

might not have been called upon to make even a single ascent in the path of causation, had the world stood forth to view in the character or aspect of immutability. But instead of this, both history and observation tell of a definite commencement to the present order—or, in other words, they oblige us to regard this order as the posterior term of a sequence; and we, in reasoning on the prior term, just follow the lights of experience when we move upward from the world to an intelligent mind that ordained it. It is this which carries us backward one step from the world to God—and the reason why we do not continue the retrogression beyond God is, that we have not met with an indication of his having had a commencement. In the one case there is a beginning of the present material system forced upon our convictions; and we proceed on the solid ground of experience, when we infer that it begun in the devisings of an antecedent mind. In the other case, the case of the antecedent mind, there is no such beginning forced upon our convictions; and none therefore that we are called upon to account for. It is our part as far as in us lies to explain an ascertained difficulty; but not surely to explain an imagined one. We must have some reason for believing in the existence of a difficulty ere we are called upon to solve it. We have ample reason for regarding this world as a posterior term, and seeking after its antecedent. But we have no such reason for treating this antecedent as a posterior term, and seeking for its prior term in a higher antecedent. The one we see to be a changeable and