

man. How much of evil may be imputed to his perversion of the gifts of Providence will be considered in another place, as will also those cases in which evil seems inseparable from the original arrangements of the world. All that I am now concerned to prove is, that, in a vast majority of instances, we see the marks of benevolent design and benevolent operation in the arrangements of nature.

This position is established, in the first place, by the fact that the design of every natural contrivance is to produce happiness.

To show that such is the case, by an appeal to facts, would be, in truth, to write the history of every natural process, and show its design. But it will be sufficient to consider only such cases as appear most decidedly to militate against my position, and to show that even these are not designed to cause evil or suffering.

How does it happen, then, you may enquire, that evil is the result of a multitude of contrivances and processes in nature? It is an incidental effect, I answer; that is, an effect happening aside from the main design of the contrivance. Take a few illustrations.

No one can doubt that the law of gravity is essential to the preservation and comfort of the world, and to the harmonious motions of the heavenly bodies. Yet how often does it give rise to frightful accidents to men and animals! But when they are crushed by falling bodies, or by falling themselves, who imagines this to be the design of gravitation? How clear that its real object is beneficial, and that the evil resulting from it is unavoidable in a world constituted like ours! Why the world is not constituted differently, is an inquiry which men may try to answer; but an answer is not important to my present object.

Take an example from the organic world. Every one is aware that without a nervous system in animals there would be no sensibility, nor sensation, and, of course, no enjoyment; and without these, animals would be unconscious of danger, and would not guard against it, nor withdraw from it. We are sure, therefore, that these two objects are the grand design of the nervous system, and, of course, it is a benevolent design. But the nervous system causes a great deal of suffering as well as pleasure. Obviously, however, this is only an incidental