

kind, afforded by fossil organic remains, than I might have done, without such specific directions respecting the source from which my arguments are to be derived. I know not how I can better fulfil the object thus proposed, than by attempting to show that the extinct species of Animals and Vegetables which have, in former Periods, occupied our Planet, afford in their fossil remains, the same evidences of contrivance and design that have been shown by Ray, Derham, and Paley, to pervade the structure of existing Genera and species of organized Beings.

From the high preservation in which we find the remains of animals and vegetables of each geological formation, and the exquisite mechanism which appears in many fossil fragments of their organization, we may collect an infinity of arguments, to show that the creatures from which all these are derived were constructed with a view to the varying conditions of the surface of the Earth, and to its gradually increasing capabilities of sustaining more complex forms of organic life, advancing through successive stages of perfection.*

* When we speak of different forms of animal life, as possessing various degrees of *perfection*, we do not impute to any creature the presence of absolute *imperfection*, we mean only, that animals of more simple structure discharge a lower office in the gradually descending scale of animated beings. All perfection has relation to the object proposed to be attained by each form of organization that occurs in nature, and nothing can be called imperfect which fully accomplishes the end pro-