowledge, what right have we to think, that in gaining religious knowledge we are permitted to be more free?—That in regard to our spiritual relation to God and a future state we may indulge in any fantastical notions we think fit; while we shut our eyes to the light that he has given us, and despise the law that he has set before us? Madness and folly like this, in any one professing to be a Christian (and to Christians only is this Discourse addressed), would be utterly incredible, did we not see it every moment before us, and did we not find all its elements lurking within our own bosoms.

But if the Bible be a rule of life and faith—a record of our moral destinies—it is not (I repeat), nor does it pretend to be, a revelation of natural science. The credibility of our religion depends on evidence, internal and external. Its internal evidence is seen in the coherence of its design from its first dawning to the fulness of its glorious light—in its purity and moral dignity—in its exalted motives fitted to call forth man's highest moral and intellectual energies—in its suitableness to his wants and weakness—in its laying bare the inner movements of his heart—in its declarations of the reality of a future state, and of other truths most important for him to know, yet of which he has but a faint and insufficient knowledge from the light of nature. Its external evidence mingles itself in a thousand ways with the internal; but finally resolves itself into the strength of human testimony, proving that God has at many times made a visible manifestation of his power on earth; promulgating among mankind a rule of life, enforcing it by the terror of penal sanc-