

arguments, whether of reason or of testimony, which can be brought to bear upon it. Though natural religion should be indeed the basis, and Christianity but the erection which springs from it—still it may so happen, that from one and the same source there might be extracted a material for the consolidation of both—and so the whole fabric of religion may suffer by our restricting ourselves to a partial instead of a full use of that material. If the testimonies we have for the recency of our world as now constituted, would have been so eagerly seized upon, in behalf of natural theism, had they come to us through the channel of secular or profane history—then, we are not to lose the service of them even as present auxiliaries to our cause, unless it can be shown to us in what way they have become impotent or worthless, by their having descended to us through the channel of sacred history. We thus hold, that in virtue of the artificial process by which the whole argument has been conducted, there has been created what we should call an artificial scarcity of argument for the doctrines of natural religion. For there is no real scarcity. On the firm and frequent stepping-stones of a sustained history, we may rise to the observational evidence of a creation and a Creator—but, by the general practice of our guides and conductors, we are kept at the present stage of our inquiries, from entering upon this path. The fact of creation is strictly an historical one, and is therefore susceptible of being proven by historical evidence, if such is to be