

and the opaque matter changed places in the firmament; or the planets, by the eccentricity of their orbits, been subject to such vicissitudes of temperature as would certainly, in our own at least, have entailed destruction both on the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

12. We hold that there is strong evidence for the commencement of our planetary system—though we shall not attempt to expound it at present—and the more, as there is a greatly overpassing evidence for the commencement of the organic systems in our animal and vegetable kingdoms, which are far more replete with the indications of design than is the mechanism of the heavens, as unfolded to us by astronomy. Let us therefore meanwhile assume a beginning for our solar system—and then, though we should not be able to disprove the eternity of matter, or that it had all the laws and properties which we now observe from everlasting—still these laws and properties though perfectly sufficient to account for the working of the planetary mechanism, are not sufficient to account for the original collocation of its parts. They may account for the operation of the machine, but not for the fabrication of it. If we have evidence for its being at one time set up, we are in the profoundest ignorance of any law by which it behoved to be set up according to its present arrangement. Why, for example, should all the luminous matter have been accumulated in the centre? Why should the fountain-head of light and of heat have been throned, as it were, in that place, whence it could emanate its gracious influ-