

of every department of natural history : both helping us in the arrangement of known objects, and in the interpretation of new phenomena. To form an adequate notion of the importance of this law, we have only to bear in mind how it enabled Cuvier to reassemble the scattered organs of many beings of a former world—to determine their place in the scale of animated nature—and to reason on their functions with as much clearness as if they were themselves still living before him.

In passing from one order of beings to another as they stand arranged in a museum of comparative anatomy, we see a continued repetition of the same organs, yet in each successive instance we find them changed in a greater or less degree in their proportions and manner of adjustment. This most striking fact bears directly on the argument for design. “Whenever we find a general plan pursued, yet with such variations in it as are, in each case, required by the particular exigency of the subject to which it is applied, we possess, in such a plan and such adaptation, the strongest evidence that can be afforded of intelligence and design; an evidence which the most completely excludes every other hypothesis.” This view of the argument admits of endless illustrations. To each man those instances are the best that spontaneously offer themselves to his mind. The real difficulty is to teach men first to enter on such trains of thought, and to shake off that torpor in which their senses seem often to be steeped. Paley’s instances are well put, and full of meaning: I will endeavour to add one or two familiar examples to them, though at the risk of extending this note to an unreasonable length.