

seeing that there is over all matter and all mind the will of a presiding God.

It may perhaps be well to consider some of the causes that have led men to reject the proofs of natural religion. One cause is the affectation of originality. "The proof of a Deity drawn from the constitution of nature, is not only popular but vulgar; and many minds are not so indisposed to any thing which can be offered to them, as they are to the *flatness* of being content with common reasons*." This remark of Paley's is applied to certain writers, who, to rid themselves of an intelligent Creator, have loaded natural history and physiology with the wildest and most preposterous hypotheses.

Another cause is ignorance of the laws of nature. Man is unwilling to think himself ignorant; and he naturally enough thinks lightly of the proofs he does not understand. Religious men may easily fall into this error: for their minds dwell on proofs not derived from any study of the material world, and they know full well, that the hopes and sanctions of natural religion are little fitted to satisfy the wants of man. Hence they reject it altogether. But they ought to know that the laws of nature, when properly understood, are records of the will of God, and are therefore fit matter for exalted study: and they have no right to argue from their own ignorance.

A third cause for rejecting natural religion is the reception of a narrow and false psychological system. This cause has, during the past century, tainted some of the best writings of the Ecclesiastical Members of our Church. Let us suppose some one to

* Natural Theology, Chap. xxiii.