

You can whisper to him, as the thunder-cloud is bursting overhead: "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth; He toucheth the hills, and they smoke." Who sends the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills? Who causes the grass to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man? Who has clothed the neck of the war horse with thunder, made leviathan to sport in his deeps, tuned the linnet's throat, and given power to the wing of the eagle? Thus you can frame your appeal. Still further, you can send the man with whom you are dealing in the chambers of his own soul. Does he never, it may be in the silent watches of the night, feel himself alone *with God*? Does no consciousness ever come home to him of his dependence on a Higher Power? Is he really in earnest in supposing that his existence is uncaused? that there is not a Creator in whom he lives and moves and has his being? Does he never, in reflecting upon his life, awake to the conviction that he is under the moral government of a Being who is absolutely holy, and who will render to every one according to his deeds? By such questionings and representations you may endeavour to stir the Atheist's soul to the apprehension of God; but if you fail, if his intellectual and moral energies still continue dormant, he must be left to his delusions.

Here I might let the matter rest. And indeed I am conscious that the points to which I am about to refer cannot be discussed in detail to any good purpose before a mixed audience—cannot be satisfactorily discussed at all, except on the basis, and as the ultimate results, of a complete system of metaphysics. Hence I shall not inflict a discussion of them upon you; yet, as you will naturally expect me to be somewhat more explicit regarding the notions of *creation* and of *moral perfection* involved in our conception of the *Perfect Being*, I will endeavour to state—merely to state, and that as briefly as possible—the conclusions on these very difficult topics, in which, after the most earnest thought, I find myself resting. A single word of caution ere I proceed. Should the views which I am about to express be incorrect, the general doctrine that has been delivered will not thereby in the least degree be affected; except thus far—that it will be seen to be a doctrine which I am unable to work out. On these, as on the more special doctrines of revelation, may the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth.

The doctrine of Creation held by the modern Scottish (the Hamiltonian) school, is, that it is impossible positively to conceive creation, and therefore impossible, by any direct act of the mind, to realise the belief of it. I do not mean to deny that Sir William Hamilton denied creation—though his language on the subject is strange, and (as the utterance of a believer in the Bible) hard to be understood; but he certainly held that we cannot positively think or believe creation. Whatever thought or conviction of it we have, is negative: which is just saying, in plain language, that we have no *real* thought or conviction of it at all. Now, adopting the Cartesian argument, I of course reject this doctrine—as indeed I reject the whole Hamiltonian system, root and branch. I think that I find, among the positive conceptions which my mind has in its possession, one to which no adequate interpretation can be given, except such as makes it to be the revelation of what is substantially an exercise of creative energy on the part of the Most High—I mean the conception of cause. Hamilton denies that we have any positive conception of cause. The notion (he would have us believe) is merely a negative impotency of the mind to think any addition being made to the sum of existence in the universe. According to this view, the notion of cause would take account simply of quantity of existence. This is assuredly not a correct statement of my notion of cause. When I speak of the power or efficient energy by the forthgoing of which something is caused, I am doing more than looking at, and comparing, the mere quantum of existence in the universe at two different periods. Assuming that the mind has a positive conception of cause, I observe, next, that the conception is realised in connection with the thought of change. We necessarily think change as due to a cause; in other words, as brought about by