

my conviction that as long as it cannot be shown that matter or physical forces do actually reason, I shall consider any manifestation of thought as evidence of the existence of a thinking being as the author of such thought, and shall look upon an intelligent and intelligible connection between the facts of nature as direct proof of the existence of a thinking God,¹ as certainly as man exhibits the power of thinking when he recognizes their natural relations.

As I am not writing a didactic work, I will not enter here into a detailed illustration of the facts relating to the various subjects submitted to the consideration of my reader, beyond what is absolutely necessary to follow the argument, nor dwell at any length upon the conclusions to which they lead, but simply recall the leading features of the evidence, assuming in the argument a full acquaintance with the whole range of data upon which it is founded, whether derived from the affinities or the anatomical structure of animals, or from their habits and their geographical distribution, from their embryology, or from their succession in past geological ages, and the peculiarities they have exhibited during each,² believing, as I do, that isolated and disconnected facts are of little consequence in the contemplation of the whole plan

¹ I am well aware that even the most eminent investigators consider the task of science at an end, as soon as the most general relations of natural phenomena have been ascertained. To many the inquiry into the primitive cause of their existence seems either beyond the reach of man, or as belonging rather to philosophy than to physics. To these the name of God appears out of place in a scientific work, as if the knowledge of secondary agencies constituted alone a worthy subject for their investigations, and as if nature could teach nothing about its Author. Many, again, are no doubt prevented from expressing their conviction that the world was called into existence and is regulated by an intelligent God, either by the fear of being supposed to share clerical or sectarian prejudices; or because it may be dangerous for them to discuss freely such questions without acknowledging at the same time the obligation of taking the Old Testament as the standard by which the validity of their results is to be measured. Science, however, can only prosper when confining itself within its legitimate sphere; and nothing can be more detrimental to its true dignity than discussions like those which took place at the last meeting of the German association

of naturalists, in Göttingen, and which have since then been carried on in several pamphlets in which bigotry vies with personality and invective.

² Many points little investigated thus far by most naturalists, but to which I have of late years paid particular attention, are here presented only in an aphoristic form, as results established by extensive investigations, though unpublished, most of which will be fully illustrated in my following volumes, or in a special work upon the plan of the creation. (See AGASSIZ, (L.) On the Difference between Progressive, Embryonic, and Prophetic Types in the Succession of Organized Beings, Proceed. 2d Meeting Amer. Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, held at Cambridge in 1849, Boston, 1850, 1 vol. 8vo., p. 432.) Meanwhile I refer in foot notes to such works as contain the materials already on hand for the discussion of these subjects, even when presented in a different light. I would only beg leave to add, that in these references I have by no means attempted to quote all the writers upon the various topics under consideration, but only the most prominent and most instructive, and here and there some condensed accounts of the facts in more elementary works, by the side of the original papers.