

history, and demand for them only that they should be believed so far as we have testimony to their authenticity. If a man, after careful examination of their evidences, comes to the conclusion that they are mere fables, then to him their testimony is of no value to prove or illustrate any truth of natural religion. But if he is convinced that they are worthy of credence, then their statements may decide a point about which the light of nature leaves him in uncertainty. In this way the Bible is used by the natural theologian, just as he would employ any curious object in nature, say, the human hand, or the eye. These organs exist, and their mechanism is to be accounted for either with or without a God. And so the Bible exists, and its contents are to be accounted for; and if they clearly evince the agency of a Deity, then we may use them, just as we would use the eye or the hand, to prove or illustrate important truths in natural theology.

But the testimony of the Bible, as to the origin of the world, is most explicit and decided. It declares that "*in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" The obvious meaning of this latter passage is, that the material universe was created out of nothing. (*τα μη φαινόμενα.*) How much more satisfactory this simple and consistent statement, than a volume of abstract argument to prove the non-eternity of the world!

Now, if the testimony of the Scriptures on all other points has been found correct, why should we not receive with unhesitating credence, and even with joy, the sublime announcement with which that volume opens? True, we are not compelled to admit this statement, in order to save Theism from refutation, because geology shows us the commencement of several economies on the globe, which point us to a divine Author. But the doctrine of matter's creation out of nothing gives a desirable completeness to the system.

In looking back upon the subject, which has thus been discussed, too briefly for its merits, but too prolixly for your patience, several important inferences force themselves upon our attention.

And first, it furnishes a satisfactory reply to a well-known objection, otherwise unanswerable, against the argument from design in nature to prove the existence of a Deity. We pre-