

the same question he carried back to any point or period of duration however remote—or, in other words, might not we dispense with a beginning for the world altogether? Such a consequent as our world, if consequent it really be, would require, it might be admitted, a designing cause or its antecedent. But why recur to the imagination of its being a consequent at all? Why not take for granted the eternity of its being, instead of supposing it the product of another, and then taking for granted the eternity of his being? And, after all, it may be thought, that the eternity of our world is but one gratuitous imagination instead of two—and, as to the difficulty of conceiving, this is a difficulty which we are not freed from by the theory of a God. Can we any more comprehend His past eternity, than we can the past eternity of matter—the everlasting processes of thought any more than the everlasting processes of a material economy—a circulation of feeling and sentiment and purpose and effect that never had commencement in an aboriginal mind; than a circulation of planets, or that orb of revolution which is described by water through the elements of air and earth and ocean, or finally the series of animal and vegetable generations, never having had commencement in an aboriginal mundane system. At this rate, the supposition of an intelligent Creator may only be a shifting of the difficulty, from an eternal Nature to an eternal Author of Nature. If Nature is clearly made out to be a consequent, then it might be admitted, that the adaptations which abound in it point to an intelligent and