

acter of Him from whom we have emanated. The book of conscience may be regarded as a transcript by the hand of this Being from that primeval virtue which belongs essentially and eternally to Himself—and whatever lineament we discern there, is the evidence to us of a corresponding lineament in the image of the Godhead. It is thus that we read the moral character of God in the book of our own consciences. From what we find to be the constitution of our moral nature, we directly infer the mind and disposition of Him who framed it. It is true that there are certain local or accidental modifications, which have caused slight and occasional difference in the moral judgments of men. But whatever, apart and aloof from these, has been enthroned by the universal sense of mankind as a virtue, or as that which should have a dwelling-place on earth—announces itself through the organ of conscience to have had an eternal dwelling-place in Heaven—being seated there as one of the lovely or venerable characteristics of Him who framed us. If truth and purity and integrity and kindness be virtues in men, and are recognised by him as of supreme obligation—the very fact of man being so framed as thus to recognise them, is to us the strongest argument within the compass of our natural vision, for the truth and righteousness and goodness and holiness of God.

12. When Ethical Philosophers investigate the origin and foundation of our moral ideas—they sometimes, for the eliciting of principle, put imaginary cases—at one time disjoining, at another variously blending the elements of their speculation.