

history be destroyed, there is no power in the laws of our existing natural philosophy to replace them. Or, in other words, if ever a time was, when the structure and dispositions of matter, under the present economy of things were not—there is no force known in nature, and no combination of forces that can account for their commencement. The laws of nature may keep up the working of the machinery—but they did not and could not set up the machine. The human species, for example, may be upholden, through an indefinite series of ages, by the established law of transmission—but were the species destroyed, there are no observed powers of nature by which it could again be originated. For the continuance of the system and of all its operations, we might imagine a sufficiency in the laws of nature; but it is the first construction of the system which so palpably calls for the intervention of an artificer, or demonstrates so powerfully the fiat and finger of a God.

23. This distinction between nature's laws and nature's collocations is mainly lost sight of in those speculations of geology, the object of which is to explain the formation of new systems emerging from the wreck of old ones. They proceed on the sufficiency of nature's laws for building up the present economy of things out of the ruins of a former economy, which the last great physical catastrophe on the face of our earth had overthrown. Now, in these ruins, viewed as materials for the architecture of a renovated world, there did reside all those forces, by which the processes of the existing economy are upholden; but the geolo-