

THE  
HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD  
OF  
THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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No. 2.

DECEMBER, 1862.

VOL. II.

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LECTURE ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL  
RELIGION, BY PROFESSOR YOUNG.

[The following Lecture was delivered by Professor Young, at the opening of the Session in October. It is published in accordance with the request of several ministers of the church.—EDITOR.]

GENTLEMEN,—As the subject of lecture which has been announced, *the philosophical principles of natural religion*, may, perhaps, be thought ambiguous, I may explain that the special question to be brought before you is: does unassisted reason warrant the assertion of the being and moral perfection of God? The subject is extensive, and I must only occupy a short space of your time; I will therefore dispense with preliminary remarks, and at once address myself to the main enquiry.

Leaving aside in the meantime the question of the Divine perfection, and limiting ourselves to the question of the existence of an intelligent Creator,—all the possible arguments to prove the affirmative can be reduced, according to Kant, to three; which may be described, not exactly in Kant's phraseology, as the argument from the contingency of the world, the argument from final causes, and the argument from our subjective conception of God. "Besides these arguments," says Kant—and my impression is that he is right in his judgment—"there are, and can be, no others." The first, from the contingency of the world, contemplates the world simply as a world,—of what sort is immaterial. Taking no account of the general plan or special adaptations of the cosmical system; disregarding all considerations of order, harmony, and beauty; it seeks, from the bare datum of nature as a reality, to infer a self-existent necessary Being. The second, from final causes, proceeds upon the view of the world as such a world—one, namely, full of order and beauty; and the inference is, that these features have not been the offspring of chance, but that the system which presents them must have had an intelligent author. The last, from the conception which we have of God, or of the Perfect Being, seeks to deduce the objective existence of God from our thinking. All these arguments are valuable; the last specially and preeminently so, yet I wish it to be clearly understood, that I do not regard them as by any means *demonstrative* of the being of God. They are fitted to produce a legitimate conviction—I go so far as to think, an absolutely valid conviction—of the great truth