

Creator to preserve religion in the world; and to restrain that freedom of thought which of course in itself is one of the greatest of our natural gifts, and to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses. And let it be observed that neither here nor in what follows shall I have occasion to speak of the revealed body of truths, but only as they bear upon the defence of natural religion. I say that a power possessed of infallibility in religious teaching is happily adapted to be a working instrument in the course of human affairs for smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive intellect; and in saying this, as in the other things that I have to say, it must still be recollected that I am all along bearing in mind my main purpose, which is a defence of myself.

It has been said that reason is the faculty which finds reasons for what we wish to believe, and the saying is true in so far as it implies that there are in every human being emotional and mental tendencies which suggest the premisses of arguments, dispose the lights and shadows in which external facts shall appear, and make conclusions appear to one person to be satisfactorily made out when to another they shall seem resting upon air. I believe