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ARTICLE I.—*Antiquities of the Christian Church.*

1. *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Christlichen Archæologie.* Bde I.—XII. 8vo. Leipzig, 1817–31. Von D. Johann Christian Wilhelm Augusti.
2. *Handbuch der Christlichen Archæologie.* Bde I.—III. Leipzig, 1836–7. Von D. Johann Christian Wilhelm Augusti.
3. *Die Kirchliche Archæologie.* Dargestellt von F. H. Rheinwald. 8vo. S. 569. Berlin, 1830.
4. *Handbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Alterthümer in alphabetischer Ordnung mit steter Beziehung auf das, was davon noch jetzt im christlichen Cultus übrig geblieben ist.* Von M. Carl Christian Friedrich Siegel. Bde I.—IV. Leipzig, 1835–38.
5. *Lehrbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Archæologie.* Verfasst von Dr. Joh. Nep. Locherer. 8vo. S. 194. Frankfort am Main, 1832.
6. *Die christlich-kirchliche Alterthumswissenschaft, theologisch-critisch bearbeitet.* Von Dr. Wilhelm Böhmer. Bde I.—II. 8vo. Breslau, 1836–9.
7. *Lehrbuch der christlich-kirchlichen Archæologie.* Von Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Guericke. 8vo. S. 345. Leipzig, 1847.

THIS formidable array of authors comprises only those who, in Germany, have within the last thirty years, written on the
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existed in name under the Cæsars, but the reality of which had completely disappeared.

“In the United States religion also governs the mind, restrains it in its aberrations, and thus becomes a guaranty of the duration of the republic. Everybody in the United States professes religious dogmas. The small number who are not sincere Christians affect to be so, lest they should be suspected of having no religion. Christianity, therefore, has an external adhesion which is unanimous. The result of this is, that in the moral world *every thing is fixed*, although the political world may appear to be entirely given up to discussion and rash experiments. The human mind, in the United States, has not before it an unlimited space; however bold it may be, it feels that there are insurmountable barriers before which it must stop. Hence it happens that in all classes there is a certain restraint, either voluntary or the result of force.”

2nd Ed. 1840.

ART. III.—*Moral Æsthetics; or the Goodness of God in the Ornaments of the Universe.*

THE power and wisdom of God appear in so forming the eye and adapting it to the element of light as to make us capable of vision; but his benevolence is manifested in adorning the earth with such scenes of majesty and beauty as minister delight to every beholder. His power and wisdom are seen in so constructing the ear as to render us capable of distinguishing sounds. His benevolence appears in making us alive to the voice of melody and gladness.

The argument, on the illustration of which it is now proposed to enter, has nothing whatever to do with the grosser and more obvious uses of hearing and vision. It is much more limited. We shall regard the sights and sounds of the creation, only as they are beauties and melodies. We shall contemplate them only as so many illustrative tokens of the Divine goodness; and if reference be made to any utility which they may possess beyond that of being a manifestation of God, it is to a spiritual not a material utility.

The whole earth teems with truth. Every object is a divine index, meant to point us to the invisible God. There is a theological expression in the face of nature. Not only are there geological features, and agricultural uses, and mineral treasures, but there is a divine significance in this earth of ours. It is intended to be a permanent and perspicuous testimony for God; and the religious contemplation of its beauties has from the beginning, ministered to the spiritual edification of the wisest and best men, who living have breathed on its bosom as a mother, and dead, have reposed in its kindly embrace. No one can be altogether insensible to the Psalmist's exulting celebrations of its spiritual teachings; or to the lessons of holy wisdom which the ample page of the creation opened to the ardent gaze of Paul. Not only are the enduring objects of nature significant, the everlasting hills, the stars shining as brightly now as at creation's dawn; but the variable aspect of earth and sky, now veiled in tempest, now smiling in light, and robed in beauty and breathing repose, soft as an infant's slumber, it teaches that although justly offended, God is yet placable. If the darkened sky, the desolating flood, the rushing wind, the tumultuous ocean, and the flaming volcano indicate the righteous indignation of the Most High, surely the tranquil beauty of the summer evening, the soft brilliancy of the shaded sun, the tender lustre of departing day, the sweet sound of waters flowing gently—surely these were designed to tell us of his love. And when we pass from nature to Scripture, we read in words of truth and grace, that "drop as the rain and distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass," how he has been pacified towards us by the sacrifice of his only begotten Son, and how this most gracious and divine Redeemer, "is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and how "a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

The constitution of the human spirit has not been so wondrously fitted to the constitution of the external world by accident. The spirit of beauty was not shed so profusely upon the material universe, and the sense of beauty on the conscious

soul of man without design. This world was not so admirably adapted to be our habitation, the sky was not made to spread its splendid and illimitable arch above us, the earth was not clothed with flowers, the heavens were not studded with stars, the air was not made to vibrate with melody, the woods were not made vocal with the song of summer birds, and man endowed with senses to perceive, and a spirit to enjoy all this, without a purpose. As the instrument wakes its slumbering melodies when its chords are swept by the hands of a master, so is the spirit of man formed to respond to the myriad voices of nature, and they were doubtless designed to wake to joyful consciousness its hidden harmonics.

We might naturally have imagined that if God should continue the existence of the earth and the race of man upon it, after the apostasy, he would blot out every ornament and cause it to be, not as so large a portion of it now is, a garden of delights, but a horrible prison, stretching away in darkness and terror, "a land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." But how different is our experience! How does the goodness of God exceed our anticipation and understanding! "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches." Ps. civ. 24. For while he has impressed upon the very face of the earth the testimonies of his holy abhorrence of sin, and made the voice of his righteous indignation to be heard in the reverberations of the thunder, and to be re-echoed in the terrors of the soul, and written the traces of his consuming wrath, in the red lightning, and mirrored his angry visage in the troubled ocean and the trembling earth: although he has made mountains to bow at his presence, and turned rivers into blood; although he has made hail, and caterpillar, and locust, and frost, and hot thunderbolts the unconscious but appalling witnesses of his righteous abhorrence of sin, he has yet, doubtless not without design to testify his goodness, scattered over the creation, not only his bounties, but his glories.

Why has he made the scales of the fish, the shells of the ocean, the flowers which bloom beneath the glacier, and under the shadow of the rock, and even in retired nooks where the

the eye of man, of any creature, shall never behold them so beautiful, where no other than his own all-beholding eye shall ever rest upon them, or rejoice in them? Why has he done all this, but to please himself; to make them serve no meaner purpose than directly to show forth the profusion of his bounty, the exuberance of his love? And what an endearing exhibition, what an ennobling view, what a transcendent testimony of the Godhead is here! *He* loves to hear the song of the birds, which never falls on the listening ear of man. He delights in the minstrelsy of the brook as it flows on in its subterranean passage inaudible to us, or "wanders at its own sweet will," far away from the habitations of men, among the clefts of the rock, or pours its unheeded murmurs on the secluded valley, making music only in the ear of God. His eye delights to rest upon the grassy mound, the retired vale, the mossy couch, the hidden violet. He hearkens to the grasshopper's chirp, and watches the silent growth of the daisy, far down in the dell. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Psalm xxxvi. 7, 8.

God has built the universe for his monument, for his palace, for his temple. He has crowded it with wonders, and crowned it with a diadem of beauty. Above he has spread the unmeasured and vaulted sky, "sown thick with stars." Below he has covered the earth with a carpet of the richest embroidery, refreshing the eye with alternate changes from the delicate green of early spring, to the vivid splendors of summer; then deepening to the sober tints of autumn, in their turn, to give way to the more radiant brightness of the ice-clad, winter earth, the trees now leafless, but arrayed in snowy robes, and shining with pendants of silver.

So proud was an ancient architect of the work of his hands, that he secretly wrought his name upon the cornice of the building, and so skilfully was it done, that although at first invisible, and surmounted by another inscription, it ultimately stood forth revealed. Now God has written his glorious name upon the universe, the work of his hands, the memorial of his invisible

majesty, the witness of his eternal power and Godhead. So that in every object, whether invested with grandeur, or appalled with gentle beauty, may we read the authentic name of God, whether in "the fragrance of the breathing flowers," or in the majesty of the untrodden and primeval forest. What an image of grandeur and repose is a noble mountain range, with its outline undulating "as if touched by a tremulous hand," but, therefore, all the more delightful and dear to the imagination and the heart!

God has every where put his name on the works of his hands; in the bursting seed, the springing corn, the waving grass, and the modest flower, as well as in the headlong torrent, the thundering cataract, the giant Mississippi, with its sullen and angry roar, or Niagara with its "eternal thunder and unceasing foam." He hath spoken not only in the voice of the tempest, but in "the silence that is in the starry skies;" not only in the rushing, mighty wind, that tears from its firm foundation the mountain oak, but in "the sleep that is among the lonely hills."

In beauty and grandeur, the works of nature infinitely transcend the works of art; in other words, the works of God are incomparably superior to the works of man. Even when examined by the most powerful microscope, this difference is perceptible. No flaw can be found in the minutest works of God; but on the contrary, on the closest inspection, they exhibit beauties unsuspected before. What are the elaborate decorations of a regal hall, compared with a stately tree, growing in the wild majesty and graceful luxuriance of nature? How noble a forest of such trees, and how insignificant the finest statuary beside them! What painter can paint like God? What are the finest tints that man can give to canvass compared with the golden glories of the rising or the setting sun? In the defence and confirmation of this view, the sacred authority of the Lord Jesus himself may be invoked. "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Matt. vi. 28, 29.

We rise, then, to the conclusion that the creation, properly regarded, has not only a manifest adaptation to the grosser necessities of our nature, but an inspired and immortal signifi-

cance. An intelligent faith baptizes nature. It makes it no longer a common, but a sacred thing; not only the habitation of man, but the witness of God; in her fairest and highest forms, faintly but really shadowing forth his infinite and ineffable glories. This is the view of nature which the most devotional men in all ages have delighted to take. It is undeniably the view sanctioned by God himself, in his word. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Psalm cxi. 2, 4.

The Bible connects the creation with God; and, instead of presenting it to our contemplation as a hard and barren thing, the Bible, as the inspired interpreter of nature, shows that it is every where informed with spiritual meaning, and that it was specifically designed, with its myriad voices and bright forms, to lead us insensibly up to the remembrance and love of an invisible, but personal and presiding God. We are not, with the Pantheist, to confound the personal God with these, the works of his hands, the ministers of his providence, and the witnesses of his eternal power and Godhead. Nor are we, with the Atheist, to overlook them altogether, or to survey their glories, but sever them, meanwhile, from him, their more glorious Maker. We should rather let the works of God be to our faith what the ladder in the patriarch's vision was to his, an instrument of ascent to God, its base touching the earth, its summit piercing the skies; as, saith the Scripture, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool." Acts vii. 49.

As the innumerable objects of the creation are wrapped in invisibility until the material light falls upon them, so are they destitute of their most precious significance and highest lustre until shone upon by the glorious revelations of the divine word. It is only when natural objects are bathed in the light of the Sun of Righteousness that the beholder can attain

"A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

Nature has been looked on with other eyes by the sons of God, than by the common children of this world. It is no

where hailed with sensibility so enlightened and profound; it is no where associated with sentiments so pure and sacred, by the Greek poets as by the Hebrew bards, as in the Scripture given by inspiration of God. To the pagan Greeks, nature was a cold, dead thing. She became "a thing of beauty, a joy for ever," only when touched and transfigured by the finger of God, the pen of inspiration.

There is, confessedly, a different tone in the descriptions of nature, which we find scattered through the early Christian writers, from that which prevailed in the most feeling and tasteful of the orators and poets of profane antiquity. The latter often described the visible forms of nature with admirable truth and beauty. But they perpetually betray a want of elevated sentiment, of indivisible and delightful association, between the forms of nature and the feelings of the soul. Like the impotent astrologers at the court of Belshazzar, they beheld the hand writing of God, but they knew not the interpretation thereof. While they ignorantly made of nature a God, and transferred to the creature the homage due of right only to the Creator, it is plain that they did not understand the best lessons, that they did not enjoy the best influences of nature. The whole process is described with something more than mere philosophic accuracy, even with inspired authority and insight, by the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Not liking to retain God in their knowledge, in righteous judgment he gave them up to believe a lie. Their moral deterioration affected their intellectual apprehension, corrupting their judgment and degrading their taste. This diversity in *the tone* of Christian and Pagan writers, will be evident to any one on a comparison of the passages in which Cicero and Virgil have described nature, with corresponding passages in the works of the Christian Fathers, especially Basil the Great, and Chrysostom.* An illustration more familiar, but equally just and decisive, is presented by the difference of sentiment which prevails in the poetical works of Milton and Homer. Nothing can be more vivid, animated, and delightful, than the Homeric

* For particular examples of which see Humboldt's *Cosmos*, Vol. ii. Part 1.

descriptions of the forms and forces of nature. We fancy that we can see his "well-ordered gardens," that we are admitted to the councils of his chiefs, and that we can descry the dim outline of the figure of the old man as he walks in silence along the shore of the far-sounding sea. But what we lack, and what we long for, with all this, is the association of spiritual sentiment.

The quality of which we speak, as distinguishing the poetry of Milton from that of Homer is not confined to him. It is not even confined to England. It is characteristic of the descriptions of nature, which we find in all the cultivated and Christian States of modern Europe, of France, of Italy, of Germany, and of Spain; not less, or scarcely less, than of England. Milton is a peculiarly religious poet. He was a peculiarly religious man. He shows this, even in his fierce political pamphlets. We have called them political pamphlets, with no disposition to disparage them, but simply because as such they were originally published, as such they were originally regarded and read, as such they were praised and blamed, prized and hated, received with execrations and hailed with delight. Though written for a temporary purpose, they carried within them the seeds of perpetuity the "ethereal and fifth essence,"—"the breath of reason itself, the precious life-blood of a master spirit." They are in truth profound philosophical treatises on the origin, the objects, and the ultimate grounds of civil government. They are the noblest defences of rational and regulated liberty in existence. They have done more for its propagation, and defence, than armies, and battles. His two tracts entitled the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and a *Defence of the People of England*, did more to discredit tyranny and uphold freedom in the world than the battles of Marston Moor, and Naseby. But their crowning glory is their exalted spirit of evangelical devotion. Whether writing on education, on history, on doctrinal theology, on personal topics, or on party politics, Milton always wrote religiously. Some of the most impressive prayers ever written by uninspired man, prayers full of devout affection, of holy ardour, of divine unction, are introduced in the midst of discussions on sacred and civil polity—topics which we know from daily experience may

be handled by professedly religious men without one spark of holy feeling, or one sentence of devotional enthusiasm. No competent reader can rise from the perusal of the bitterest of his controversial writings, not even that famous and fatal Answer to Salmasius, without a higher sense of truth and duty.

On the question of his religious orthodoxy, we do not think it necessary to enter. At one period of his life he may have been an Arian; but at no period of his life was he indifferent to the subject of religion. Religion animates and exalts; it literally inspired his earliest poems, and it continued to burn with steady flame, but with ever growing brightness to the close of life. The same spirit of piety breathes through the *Comus* which glorifies the *Paradise Lost*. Religion pervaded and moulded his whole spirit. It was "the master light of all his seeing." But religious as was the time in which he lived, and the men with whom his lot was cast or chosen, religious as were his thoughts and works, the Christian element does not more thoroughly pervade and imbue the *Paradise Lost*, the greatest poetical effort of the human mind, than it does the earlier and less elevated poem of Dante, the *Divina Commedia*.

In conception and in execution, the *Paradise Lost* required a greater combination of rare qualities; more universal learning; more knowledge of truth and fable, of Christian theology and Rabbinical literature; more speculative knowledge of man; more practical acquaintance with men, because more exact discrimination of characters widely different; more exquisite appreciation of art; more exalted enjoyment of nature; more genial and expanded sympathy with the human race; above all, more creative imagination; more of the plastic and potent genius requisite to master and mould, to assimilate and adapt all these varied treasures, than was ever before demanded by any theme, or exhibited by any poet. What an ear for melody, what an eye for beauty, what a soul for truth must have been his!

The most difficult elements which his plan required him to deal with, were the supernatural beings introduced as speaking and acting; and in the management of these agents, his success is without precedent or parallel. His angels, good and bad, retain sufficient resemblance to men to be recognized as

creatures, and excite a human interest. But projected from a higher ground, they rise above the ordinary level of humanity, and yet how insensible, how consistent, how grateful their elevation! what harmony of proportion, what distinctness of outline! "The force of nature can no further go" than in the conception of the chief of the fallen angels, the "archangel ruined," "the excess of glory obscured." How unlike all previous representations of Satan! What theological fidelity united with poetical elevation meet in the lost archangel! What innate and invincible affinity for evil in his fallen nature! What despotic wickedness in the very core and ground of his moral being! How gigantic and dread his purposes of mischief! What desolation and vastness in his agonies, and yet what defiance in his defeat! what grandeur in his despair! In the whole range of poetry, the only character that will bear comparison with the Satan of Milton, is the Prometheus of Æschylus; and how abject is the latter, chained to the rock and complaining of his physical tortures, compared with the "bad eminence" of that being "who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms:" and who, even in the last extremity, derives a certain dignity from indomitable intellectual pride, and strength of will! We do not compare the *Divina Commedia* with the *Paradise Lost*, therefore, in any other point of view, than as possessing in common with it, and in as large measure, the religious spirit. This diffusion of exalted religious sentiment is alleged and insisted on, to show that it is not the attribute of a particular mind, or the growth of a particular region, or the product of a particular age; but the effect of a common cause—Christianity.

After all, however, this discussion may appear to many very excellent persons, idle and profitless. Never accustomed, themselves, to associate the glories of the creation with Christian sentiment, they look upon any endeavour to throw a religious colouring over the material universe, with suspicion and dread. In vindication of the view taken, it may be enough to say to such persons, your views of the nature of man and the designs of Providence; of the agencies ordained for our nourishment in knowledge and love; of the exalted sympathy with God in judgment and feeling which it behoves us to cultivate; your views on all these high themes are not only defective, but, what

you little suspect, they are contrary to pure religious doctrine, to right religious feeling, and to the manifest will of God. It is, indeed, truly modest in us to say that he shall create and spend the virgin Sabbath of the world in the pleased and propitious contemplation of what we, forsooth, are too enlightened and holy to think or speak of! Shall he make these things, and endow us with a capacity to appreciate and enjoy them, and shall we, with churlish and cynic pride, refuse to make delighted mention of his perfections and praises, shown forth in these his works? What a wilful obscuration of the glory of God—what a monstrous perversion of true theology and genuine religious sensibility is here!

It is plain, that the world would have been very different from what it is, if such persons had planned it. They would have clothed nature, not in the variegated vesture of God, not with that glory greater than Solomon's, to which a greater than Solomon has pointed us, but with a suit of sober drab. Instead of that fountain of visible glory, the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race, whose going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it—instead of this magnificent luminary scattering his unprofitable beams on the barren rock of Seriphus and the glowing sands of Sahara, there would have been a very economical and convenient contrivance to dispense the necessary *modicum* of light, and no more. There would have been no delicate streaks announcing his coming, no lingering beams on the purple mountains at evening; no cloud with golden fringe or bosom bathed in pearly light; no faint, receding, scarce distinguishable vapour floating in the azure sky and lost in its impenetrable depths. There would have been nothing of all this, because it serves a purpose which they have never contemplated, it ministers to a want they have never felt, it manifests a trait which they neither possess nor value.

All this rich tracery of the heavens, this delicate intermingling of light and shade, this effulgence "poured forth profuse," not only on flower and gem, but on the unshapely rock, and the unsightly waste—all this is not necessary to the comfortable existence of man in this world, to the common purposes of life,

to the performance of our plain duties here, and a saving preparation for heaven hereafter.

Proceeding on this principle, they might rob the lilies of the field of that glory which our Saviour commended as beyond the reach of art; and while the stars in their world would shed as much light as might be deemed convenient, there would be in their beams nothing of

“That tender light which heaven to gaudy day denies.”

They would be ennobled by association with no sentiment of natural beauty, or of moral grandeur—with the midnight prayer of the prevailing Patriarch—with the mystic lore of Chaldea and Egypt—with the shepherds of Bethlehem—the song of the angels, and the infancy of Jesus.

In the eyes of every Christian, our argument would derive additional interest and value, from being manifestly susceptible of application to the word, not less than to the works of God. There is, however, the less necessity for dwelling on this aspect of the subject at present, as it has recently been developed at large, and with admirable eloquence, by Dr. Hamilton of the Scotch Church, London, in his tract on the *Literary Attractions of the Bible*. It will suffice, therefore, for our present purpose, merely to indicate this interesting application of the argument.

The Author of nature is the Author of Scripture, and he has followed the same plan in his works and word—in the construction of the universe, and in the inspiration of the Bible. As he has beautified the one with islands, and mountains, and seas, and stars, so has he adorned the other with pathetic narrative, gorgeous description, and amazing incident—with the legislative wisdom of Moses, the lyric outburst of Miriam, the hoar majesty of Job, the evangelical elevation of Isaiah, the mystic splendors of Ezekiel, the pathetic beauties of Jeremiah, the manifold and many-toned melodies of the sweet singer of Israel. And then when we pass from under the august and awe-inspiring shadows of the legal and Levitical economy into the sweet and soul-subduing manifestations of gospel grace, within the veil of the New Testament—when we pass, as it were, with downcast eye, and reverent wonder, and chastened joy, into this Holy of Holies, the more immediate pavilion and presence chamber of

God manifest in the flesh, and listen with rapt attention and loving spirit to those wondrous words of truth and grace which first began to be spoken unto us by the Lord, and were treasured up and told over again, and then committed to inspired and imperishable record—we think the argument rather rises in power and in preciousness; and we can find fit analogy, not in the tarnished beauties of this present world, which, with its “faded splendor wan,” must be renovated and purified before it can become the permanent habitation of God’s elect, but rather in the unpolluted garden of Eden, in which grew every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is plain, that instead of this accumulation of poetry and beauty, this attractive exhibition of the treasures of heaven, this sweet and touching sentiment, this expressive and graceful allegory, this grand and stirring description, laying the world that now is, and the new heavens, and the new earth, alike under tribute, to furnish forth a revelation suitable to the majesty of the Lord of Hosts, the whole Bible might have been constructed, in a form as bare and didactic as the ten commandments; though even these, it should be remembered, were ushered in by Jehovah descending on the awful mount, girt with glorious majesty, attended by an innumerable company of angels, and enthroned in a cloud, whence went forth his fiery law. Whether, therefore, we look at nature, or Scripture, we find that God uniformly recognizes the existence, and appeals to the sense of beauty.

In closing, it may be well to add a word in illustration of the practical bearing of this subject. It is evident that a mere sentimental admiration of nature, such as Rousseau, Shelley, and Byron gloried in, is not what piety and truth demand. A sanctified sensibility, formed not on the visible and material splendors of the universe alone, but on its divine origin and spiritual significance, is what our Saviour himself and all his inspired servants exemplify and commend. The works and the word of God should never be dissociated in our thoughts. Every Christian should assiduously cultivate in himself the habit of hallowed association. A man may have a constitutional susceptibility to the beauties of nature, while he is wholly forget-

ful of her Maker and Lord. Like the wretched Shelley he may even write himself "Atheist" among the most stupendous works of God. Let a taste for nature therefore be cherished, but let it not be divorced from the truths, the hopes, and the sanctions of the Christian revelation. This earth derives its chief importance from its connection with redemption by Christ Jesus. The Bible and Christian literature throw over the face of nature grander and more lovely lights than those which stream upon her from the sun and stars. The works of Milton, Cowper, Watts, and Wordsworth, may not only refine and exalt our taste for the glories of this visible world, but be made ministers to devotion; and as the Hebrews bestowed on the Tabernacle of Jehovah jewels of silver and jewels of gold borrowed from their Egyptian neighbours, so may we turn to pious and profitable use the beautiful descriptions of nature which embellish the writings of men, many of whom, it is to be feared, were themselves destitute of evangelical taste and sentiment. It is a wise and holy alchymy which thus transmutes base metals to gold.

There surely cannot be a higher wisdom than to see God in his works, nor a more sacred duty than to teach men to do so. The constant inculcation of this lesson is an eminent characteristic of the Bible. The Bible looks upon the world as God's world; it recognizes his hand and his counsel in all that he does or with high Providence permits to be done. The first truth which it reveals is, that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," thus destroying at a single stroke all false and fabulous cosmogonies, and placing the universal-empire of God on an impregnable foundation. The Apostle declares that we cannot attain unto the adequate and fruitful knowledge of this great truth, save by the exercise of faith. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The devout and believing reference of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them to God, as their Creator and Sovereign, is a distinguishing mark of a soul anointed with the unction of the Holy One, and imbued with the wisdom of the just.

It is lamentable indeed to see men deeply read in the laws of nature, familiar with her phenomena and her forces, unable

or unwilling to discern a personal intelligence presiding over all her mighty works and mysterious processes. It is not often, however, (as in the case of Humboldt in his *Cosmos*) that we see men who have made important contributions to science, stopping at the threshold, and surveying only the magnificence of the outer temple; refusing to bow down before the invisible presence of the Divinity within. For the most part, it has been left to the vain pretenders to a knowledge of the mysteries of science, to avow themselves without hope and without God in the world. It was long ago remarked by the great prophet and pioneer of our modern science, that "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

The inconceivable glory of the heavenly world is a thought which arises almost inevitably in the Christian mind, on a survey of the ornaments of the creation. If God has made this world, which is only his footstool, so beautiful, what will heaven, the habitation and throne of his glory, be! If this earth, now cursed for man's sake, and dishonoured by the foul pollutions of sin, is still so lovely, what visions of joy must it have presented, what garments of beauty must it have worn, when clothed in virgin innocence, with the blessing of its Father and its God resting freshly upon it!

Sin is a blot on the creation; a deformity, a monster, a madness, which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will ultimately banish from this redeemed and renovated world. The creation is subject for a time only, and not willingly to this chain of corruption. There is a perpetual protest against the hateful presence of sin on the part of God's irrational creatures. By their cruel wrongs, their helpless sorrows, their partial joys, their tarnished, but still most touching beauties, they protest against the sin of man, which hath cast a shadow alike over the face of nature and over the providence of God. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. 22, 23.