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 ibis 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. On this subject many books have been published in our own and other languages ; of which the following may be mentioned as the most valuable : Paley's Natural Theology, especially as edited by Lord Brougham and Sir Charles Bell, 4 vols, 12mo. Chalmers's Nat. Theol. Works, vol. i. and ii. Sumner's Records of the Crea­tion, 2 vols. 8vo. The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, &c., by Chalmers, Kidd, Whewell, Bell, Ro­get, Buckland, Kirby, and Prout.

The principles of this science are to be found only in the word and works of God ; and he who would extract them pure and unsophisticated, must dig for them himself in that exhaustless mine. To fit a man for this important investi­gation, much previous knowledge is requisite. He must study the works of God scientifically, before he can per­ceive the full force of that testimony which they bear to the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of their author. Hence the necessity of a general acquaintance with the physical and mathematical sciences before a man enter on the proper study of theology, for he will not otherwise ob­tain just and enlarged conceptions of the God of the uni­verse. He should also make himself acquainted with the principles of logic, the philosophy of the human mind, and the different sources of evidence. Above all, he should devote himself to the study of the original languages of scripture, and to the principles of Biblical criticism and in­terpretation. He who is incapable of consulting the ori­ginal scriptures, must rest his faith, not on the sure foun­dation of the word of God, but on the credit of fallible translators ; and if he be at any time called on to vindicate revelation against the scoffs of infidelity, he will have to struggle with many difficulties which are easily solved by him who is master of the original tongues.

Having satisfied himself of the Authenticity and Divine Authority of the Scriptures, (see Scripture and Inspiraτιον), the student will set himself honestly, diligently, and devoutly to examine into their sacred contents, that he may therein learn for himself the system of truths which they contain.

***Obs.*** “ Impressed,” says Mr. Tatham, ***(Chart and Scale of Truth), "***with an awful sense of the importance of the sacred volume, the phi­losophical [scientific] divine will shake off the bias of prejudices, how­ever formed, of opinions however sanctioned, and ***of*** passions how­ever constitutional, and bring to the study of it the advantage of a pure and impartial mind. Instead of wasting all bis labour upon a number of minute and less significant particulars, and of refining away plain and obvious sense by the subtleties of a narrow and cor­rosive mind, his first object will be to institute a theological inquiry into the general design of the written word, and from principles fully contained and fairly understood, to illustrate the true ***nature*** and ***genius of the religious dispensation*** in all its parts. He will mark the difference between the first and second covenants, and observe the connection that subsists between them. He will trace the tempo­rary economy of the ***Old Testament,*** and weigh the nature and intent of the ***partial covenant*** with the Jews ; observing with astonishment how it was made introductory of better things to come : and be will follow it through the ***law*** and the ***prophets*** in its wonderful evolu­tions, till be see this vast and preparatory machine of providence crowned and completed in the eternal gospel. This ***New Testament,*** the last and best part of the religious dispensation, be will pursue through the sacred pages of that gospel with redoubled attention; contemplating the divine foundation on which it claims to be built, the supernatural ***means*** by which it was executed, and the immortal end which it has in view.”

In the course of this inquiry into the import of the sacred volume, the student will pay particular attention to the circumstances of the age and country in which its various writers respectively lived, and to the nature of the different ***styles, analogical,*** and ***parabolical,*** in which it is written. He will likewise keep in mind that God, whom it claims for its author, is the parent of truth, and that all his actions and dispensations must be consistent with one another. He will therefore compare the different passages of the Old and New Tes­

taments which relate to the same doctrine, or to the same event, reasonably concluding that the Bible must be the best interpreter of itself; and though the opinions which he thus forms may often be erroneous, they will seldom be dangerous errors, and may easily be corrected by mature reflection, or by consulting approved authors who have treated before him of the various points which have been the subject of his studies. Of this mode of proceeding one good consequence will be, that, having from the sacred scriptures formed a system of theology for himself, be will afterwards study the systems of other men without any violent prejudices for or against them ; he will be so much attached to bis own opinions, as not to relinquish them in obedience to mere human authority, at the same that be will be ready to give them up when convinced that they are not well-founded ; and if he have read the scriptures attentively, he will have acquired such a love of truth as to embrace her wherever she may be found.

No small assistance will be obtained in this inquiry by an acquaintance with the history of theological opinions, and of the different controversies which have at different periods, or more continuously, agitated the church? It has indeed been long fashionable to decry polemical di­vinity as an useless, if not a pernicious, study ; but it is not impossible that this fashion has had its origin in ignorance, and that it tends to perpetuate those schisms which it pro­fesses to lament. We are, however, far from recommend­ing to the young divine a perusal of the works of the seve­ral combatants on each side of a disputed question, till he has fitted himself for judging between them by a long course of preparatory study ; and no preparation can better fit him for this purpose, than an impartial study of eccle­siastical history. He who has with accuracy traced the progress of our holy religion from the days of the apostles to the present time, and marked the introduction of new doctrines, and the rise of the various sects into which the Christian world is divided, is furnished with a criterion within himself, by which to judge of the importance and truth of the many contested doctrines : while he who, without this preparation, shall read a multitude of books on any religious controversy, will be in danger of becom­ing a convert to his last author, if that author possess any tolerable share of art and ingenuity.

b See Stapferi *Theologiae Polemicae Institutiones, 5* tom. 8vo, 1743— 47. Reinhard *Theologia Polemica, 8vo,* 1745. Petavius *De Theo­logicis Dogmatibus,* 3 vols. folio, 1700. Augusti's *Christliche Dog­mengeschichte,* 8vo, 1885; &c.

The student will find it further of advantage to compare his own conclusions with those which have been arrived at and advocated by the most distinguished writers upon sys­tematic theology. He will thus be enabled to verify his own opinions where they are sound, and to modify or correct them where they are erroncous.

***Obs.*** Systems of theology abound both in our own and in other lan­guages. The following appear especially worthy of the attention of the student : **Latin.**—Phil. Melanchthonis ***Loci Communes Theo­logici,*** 1521, denuo edidit Augusti, 8vo, 1821. J. Calvini ***Jnstitutiones Rd. Christ.,*** 1536, denuo ed. Tholuck, 2 tom. 8vo, 1834, 5. J. Gerhardt ***Loci Theologici,*** 1610-2\*2, denuo ed. Cotta, 20 tom. 4to, 1762—81. Fr. Turretini ***Institutio Theol. Elencticae,*** 3 tom. 4to, 1701. D. Hollazii ***Examen Theol. dcroam.*** 1707, denuo ed. Tel­ler, 1763, 4to. J. Cp. Döderleinii ***Institutio Theologi Christ, in capp. relig. theor. nostris temporibus accommodata,*** 1780, ed. 6ta, a Junge, 1797, 8vo. Ric. Buxtcri ***Methodus Theologiae Christ,*** fol. 1681. Herrn. Witsii *De* ***Oeconomia Foederum Dei cum Hominibus*** lib. iv. 4to, 1693. Herrn. Muntinghe ***Pars thedl. Christ, theoretica, 2*** vols. 8vo, 1800. **English.**—Tb. Ridgley’s Body of Divinity, &c. 2 vols, fol. 1731 ; 4 vols 8vo, 1819. Th. Gill's Body of Doctrinal and Prac­tical Divinity, 2 vols. 4to, 1769 ; 3 vols. 8vo, 1796. Tim. Dwight's Theology explained and defended, in a series of Sermons, (many edi­tions). G. Hill's Lectures in Divinity, 2 vols. 8vo, 1821 ; 2 vols. 12mo, 1833. Dick's Lectures on Theology, 4 vols. 8vo. Morren’s Biblical Theology, 8vo, 1835. S. S. Schmucker's Biblical Theo­logy, translated from the Works of Storr and Flatt, 8vo, 2d ed. 1836, (London, reprinted 1839.)

As much of our success, in all theological inquiries, de­pends upon the spirit and temper in which these are pro­secuted, we commend to the attention of the reader the fol-