the relation between the effect and its cauſe, ſo as to infer by the powers of their own reaſon the existence of the Creator ſrom the preſence of his creatures. Such revela­tions, however, could be satisfactory only to thoſe who im­mediately received them. Whenever the Deity has been pleaſed by ſupernatural means to communicate any informa­tion to man, we may be ſure that he has taken effectual care to ſatisfy the perſon ſo highly favoured that his underſtanding was not under the influence of any illuſion ; but ſuch a person could not communicate to another the knowledge which he had thus received by any other means than an addreſs to his rational faculties. No man can be required to believe, no man indeed can believe, without proof, that another, who has no more faculties either of ſenſation or intellect than himſelf, has obtained information from a ſource to which he has no poſſible acceſs. An appeal to miracles would in this caſe ſerve no purpoſe ; for we muſt believe in the existence, power, wisdom, and juſtice, of God, be­fore a miracle can be admitted as evidence of any thing but the power of him by whom it is performed. See Miracle.

It is therefore undeniable that there are ſome principles of theology which may be called *natural* ; for though it is in the higheſt degree probable that the parents of mankind received all their theological knowledge by *ſupernatural* means, it is yet obvious that ſome parts of that knowledge must have been capable of a proof purely rational, otherwiſe not a single religious truth could have been conveyed through the ſucceeding generations of the human race but by the immediate inſpiration of each individual. We indeed admit many propoſitions as certainly true, upon the ſole au­thority of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian ſcriptures, and we re­ceive theſe ſcriptures with gratitude as the lively oracles of God ; but it is ſelf-evident that we could not do either the one or the other, were we not convinced by natural means that God exiſts, that he is a Being of goodneſs, justice, and power, and that he inſpired with divine wiſdom the penmen of theſe ſacred volumes. Now, though it is very poſſible that no man or body of men, left to themſelves from infancy in a desert world, would ever have made a theological diſcovery ; yet whatever propoſitions relating to the being and attributes of the firſt cauſe and the duty of man, can be demonſtrated by human reaſon, independent of writ­ten revelation, may be called *natural theology,* and are of the utmoſt importance, as being to us the firſt principles of all religion. Natural theology, in this ſenſe of the word, is the foundation of the Chriſtian revelation ; for without a previous knowledge of it, we could have no evidence that the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments are indeed the word of God.

Our young divine, therefore, in the regular order of his ſtudies, ought to make himſelf maſter oſ *natural theology* be­fore he enter upon the important taſk of searching the scriptures. On this ſubject many books have been published in our own and other languages ; but perhaps there is none more worthy of attention than the Religion of Nature de­lineated by Mr Wollaston @@(b ). It is a work of great merit, and bears simple teſtimony to its author’s learning and acuteneſs : yet we think it ought to be read with caution. Mr Wollaſton’s theory of moral obligation is fanciful and groundleſs ; and whilſt we readily acknowledge that he demonſtrates many truths with elegance and perſpicuity, we can­not deny that he attempts a proof of others, for which we believe no other evidence can be brought than the declarations of Chriſt and his apostles in the holy ſcriptures. To ſupply the defects of his theory of morals, we would recommend to the ſtudent an attentive peruſal of Cumberland on the Law of Nature, and Paley’s Elements of Moral Philosophy. A learned author @@\* affirms of Cumber­land, that “ he excels all men in fixing the true grounds of moral obligation, out of which natural law and natural religion both ariſe ;” and we have ourſelves never read a work in which the various duties which a man owes to his Maker, himſelf, and his fellow-creatures, are more accurately stated or placed on a ſurer baſis than in the moral treatiſe of the archdeacon of Carliſle.

As Wollaston demonstrates with great perſpicuity, and to the abſolute conviction of every man capable of feeling the force of argument, the being and many of the attributes of God, it may perhaps appear ſuperfluous to recommend any other book on that ſubject. The preſent age, however, having, among other wonderful phenomena, witneſſed a re­vival of the monster *Atheism,* we would adviſe our ſtudent to read with much attention Cudworth’s Intellectual Syſtem, and to read it rather in Moſheim’s Latin tranſlation than in the author’s original Engliſh. In the original, though many authors are quoted that are now but little known, there are very few references to the book, or chapter, or ſection, from which the quotations are taken. Theſe omiſſions are ſupplied by the tranſlator, who has likewiſe enriched his edition with many valuable and learned notes. It is well known that Cudworth wrote his incomparable work in con­futation of Hobbes’s philosophy ; but inſtead of confining himſelf to the whimſies of his antagoniſt, which were in a little time to fink into oblivion, he took a much wider range, and traced atheiſm through all the mazes of anti­quity, expoſing the weakneſs of every argument by which ſuch an abſurdity had ever been maintained. In exhauſting the metaphyſical queſtions agitated among the Greeks concerning the being and perfections of God, he has not only given us a complete hiſtory of ancient learning, as far as it relates to theſe inquiries, but has in fact anticipated moſt of the ſophiſms of our modern atheiſts, who are by

From this passage it is evident, that the Stagyrite, though he conſidered the motions of the heavenly bodies, the ebbing and flowing of the ſea, and the other phenomena of nature, as affording a complete *proof* of the being and providence of God, did not however ſuppoſe that ſrom theſe phenomena an untaught barbarian would dis*cover* this fundamental principle of religion. On the contrary, he expreſsly affirms, that before a man can feel the force of the evidence which they give of this important truth, he muſt have heard of the existence and power of God.

@@@[m]\* Warburton.

@@@(b) It may not be improper to inform the reader, that Mr Wollaſton, the author of the Religion of Nature, was a different man from Mr Woolſton, who blaſphemed the miracles of our Saviour. The former was a clergyman of great piety, and of ſuch moderate ambition as to refuſe one of the higheſt preferments in the church of England when it was offered to him ; the latter was a layman remarkable for nothing but gloomy infidelity, and a perverſe deſire to deprive the wretched oſ every ſource of comfort. In the mind of the former, philosophy and devotion were happily united ; in the mind of the latter, there was neither devotion nor ſcience. Yet theſe writers have been frequently confounded ; ſometimes through inadvertence from the similarity of their names ; and ſometimes, we are afraid, deſignedly, from a weak and bigotted abhorrence of every ſyſtem of religion that pretends to have its foundation in reaſon and in the nature of things.