

a present compassion may have been the result of a previous choice ; and so may a present conviction be the result of a previous choice—being in proportion, not to the evidence possessed by the subject, but to the evidence attended to, and perceived in consequence of that attention. The designations of virtuous and vicious are only applicable to that which is voluntary ; and it is precisely because, through the faculty of attention, the voluntary has had so much to do, if not immediately with the belief, at least with the investigations which lead to it—that man may be reckoned with for the judgments of his understanding, as well as for the emotions of his heart or the actions of his history.

23. That man is not rightfully the subject of any moral reckoning for his belief, would appear, then, to be as monstrous a heresy in science as it is in theology, as philosophically unsound as it is religiously unsound ; and deriving all its plausibility from the imagination, that the belief is in no way dependent upon the will. It is not morally incumbent upon man to see an object which is placed beyond the sphere of his vision—nor can either a rightful condemnation or a rightful vengeance be laid upon him, because he has not perceived it. It must lie within that sphere, else he is no more responsible for not having reached it with his eye, than for not having stretched forth his hand to any of the distant bodies in the firma-