

may be of the nature and authority of an intuitive sentiment. The unanimous consent of mankind to any proposition is to be regarded as the utterance of humanity. That which our common humanity expresses is the expression of the Author of our humanity; it is a kind of revelation, and will be found in all cases to correspond to a reality.

But we are not compelled to refer this doctrine to any spontaneous, and universal, and necessary intimations growing out of the constitution of human nature. Why may not this faith have been a grand generalization reached in common by the philosophic minds of all ages? The facts of Nature have always been patent to all the world. The phenomena upon which we have reared the stupendous structure of the modern sciences were as open to the scrutiny of Thales, and Pythagoras, and Plato as to us. There are *scientific grounds* for such beliefs; and the ancient sages, though they certainly failed to appreciate the data of science to the same extent as ourselves, may reasonably be supposed to have caught glimpses of majestic inductions which involved the destruction of terrestrial order, or even the order of the material universe.

We stand now in the presence of those grand and instructive phenomena. On an eminence in the midst of the visible universe, with the multitudinous events of earth and heaven transpiring before our eyes—a universe flooded by the ethereal light of modern science—our intelligence gifted with the power to penetrate to the core of the earth, or fly beyond the flight of the most erratic comet—or pierce the gloom of a million ages passed—or lift the veil which opens the vista of a million ages to come—and here, in this favored position, we ask ourselves what tides we witness in the flow of terrestrial and cosmical events. It is a sublime query. With boldness, but with humility and reverence, let us seek the answer.