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THE PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

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THE first step towards God originates in a deepened sense of the moral worth and high responsibilities of Man's life. The religion of children, as of some uncultivated and simple tribes, consists in a vague wonder and awe, intermingled with a diffusive feeling of gratitude and trust. They are taught perhaps to blend the idea of God with that of duty; but the association is not in general very vivid, till sorrow or death, or the consequences of heedless transgression, have awakened the mind to profounder reflection on the destination of humanity. While life flows on—in the main innocent and happy—the moral consciousness is tranquil, but it is not quick and operative. Such, however, can rarely be for any length of time, the condition of a dweller on earth. Sorrows and trials are too thickly spread—misfortune and disappointment reach us through too many avenues—to leave any one many