

the alleged catastrophes have been brought about—whether by fire from the centre, or by ocean heaved from its old resting-place, and, in one mighty resistless tide, sweeping, as with the besom of destruction, those continents on which the animals of a former era had for thousands of ages held their unmolested habitation. It is enough if by one catastrophe whole species or genera have been extinguished; and if by an indefinite number of them throughout past eternity all the genera at one time in the world might now have disappeared. The question still is unresolved, what the origin, or whence the existence of our present races? Not by spontaneous generation, we are taught by natural science, in one of its most authoritative lessons. Not as we know from another of its lessons, by the transmutation of old species into new ones. Not by any combination that we have ever observed of all the known powers and principles in creation—and thus are we enabled to refer those things in nature which of all others have most exquisite and manifold collocations—the most certainly to a definite origin, the most nearly to the finger of a Creator.

7. There is another strong point in the argument; and which has been turned with great effect by theistical writers to the service of the cause. In reasoning on the perfect symmetry and commodiousness of the animal machine, there is a certain infidel evasion that has been made from the argument. It has been affirmed that most of the alleged fitnesses, in the construction of an organic being, are not only indispensable to comfort but