

Thus, while we acknowledge all the beauty and all the value of the mathematical reasonings by which the consequences of our general laws are deduced, we may yet consider it possible that a philosopher, whose mind has been mainly employed, and his intellectual habits determined, by this process of deduction, may possess, in a feeble and imperfect degree only, some of those faculties by which truth is attained, and especially those truths which regard our relation to that mind, the origin of all law, the source of first principles, which must be immeasurably elevated above all derivative truths. It would, therefore, be far from surprising, if there should be found, among the great authors of the developements of the mechanical philosophy, some who had refused to refer the phenomena of the universe to a supreme mind, purpose, and will. And though this world be, to a believer in the Being and government of God, a matter of sorrow and pain, it need not excite more surprise than if the same were true of a person of the most ordinary endowments, when it is recollected in what a disproportionate manner the various faculties of such a philosopher may have been cultivated. And our apprehensions of injury to mankind from the influence of such examples will diminish, when we consider, that those mathematicians whose minds have been less partially exercised, the great discoverers of the truths which others apply, the philosophers who have looked upwards as well as downwards, to the unknown as well as to the known, to ulterior as well as proximate principles, have never rested in this narrow and barren doctrine; but have perpetually looked forwards, beyond mere material laws and causes, to a First Cause of the moral and material world, to which each advance in philosophy might bring them nearer, though it must ever remain indefinitely beyond their reach.

It scarcely needs, perhaps, to be noticed, that what we here represent as the possible source of error is,