

for us to estimate the analogous powers and attributes of other minds. The difficulty of applying this scale of measurement will, of course, increase in proportion to the difference between the objects compared; and although we may conceive that there are powers and intelligences infinitely surpassing our own, the conceptions we can form of such superior essences must necessarily be indefinite and obscure, and must partake of the same kind of imperfection as our notions of the distances of the heavenly bodies, however familiar we may be with the units of the scale by which those distances are capable of being expressed. When, on the other hand, the objects contemplated are more within the range of our mental vision; when, for instance, they are phenomena that we can assimilate to our own voluntary acts, and in which we can clearly trace the connexion between means and end, then does our recognition of the agency of intellect become most distinct, and our conviction of its real and independent existence become most intimate and assured.

Such is the kind of evidence on which rests our belief of the existence of our fellow men. Such, also, is the foundation of our assurance that there exists a mighty Intellect, who has planned and executed the stupendous works of creation, with a skill surpassing our utmost conceptions; by powers to which we can assign no limit, and the object of whose will is universal good.*

It will argue no undue presumption, therefore, if, in our earnest endeavours to form just ideas of the attributes of the Deity from the examination of nature, we are led to institute comparisons between His works and those of man; and strive to gather some faint notions of the divine intelligence by applying the only standard of admeasurement which we possess, and are permitted to employ, namely, that derived from the operations of human intellect. Our interpretations of the designs of the Creator must here be obtained through

* The view here taken is, of course, limited to *Natural Theology*; that being the express and exclusive object of these Treatises.