

This matters not. The conclusion is as good the one way as the other—the valid conclusion, if we will but reflect upon it, not of a subtle but of a sound and substantial process of reasoning.

26. And if we can thus infer the agency of design in a watch-maker, though we never saw a watch made—we can on the very same ground infer the agency of design on the part of a world-maker, though we never saw a world made. We concede it to our adversaries, that, when reasoning from the posterior term or consequent to the prior term or antecedent of a sequence, both terms must have been seen by us in conjunction on former occasions—else we are not warranted to infer the one from the other of them. We are aware of the use which they make of this principle. They tell us that we cannot argue from a world to a God—because the world, if an effect, is a singular effect—that we have no experience in the making of worlds, as we may have in the making of watches—that had we seen a world made and a God employed about it, then on being presented with another world, we might have inferred the agency of a God in the creation of it—and this they contend to be the whole length to which our experience can carry us. But they overlook the distinction between what is essential in the consequent, and what is merely circumstantial therein; and it is here that the whole mistake lies. The essential consequent we have seen produced or we have seen in conjunction with its proper antecedent a thousand times—and thus it is, that we should confidently infer a designing artificer from the view