

before the time when a new and nobler creation than those previously occupying the earth was to be placed upon it. Desolating as this agency must have appeared, and actually was, at the time, yet who can doubt, when we see the ultimate fruits of it, that its origin was divine benevolence?

In the ultimate results of aqueous inundations at the present day, we can trace the same benevolent design. Those floods do, indeed, produce partial evils; nay, life, as well as property, often falls a prey to them. But they produce those alluvial soils which are more prolific of vegetation than any other on the globe. Who has not heard of the fertility of the banks of the Nile, the Niger, the Ganges, the Amazon, and the Mississippi, all of them the fruit of inundations? Truly, such floods as these may be said to *clap their hands* in praise of the divine goodness.

*My sixth geological argument for the divine benevolence is derived from the existence of volcanoes.*

The first impression made on the mind by the history of volcanic action is, that its effects are examples rather of vindictive justice than of benevolence. And such is the light in which they are regarded by Mr Gisborne, an able English divine, in his 'Testimony of Natural to Revealed Religion.' He looks, indeed, upon all the disturbances that have taken place in the earth's crust as evidence of a fallen condition of the world, as mementoes of a former penal infliction upon a guilty race. And aside from the light which geology casts upon the subject, this would be a not improbable conclusion. Take for an example the case of volcanoes and earthquakes.

A volcano is an opening made in the earth's crust by internal heat, which has forced melted or heated matter through the vent. An earthquake is the effect of the confined gases and vapours, produced by the heat upon the crust. When the volcano, therefore, gets vent, the earthquake always ceases. But the latter has generally been more destructive of life and property than the former. Where one city has been destroyed by lava, like Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae, twenty have been shaken down by the rocking and heaving of earthquakes. The records of ancient as well as modern times abound with examples of these tremendous catastrophes. Pre-eminent on the list is the city of Antioch. Imagine the inhabitants of that great city, crowded with strangers on a festival occasion,