

found. And by all the signatures of valid or incorrupt testimony, we are directed to a place and a people, among whom the registers both of creation and providence were deposited. Yet on the existence of God, as a preliminary question, these leading credentials are kept out of sight—and we are presented instead, with but the secondary or shadowy reflections of them in the oral traditions of other places and other people, or the dying and distant echoes of nations that had been scattered abroad over the face of the world. It is thus that the fundamental demonstrations and doctrines in a course of theology are made to lack of that strength which rightfully belongs to them. We go in pursuit of dim or mythological allusions, to be found in heathen writers; and should we catch at some remote semblance of the Mosaic story, whether in the literature of Greeks or Hindoos, we rejoice over it as if a treasure more precious than all that we possess. Now, whatever semblance may be found there, the substance of this argument is to be found in the succession of Jewish and Christian writers. We ask no special indulgence for them. We should like them to be tested in the same way as all other authors; and, ere they are admitted as the chroniclers of past ages, to pass through the ordeal of the same criticism that they do. It is thus that we would trace by its successive landmarks, what may be called the great central stream of that history which stretches from the commencement of our existing world to the present day—and it is only thus that our minds can be adequately