

Eternal spirit, matter stands indebted as well for its existence and its laws, as for its numerous collocations of use and of convenience. We hold that without a Revealed Theology we should not have known of the creation of matter out of nothing, but that by dint of a Natural Theology alone we might have inferred a God from the useful disposition of its parts. It is good to know what be the strong positions of an argument and to keep by them—taking up our intrenchments there—and willing to relinquish all that is untenable. It is not the way to advance but really to discredit the cause of Natural Theology, when set forward by its injudicious defenders to an enterprise above its strength. Nothing satisfactory can be made of those obscure and scholastic generalities by which matter is argued to be incongruous with Eternity; and that therefore, itself originated from nothing, it must have a creative mind for the antecedent not of its harmonies and adaptations alone but of its substantive Being. We should like a firmer stepping-stone than this by which to arrive at the conclusion of a God. For this purpose we would dissever the argument founded on the phenomenon of the mere existence of matter, from the argument founded on the phenomenon of the relations between its parts. The one impresses the understanding just as differently from the other, as a stone of random form lying upon the ground impresses the observer differently from a watch. The mere existence of matter, in itself, indicates nothing. They are its forms and its combinations and its organic structures which alone speak to us