

ARTICLE III.

OF THE NATURAL PROOFS OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

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HAVING in the last number of this Review, offered some thoughts upon the constitution of spiritual beings, as exemplified in the inhabitants of our globe, in accordance with a purpose there intimated, we proceed now to consider the question, in which above all others, such beings are interested; viz. that of their continued existence, after the destruction of the corporeal frames with which, in the present state, they are so intimately connected. In the prosecution of this inquiry, our attention will be directed more especially to the spiritual nature or soul of man, as it is that, whose destinies more immediately concern us. However gratifying to our curiosity it might be, to know what becomes of the more humble endowment of spirit, allotted to each one of the lower animals, on the dissolution of their bodies, such knowledge, it is probable, would have no direct bearing upon human interests, and consequently be of comparatively little value.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" has been the great question and too often the despairing question, of the innumerable multitudes of our race, from the time when the first human being looked abroad over the earth, down to the present hour. Priests have taught the doctrine of a future life; poets have sung of it, and philosophers have labored to demonstrate it; but still as each new generation has arisen upon that which preceded it, the question has been again and again repeated, with the same eager interest, and the same uncertain and unsatisfying results. The earliest regular treatise, which has come down to us, on this subject, is the *Phaedo* of Plato. It was written about four hundred years previous to the commencement of the Christian era. It is in the form of a dialogue, and although composed by Plato, is supposed to embody the arguments of Socrates, his master, whom he makes the principal of the interlocutors. It is a highly elaborate production, uniting to a clearness and vigor of thought rarely equalled, the most finished graces of diction. Cicero, who was a profound admirer of Plato, makes one of the characters, in his *Tusculan Questions* (I. 11, 24), referring to this work, say: "evolve diligenter ejus eum librum, qui est de animo; amplius quod desideres, nihil erit."

The composition is dramatic in its character, and the scene is laid in the prison of Socrates, where, condemned to drink the hemlock for having corrupted, as it was said, the Athenian youth by his philosophy—more especially by teaching them disrespect for the ancient divinities of their country, and persuading them to substitute new ones—he is waiting the return of the sacred galley, for the execution of his sentence. Under these afflictive circumstances, his friends and disciples gather around him to express their grief and their sympathy, and to offer whatever of consolation his situation may admit. To their surprise they find him calm and cheerful, exhibiting, in his manner and conversation, the same undisturbed serenity which they had been accustomed so much to admire in him, under the ordinary trials and vicissitudes of life. Instead of administering the aid and consolations which they have come to offer, they are soon seated in the attitude of disciples, drinking in, as usual, the lessons of wisdom that proceed from the lips of their great teacher. On the morning of the last day, after the approach of the sacred vessel returning from Delos had been announced, perceiving that his bravery and firmness were still unshaken, they beg to be informed by what considerations he is able to maintain this equanimity, this lofty elevation of soul, so superior to the circumstances by which he is surrounded. In reply, he assures them, that his support comes from the belief that, on departing this life, he shall enter upon a far higher and more glorious existence—a belief which not only takes away all dread and fear of death, but awakens within him the liveliest desire to lay aside the encumbrance of the body, and commence that endless progress in virtue and knowledge, for which he thought the soul was destined. Again, they desire to know the grounds of this belief, which is so consolatory to him, and which, if well founded, would not only enable them to meet death with like equanimity, but also serve to mitigate their grief under the irreparable loss they were about to sustain in his removal from them. He then proceeds to unfold, in a series of familiar discourses, the reasons which inspired his own mind with the delightful hope of immortality, and which, if duly considered, he thought could not fail to awaken a similar hope in theirs. He argues the great truth,

1. From the capacity and desire of the soul for knowledge beyond what, in the present life, is attainable. All our knowledge in this life is phenomenal. Of things, we know nothing, and can know nothing. We may note the changes which take place within us. We may observe the events which are occurring around us. We may learn the order of these changes and these events. We may ascertain their conditions, their relations, their connections. We may resolve the

particular into the general, and from the general we may deduce the particular. But we cannot trace the phenomena back to the causes in which they originate, the essences from which they are evolved. Now the human mind is not satisfied with this merely relative and finite knowledge. It seeks for something higher and nobler. It aspires to grasp the absolute and the infinite, to comprehend things in their essence as well as their attributes, to know events in their causes as well as in their connections and their order; in a word, to penetrate into the depths of being, and there, beneath the ever-varying appearances, to recognise and apprehend the unchanging realities upon which they depend. This, however, it can never do, so long as it remains shut in on all sides by the body, with no other inlets to knowledge than consciousness and the five senses.

Nor is this all. In the acquisition of those kinds of knowledge which lie within the reach of our present faculties, we meet with various impediments and hindrances, arising from our connection with the body. A large part of our time and strength is necessarily employed in making provision for its constantly returning wants, so that we have but little of either left for the labors of investigation. Its weaknesses, diseases, and infirmities also frequently disqualify us for that high intellectual effort which is necessary for the discovery and apprehension of truth. Moreover, the various passions and desires growing out of our corporeal natures, exert such an influence upon the mind, so blind its perceptions, distort its views, and bias its judgments, that we can rarely place full confidence in its most cautious decisions.

But if the soul was made for knowledge, as its desires and capacities plainly indicate, and if in this life, owing to the restraints, impediments and hindrances of the body, it is unable to arrive at it, then it must be destined to survive the body, and to have another and higher life, in which it shall be freed from the clogs and connections at present encumbering it.

2. From the law of contraries. These, in nature, mutually terminate in and produce one another. Sleep begets vigilance, and vigilance sleep. Rest prepares for labor, and labor for rest. Growth leads to decay, and decay to new growth. Beauty springs from ugliness, and ugliness from beauty. Right grows out of wrong, and wrong out of right. Heat terminates in cold, and cold in heat; light in darkness, and darkness in light; unity in plurality, and plurality in unity; simplicity in complexity, and complexity in simplicity; strength in weakness, and weakness in strength; health in sickness, and sickness in health. In like manner life, leading to and terminating in death, death must, in turn, lead to and terminate in life. But this new life

cannot come from the body that decays and is soon wholly resolved into the elements from which it was formed. It must come, then, from the soul; and the soul must therefore survive death, must be immortal.

3. From the reminiscences of a previous existence, which the soul brings with it, into the present life. Every one is conscious of many ideas which he has not received through the medium of the senses, which he has not arrived at by any process of the imagination or the reason, which he has not acquired in any manner whatever, but which are immediately and spontaneously suggested by the mind itself. Such are our notions of the relations of number and quantity, which, expressed in language, we call axioms. Such are our conceptions of the necessary relations existing between matter and space, property and substance, cause and effect, God and the universe. Such are our apprehensions of right and wrong, of ought and ought not, of truth and justice and duty. These and many other similar ideas, suggested directly by the reason, and not derived through the senses, were believed, by Plato, to be the reminiscences of a former life—parts of that knowledge which the soul had acquired previous to its entering the body, but of which it retained, after that event, only certain dim and shadowy recollections. Indeed, according to the teaching of the great philosopher, that process by which the mind arrives at the truths of arithmetic and geometry, or by which it, in any instance, enlarges and perfects its own knowledge, is only the recalling of forgotten ideas—the recovering of what it once possessed, but has since lost through its connection with the body. Now these forgotten truths, which the mind thus brings with it into the present life, show that it must have had an existence previous to the commencement of that life, and afford ground for the presumption that it will also continue to exist after that life shall have ended.

4. From the simple and indivisible nature of the soul. It is only things compounded, gross and palpable, things which address the senses, which can be seen and felt and handled, that undergo dissolution. Of this kind are the different bodies formed of matter. They are continually changing. They do not remain the same, either in form or substance, for any two successive moments. The particles of which they are composed are in constant motion—passing continually from one body to another, without being permanently connected with any—entering, each moment, into new combinations, which are no sooner formed than laid aside for others, destined in turn to give place to still others. Whatever has such a nature, whatever is composed of such elements, must necessarily be mutable, must necessarily undergo change, decay, dissolution. But that, on the contrary, which is

immaterial and indivisible, which cannot be seen or felt or handled, which does not address any of the senses, and which makes itself known only to the reason, that must be unchangeable, indissoluble, eternal. Such are truth, and goodness, and beauty. Such are duration, extension, and number. And such, too, is the soul, which is alone capable of apprehending these ideas, and which, like them, must be always the same—incapable of change, exempt from all liability to decay, beyond the possibility of dissolution, immaterial, immutable, immortal.

5. From the essential vitality of the soul. The body is, by itself, dead. It derives all its life, all its activity, all its sensibility, from the spirit which pervades and animates it. When this is withdrawn, the vital phenomena immediately cease to be manifested, and the body, like any other portion of matter, yielding to the power of the elements, is soon resolved into its original atoms. The case is analogous to that of temperature, which is not an essential property of bodies, but depends upon the heat or caloric diffused through them. When this escapes, they lose all their warmth, and are no longer capable of awakening any of the sensations dependent upon that quality. But although the bodies have become thus changed from the escape of the heat which pervaded them, this latter principle remains unaltered. It is still heat, and, as such, retains all its calorific properties. Nor can it, by any possibility, lose these properties. They are inherent. They belong to it essentially, and must therefore continue to belong to it until changed in its nature by the same power that created it. Were caloric to become cold, from that moment it would cease to be caloric. So is it with the soul. Possessing a living nature, being itself life and the source of life to the body, it cannot die. As material substances become cold from the loss of caloric, so the body dies from the loss of the spirit. But the spirit still lives and must continue to live so long as it may please God to preserve it in being. Dependent for its living powers on no outward causes, it can lose them from no outward changes. It can lose them only by losing its existence.

“Vital in all its parts,
It can but by annihilating die.”

Such are the reasonings by which Socrates, the wisest of uninspired mortals, the pride and glory of his own age and the admiration of all succeeding time, in the absence of that brighter and purer light which Christianity sheds upon the destinies of the race, lifted up his own faith and that of his disciples to the sublime truth of the soul's immortality.

Though not amounting, in his own estimation, to an absolute proof of the doctrine, he thought them sufficient, not only to deprive death of all its terrors, but to awaken in the mind of a good man, when approaching that event, the calm and cheerful hope of a better life. Such did he, at that moment, look forward to. He trusted that he was about to exchange the society of mortals for that of the gods, and that the mysteries pertaining to his own being and the being of the universe around him, which in this life he had endeavored in vain to penetrate, would thenceforward be laid open to him. He also thought these arguments were sufficient to impose upon every one the duty of cultivating his own spiritual nature, and preparing his soul, by the adornment of every virtue, for the more glorious existence awaiting it. In the neglect of this, what was intended by the gods as the most precious of all their boons, might prove to be, in fact, far from a blessing.

In reviewing the reasons which are thus presented as the ground of belief in a future life, it should be remembered that since the time of Socrates great advances have been made in knowledge of the real and actual in every department of nature. At that epoch there were able mathematicians, acute dialecticians, subtle metaphysicians, but there were none who had any just ideas of things really existing—of the properties of matter, of the constitution of vegetable and animal bodies, of the form, structure, and physical arrangements of our world, or of the magnitudes, distances, and motions of the innumerable other worlds with which ours is more or less intimately connected. In respect to all these branches of positive knowledge, the philosophers of that day were mere children. They had not yet entered the true path of inquiry. Of the real character of the things by which they were surrounded, and of the world in which they lived, they were almost totally ignorant. It is only by recollecting this general fact, that we are able to account for the strange confounding of mere attributes, and abstract conceptions even, with actual existences, which we so frequently observe in their reasonings. Could they have brought their ideas to the simple but sure test of experiment, as we are now able to bring so large a portion of ours, they would not have suffered these blemishes to mar the perfection and beauty of their processes. We may add, that in presenting the above arguments, we have endeavored to give each with whatever additional clearness or force it may have gained from the light thrown upon it by the present more advanced state of the sciences. Justice, not less to the author than to the argument, required that we should do this.

The first and by far the most important consideration adduced in proof of the soul's immortality, is its inextinguishable desire and un-

bounded capacity for knowledge. There is perhaps no one who does not, at times, feel that this fact alone is a sufficient reason for belief in the doctrine. When he considers the narrow sphere of his own immediate knowledge, and the vast unknown by which he is everywhere surrounded, when he reflects upon the nature, origin, and destinies of his being, when he contemplates the wonderful displays of power, wisdom, and goodness that are seen in every part of the material universe, and thinks of the greatness of that almighty Being of whose glorious perfections these visible and tangible forms are but the hidings, when the desire to look into the impenetrable mysteries which lie above, beneath, and around him, has acquired all the strength of a passion, so that he would fain give up his present existence and close his eyes forever upon all material things for one glance into the spirit-world, then he feels the full force of the argument; then the hope of immortality, for a time, burns brightly within him; for he thinks it impossible that an infinitely wise and good Being should have endowed his soul with capacities for no object, and awakened within it desires never to be satisfied. When, however, other subjects have, at length, engaged his attention, and this exaltation of intellect and feeling has passed away, he finds the strength of his convictions materially abated; and when, further, he considers how many of the powers and faculties connected with his bodily organization and designed to fit him for the duties of his present existence, are never fully employed, and how few of the hopes and expectations that are continually arising in this life are ever realized, he comes finally to doubt whether the argument should be regarded as having any bearing upon the question at issue.

But whatever difficulty there may be in determining the precise weight due to the consideration of the soul's unlimited desires and capabilities, there can be no doubt that it is justly entitled to a place among the proofs of a future life. Its proper place, however, we think is only a subordinate one. It should be employed as a corroborative, and not as a leading proof. Taken by itself, it has little or no weight. Every power of the human mind finds, in this life, the necessary objects and scope for its full exercise; and although God holds himself responsible for the truth of our rational and our moral perceptions, he has in no manner guaranteed to us the gratification of our desires, especially when directed to objects beyond the reach of our faculties. Viewed as an independent argument, moreover, its force is greatly weakened, if not wholly destroyed, by the consideration that were the same reasoning to be employed with reference to the expectations of this life, it would inevitably lead to false conclusions; for here, as all must admit, what we really do, is very far from being in proportion to

our ability; and what we actually attain is still further from equalling our desires. But if the probability of a future life of progress in knowledge and virtue, can be established on other grounds, then the natural qualifications of the soul for such progress, not only remove all inherent objections which may be supposed to lie against the doctrine, but become a source of important corroborative proof. In this humbler capacity of mere subsidiary evidence, we shall find occasion for making use of the argument in a more advanced part of our essay.

The second argument, derived from the law of contraries, so obviously rests upon an imaginary basis, that it scarcely requires notice. There is, in truth, no such law as the one supposed. It does not hold, even of the few cases adduced to illustrate it, although differing essentially from that to which it is applied. Sleep does not always beget vigilance, or vigilance sleep. Strength does not always end in weakness, or weakness in strength. Beauty does not always terminate in ugliness, or ugliness in beauty. Right does not spring from wrong, or wrong grow out of right. Within the earth's shadow, darkness never changes into light. Beyond the reach of the solar beam, cold never gives place to heat. It is not easy to understand how examples such as these should have seemed to afford proof of a future life; and yet we find the argument pressed with an earnestness which could only arise from a conviction of its importance.

The third argument, drawn from the reminiscences of a previous existence, which the soul brings with it into the present life, rests, like the preceding one, upon a foundation purely imaginary. As presented by the author, it owes all its plausibility to an ingenious confounding of the suggestions of reason with those of memory, which, though arising in a somewhat similar manner, are nevertheless, in their nature and origin, essentially different. This mode of arguing the probability of a future life seems to have been suggested by the doctrine of metempsychosis, which Plato received from the Pythagoreans, and which was brought by them from the banks of the Nile. Believing that every human soul had occupied, in succession, many different bodies previous to the commencement of its present life, he would naturally seek for the evidences of this in impressions, which might be left upon the memory; and what so easy to be mistaken for such impressions, by one looking for them, as those subtle ideas which spring immediately from our rational natures—of which we find ourselves already in possession, but which we cannot trace to any outward source. Detached from its connection with the Egyptian doctrine, and adorned by the imagery and clothed in the language of poetry, the original idea of the

Grecian philosopher has furnished the basis for one of the most beautiful conceptions to be found in modern verse.

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar;
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.”

The fourth reason assigned for believing in the continued existence of the soul after death, is its indivisibility. This seems to have been a favorite ground of argument with nearly all those who have written upon the subject. Cicero adopts it, and bishop Butler, in his profound treatise on the Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature, makes use of it. And yet we think it quite as difficult, nay, far more difficult of proof, than the conclusion which they have drawn from it. We believe, as we have endeavored to show in a former Article, that all analogy is opposed to the idea of the unity or simplicity of the soul, while we think there are many and important facts which clearly and unequivocally point to its continued existence after the dissolution of the body. Plato endeavors to make good his premises by removing the soul from the class of things to that of mere abstract conceptions, such as the ideas of truth, beauty, justice, and equality, which, having no real existence, are incapable of undergoing change. Bishop Butler seeks to do the same by an argument drawn from the phenomena of consciousness, first proposed, we believe, by Dr. Clark, and about as conclusive as another remarkable argument of that distinguished metaphysician and divine, in which he proves the existence and attributes of Deity from the necessary ideas of infinite duration and space. Cicero does not attempt to prove the simplicity of the living agent, but affirms it to be a truth so clear that, “nisi plane in phisicis plumbei sumus,” we cannot doubt it.

But, even admitting the premises upon which this argument rests, the conclusion by no means follows. Were the oneness and indivisibility of the human soul to be demonstrated, that fact alone would not prove its immortality. It would indeed be incapable, on such a supposition, of undergoing dissolution; but what, we ask, even in that case, should prevent its annihilation? Having accomplished the objects for which it was created, through the instrumentality of the body, why

should it be continued in existence after the destruction of that body?

The fifth and last consideration urged in proof of a future life, viz. that of the essential and necessary vitality of the soul, viewed merely as an explanation or illustration, is both striking and beautiful. As an argument, however, it has no weight. It in fact begs the entire question. To say that the soul is essentially vital, is the same thing as to say that it cannot die; and nothing beyond this can be intended even by those who affirm its immortality in the strongest sense which that word can express. Nay, most persons would be satisfied with much less than this; their ideas of the nature and destinies of the human soul only requiring that its existence should be continued through the will and power of God, and not from any absolute and inherent necessity growing out of its constitution. The argument of the great master, rendered into the syllogism of his illustrious disciple, stands thus: whatever is inherently and essentially vital cannot die; the soul is inherently and essentially vital; therefore the soul cannot die. The major premise, though in form regular, is in reality defective. It does not express the result of any inductive process, nor does it affirm either an intuitive or demonstrative truth. It is simply an identical proposition, and, as such, cannot be made the ground of any legitimate deduction. The minor premise, however, contains within itself all that is necessary to the argument, and would, alone, be sufficient to justify the conclusion, could its truth be, in any manner, demonstrated. But unfortunately this, in our present state of knowledge, is impossible. The supposed analogy between the soul and heat, or between the soul and any other principle or agent with which we are acquainted, is altogether too remote and shadowy to be of any avail towards such a demonstration.

From the foregoing examination it appears that of all the arguments made use of in the *Phaedo* of Plato for establishing the probability of a future life, only one can be regarded as having any real bearing upon the subject; and even this, as we have seen, is fitted, in its character, to be employed rather in corroboration of other and stronger evidence, than as a separate and independent proof. Taken by itself, it must be admitted to have but little weight. How then, we may ask, did these arguments produce so much effect upon the mind of Socrates? How were they able to inspire in him so strong a conviction, so lively a hope of immortality? In seeking for an answer to this question, it should be remembered that several of the considerations adduced, although they have no importance in our eyes, had much in his. This is especially true of the numerous class of ideas which we find in

the mind, but cannot trace to an origin in the senses. These, to us, prove nothing. They are the spontaneous suggestions of the mind itself. To him, however, they proved much. They were the reminiscences of a former life. They furnished incontestible evidence that the soul had somewhere had an existence previous to the commencement of its present life; and why should it not continue to exist after the termination of that life? The second and fourth arguments, also, derived plausibility at least, if not weight, from that doctrine of the Platonic philosophy which resolved all essences into certain mathematical types and forms, and thus led to the confounding, as we have seen in these arguments, of real existences with mere abstract ideas and conceptions.

For a full solution of the problem, however, we think it is necessary to look further than this. We do not believe that the hope of a future life, in the mind of either Plato or Socrates, in reality sprang from the considerations with which, in the *Phaedo*, we find it connected. We believe that, on the contrary, it had its origin in the intuitions of their moral natures, coupled with that instinctive desire of immortality, which may indeed be weakened by a life of sensuality, or even extinguished altogether by the consciousness of ill desert and the dread of apprehended punishment, but which is always strong in the minds of great and good men. Springing from this source, the faith grew up within them, nourished and strengthened continually by high aspirations, by pure thoughts, and by noble deeds, until at length it acquired the fixed and permanent character of an original principle of belief. For what we have been long accustomed to regard as true, becomes to us as real and seems as natural as if it were a part of the visible constitution of nature. Indeed, the word natural, as applied to the phenomena of the external world, has quite as much reference to our habits of conception as to anything in the phenomena themselves. Had they been different, or had the order of their succession been different, they would have seemed to us as natural as they do now. These arguments, therefore, of Plato and Socrates were not, as we think, the real ground of their faith, but only reasons invented by them for justifying a belief which they found already existing, and which they desired to support and strengthen.

In following the history of this question, the treatise which next attracts our attention is that of Cicero, "the best or second orator that to the memory of man is known." It was written between three and four centuries after the *Phaedo* of Plato, and only about fifty years previous to the appearance in our world of Him who, by a divine revelation, brought life and immortality to light. It is not an original work,

nor does it claim to be regarded as such, but only a translation into the Latin tongue, of a portion of the Athenian philosophy, perfected and adorned, according to the invariable habit of the Romans, as Cicero informs us, of improving whatever they adopted from the Greeks. The argument is substantially the same as that of the *Phaedo*. One or two considerations, which the more advanced knowledge of his times had shown to be without weight, are omitted, and others are introduced to supply their place. The several topics are also disposed with greater rhetorical skill, and are, moreover, copiously illustrated by passages from Statius, Ennius, and others of his favorite poets. The argument is thus addressed to the imagination and the taste as well as the understanding, and the reader is lured onward not more by the interest of the theme than by the graceful and attractive manner in which it is treated. The work presents a fine example of that copiousness of illustration and elegance of diction which, according to the Roman orator, is the chief end of all philosophy. "*Hanc enim perfectam philosophiam semper judicavi, quae de maximis quaestionibus copiosae posset ornatique dicere.*" At the same time it must be admitted that there is less of that straightforward earnestness, and of that charming simplicity, which are so attractive in the original production.

The only argument of any importance added to those of the *Phaedo*, is that derived from the universal prevalence of a belief in the immortality of the soul, especially among the nations of antiquity, who, living nearer to the origin of our race, may be supposed to have retained the ideas and sentiments with which the first human beings were created, in a less corrupted state. It is based upon the assumed premise, that whatever obtains the general credence of mankind, is the immediate dictate of nature, and consequently must be regarded as having the divine sanction. "*Omni autem in re, consensus omnium gentium lex naturae putanda est.*" This universal belief in a future life, is not the effect of education, nor is it the result of any process of reasoning; it is an original law of our nature. All men are so constituted that they have an instinctive hope and expectation of surviving death. The feeling is especially strong in the noblest and most gifted minds. "*Inhaeret in mentibus quasi saeculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis et existit maxime et apparet facillime.*" It is a revelation, in the soul, of the divine will and purposes concerning its destinies, and, as such, is entitled to as full confidence as the dictates of reason or the perceptions of sense.

Were such the true origin of the very general belief of mankind in a future life, the conclusion which is drawn from it would be irresistible.

But unfortunately for the argument, there are other and less authoritative sources, from which it may have sprung. Lord Bacon, in treating of the different errors which are wont to preoccupy the minds of men to the prejudice of truth, divides them into several classes, one of which he denominates "idols of the Tribe." The ideas and opinions belonging to this class affect alike the entire race. They grow out of common features in the constitutions of men and common circumstances in the conditions under which they are placed. They have their origin especially in the limited and imperfect character of our rational and perceptive faculties, and in the influence which the various passions and desires exert over them. Hence the almost universal belief in signs and omens and dreams, in good and bad fortune, in lucky and unlucky days, in astrology, in vaticination, in spectres, in witches, and in demons. Hence, too, the various forms of superstition which, in the absence of true religion, have so constantly usurped its place in the minds of men. Universality of belief is therefore not alone sufficient evidence of the truth of any opinion. It may have sprung immediately from the intuitions of our rational or moral natures; it is then true. It may have been legitimately drawn from facts taken in connection with those intuitions; it is then also true. Or it may have had its origin in some one of the sources above referred to, and be only an idol of the tribe. In the latter case it may indeed be true, but the universality of its belief affords no evidence of it. For however widely or however long it may have received the homage of truth, it is not the less an idol on that account.

The general principle, therefore, "*omnium consensus naturae vox est,*" which the Roman orator assumes as the basis of his argument, requires important modifications and restrictions. Without these it is not true; and, if adopted and reasoned upon as such, would, in numerous instances, inevitably lead to false conclusions.

But notwithstanding the want of universality in the principle, may it not hold in reference to the case before us, and so be all that is necessary to the argument? Is not the general belief of mankind in the immortality of the soul, in fact an immediate dictate of nature? We think not. We think it has neither the directness, nor the force, nor the universality of an original principle of belief. This we suppose to be sufficiently evident from the want of proof, which has been so generally felt, and which philosophers, moralists and divines have so frequently endeavored to supply. No one ever thought of proving or requiring proof that two and two make four, that the whole is greater than any of its parts, that what we see or feel or gain a knowledge of by any of the senses, actually exists, that every change is produced by

some cause, that virtue is more engaging than vice, innocence more lovely than guilt, fidelity more deserving than treachery. These and numerous other similar truths, force the assent of the mind immediately on being presented to it. Any attempt to demonstrate them would be alike useless and futile. They are necessarily involved in every process of reasoning, and are, consequently, incapable of deriving support from any. They have their foundation in the mind itself, and are so firmly planted, that they equally spurn the aid and defy the attempts of all logic. Such surely is not the character of that earnest desire, that trembling hope, that prevailing expectation of a future life which, in every age, has been the highest attainment of those who, aided by the simple light of nature, have investigated the subject most seriously and most profoundly.

The true explanation of the phenomenon under consideration, must be sought, as we think, partly in that instinctive love of existence, that "dread and horror of falling into nought," which is natural to man, and which was designed in the framing of his constitution to prevent under any circumstances self-destruction, and partly in the presages of conscience, taken in connection with the moral government of God, which he sees plainly commenced in this life, but of which the completion can take place only in another. So far as the belief in question has its origin in the former of these sources, it is a mere idol of the tribe, and the wide extent to which it has at all times received homage, confers upon it no title to respect. So far however as it comes from the latter source, its deduction we think is legitimate, and the fact of the almost universal prevalence of the doctrine, must be regarded as of real weight in establishing the probability of a future life. But of this we shall have occasion to speak further on.

Passing over a period of nearly two thousand years, we propose next to examine the argument of bishop Butler, contained in the first chapter of his immortal work on the Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of nature, to which allusion has already been made. It is not easy to conceive a more perfect contrast to the Tusculan questions than is presented by this work. Destitute of all ornament, and addressed purely to the understanding and the reason, it has little interest for readers who require to be allured by the charm of imagery, or the attractions of style. In the conduct of this noble defence of religion, no aid is sought from any of the lighter powers of the mind, but on the contrary, they are sternly rebuked away, as altogether impertinent and out of place in discussions pertaining to so grave a theme. At the same time there are evinced a precision of thought and comprehensiveness of view, as well as a pow-

er of delicate analysis, of subtle discrimination, and of rigid logical deduction which were unknown to the Roman orator, and which make it no boy's play to grapple in argument with the English theologian and philosopher.

We think, however, it must be admitted that the author of the *Analogy* is less successful, perhaps less fortunate in his efforts to demonstrate the doctrine of a future life, than in any other portion of his great work. Both of the main arguments employed by him, are no less applicable to the lower animals than to man, and just as much prove the immortality of the living principle connected with the minutest insect or humblest infusoria, as of the human soul. It is not a little remarkable that this fact which in reality converts the attempted proof into a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principles from which it is drawn, should not have awakened in the cautious mind of Butler a suspicion of their soundness, and led him to seek other means of establishing the truth in question. These he would have found, and as we think, far better suited to his purpose, in the facts and principles so ably and so fully set forth in his chapters on the moral government of God, and on probation considered as a means of discipline and improvement. Indeed, we have always been of the opinion that these two chapters contain the only real and solid grounds for belief in a future life which the work presents; the considerations adduced in the one particularly appropriated to that object, serving at furthest only to answer objections to the doctrine. But let us examine his arguments.

The first is from the analogy of nature. Without the explanations and illustrations by which it is accompanied, it is simply this. "From our being born into the world, in the helpless and imperfect state of infancy, and having arrived from thence to mature age, we find it to be a general law of nature in our own species, that the same creatures, the same individuals, should exist in degrees of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment and suffering, in one period of their being greatly different from those appointed to them in another period of it. And in other creatures the same law holds." "Therefore, that we are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose) from our present as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature; according to a natural order or appointment of the very same kind with that we have experienced."

This argument, as we think must be apparent to every one upon reflection, does not really touch the question of a future life. The most that it goes to show, is that if there be a future life, it will probably differ widely in its character and circumstances from the present,

and that the different periods of that life will in like manner differ widely from one another.

Life in this world everywhere moves in cycles. Of these, some are of greater and some of less magnitude. Some embrace a period of many years, others are completed in a few days. At each successive point of these cycles, life is constantly assuming new phases, so that it never continues for two consecutive moments in all respects the same. But however numerous these phases may be, and however widely they may differ from one another, the movement is always in the form of a curve returning into itself, and never in a straight line of indefinite progression. This general law is well illustrated by the metamorphoses of most insects. There is first the egg. From this springs a worm. The worm is changed into a chrysalis. The chrysalis in due time bursting its envelop, issues from it a perfect insect. From the perfect insect proceed other eggs. These give rise to new worms, destined in turn to pass through the same round of changes; and so on interminably. The metamorphoses which all the higher animals undergo in passing through the successive stages of their development, are scarcely less remarkable, although as they take place for the most part during the embryonic period, they are less open to observation, and therefore less generally known. In some of the lower Articulata, the successive phases of existence are still more varied and striking. There are not only numerous metamorphosea, but successive generations, each differing widely from that which preceded it. In the case of the *Distoma Hepaticum*, it is only in the fourth, and in some species of *Aphides* not till the eighth generation even, that the descendant returns to the form, structure and habits of the original progenitor.¹

Now the only inference that can be drawn from all this by analogy is, that should the existence of man be extended into a future life so as to embrace a much wider cycle than it does at present, or should it be indefinitely prolonged and its type changed from the form of the cycle to that of a direct line in endless progression, it will probably continue to present, as it has hitherto done, new phases of character at each of the successive stages through which it is carried. Whether or not man be destined to experience such an extension of his being, is a question which these analogies by no means reach. Indirectly they may serve to answer objections to the doctrine of a future life, on the ground of its necessarily being so unlike the present; for they not only prove that God is able to continue the same being in existence under conditions and circumstances widely different, but show

¹ Agassiz.

that in respect to the inhabitants of this world, such is an essential part of the Divine plan. Whether that plan, however, includes a continuation of the existence of man, or any of the animal tribes associated with him, beyond the present life, must be learned, if learned at all, from other sources.

The second argument is from the law of continuance. It is briefly this. Whatever exists will continue to exist until something occur to destroy it. This proposition is in accordance with an original principle of belief, and its truth is moreover confirmed by the universal experience of mankind. Our powers of perception and action exist. They will therefore continue to exist until something occur to destroy them. The only event from which we can apprehend the destruction of these powers is death. That death will destroy them, cannot however be inferred either from the reason of the thing or from the analogy of nature. Nor is the connection subsisting between our living powers and the bodily organs through which they are exercised, so far as we are able to trace it, of such a nature as to afford the slightest presumption that the dissolution of the latter will be the destruction of the former. On the other hand, from the fact that our powers of reason, memory and affection are not dependant in any such manner as those of sense, or so far as we know in any manner at all upon our bodily organs, and from the fact that in many cases of mortal disease these powers remain in full exercise up to the last moment, there is good reason to believe that they are in no way affected by death—that they are altogether beyond the reach of the king of terrors. There is therefore good reason to believe that our living powers, including those of perception and action, as well as of memory, imagination, affection, etc. will survive death.

This train of reasoning and illustration which forms the main argument of bishop Butler, for a future life, is, we think, open to criticism at several different points. In commenting upon it, however, we shall confine ourselves to two general remarks.

The first is, that could we demonstrate the distinct nature and entire independence of the soul, could we prove beyond all doubt or question, that it sustains no other relations to the body than such as are necessary to enable each to act upon and receive impressions from the other, this would of itself afford no ground for the belief that the soul is destined to survive the body. The two having been created to form by their union the same compound being, why should we suppose one of them to be continued in existence more than the other, after that being has accomplished the purposes for which it was made, and its career of life and action is terminated? Since

they commence their existence at the same time, and grow up together, unfolding their respective powers and faculties in constant and harmonious relation to one another, why should we not suppose the parallel to be continued, and both on the termination of life to be alike resolved into their original elements? Indeed such is probably the fact in respect to all the lower animals.

The second remark is, that under our present constitution, the powers of reason, memory, and imagination, are just as much dependent upon certain parts of the body as those of sensation or perception. This is evident from the effect produced by disorders of the brain, the portion of the organization with which the spirit has its immediate connection. These commonly disturb the exercise of the former class of powers even sooner than they do that of the latter, and almost always to a much greater extent. Few persons, we apprehend, who have suffered only from slight irritability of that organ, can have failed to be conscious of a stronger tendency of the circulation towards it after any serious exertion of the mental faculties. That spontaneous succession of ideas which constitutes the natural train of thought, and which sleep or a swoon alone interrupts, would seem, in our present state, to be the result of one continued series of organic impressions—impressions similar in character, it is probable, to those by which the ideas were originally introduced to the mind. Indeed we are inclined to believe that perception and conception, whether considered in themselves or in relation to the causes which immediately produce them, are more nearly allied to one another than is commonly imagined. We think there is reason to suppose that they both depend upon the action of the same specific portions of the brain, and that the main difference between them consists in that action having its origin, in the one case, in impressions made upon the outward senses, while in the other it springs from habit, and is, to a greater or less extent, under the control of the will. But we will not extend our observations upon this subject, as we purpose to consider, in a separate Article, the nature and extent of the office performed by the cerebral organs, in evolving the mental phenomena. We will only add here, that no argument in favor of the separate and independent action of the mind can be drawn from the fact that, in many cases of mortal disease it retains the full possession of its powers up to the period of dissolution. In such cases, the brain is not the immediate seat of the disease, and its functions, like those of the heart, lungs, and many other parts of the system, continue to be performed in their accustomed manner, though not indeed with their accustomed energy, until they are finally interrupted by death. In other cases, where the brain is directly involved in the

disease, either disturbance of the mental faculties or inconvenience and suffering from their exercise, are commonly among the earliest symptoms by which its existence is indicated.

In constructing his proof of a future life, as we have already intimated, we think the author of the *Analogy* has erred in leaving altogether out of the argument the moral nature of man and his capacity for improvement—the two features of his constitution by which he is principally distinguished from the lower tribes of the animal kingdom, and which, taken in connection with what may be discovered of the character and government of God, point, as we think, most distinctly to another and higher existence beyond the present. We are also surprised that a mind so clear and penetrating, should have failed to perceive that the real question at issue is not whether the soul be naturally or essentially immortal, but whether he who formed the soul designs to continue it forever in being; and that the answer to this question must be sought in the indications of the divine will and purpose to be gathered from our own natures and from the constitution and government of the world around us. It might be supposed that the author had, in preference, adopted the course pursued by him, in order that he might render the argument independent of the being and attributes of God, did he not, in the commencement of the *Analogy*, take for granted the existence of an intelligent Framer and Governor of the universe. Owing to this misapprehension, as we think, in regard to the nature of the proposition to be established, and the consequent error in the choice of means for demonstrating it, although far more acute and subtle in his reasonings than the author of the *Tusculan Questions*, he does not, in fact, present so many of the true grounds for belief in the great and glorious doctrine of our immortality, as the Roman orator.

Having thus briefly reviewed the different considerations which have been urged to show, independently of the teachings of revelation, that the spirit of man is not, like his body, destined, on the termination of life, to be resolved into its component elements, we would now ask the attention of the reader, for a few moments, to a great and leading fact in the past history of our globe, which though never before considered, so far as we know, in reference to this question, we think has a real bearing upon it, which taken in connection with the capabilities and endowments of the soul, we think indicates, on the part of the Creator, a purpose to continue it in being beyond the brief period of its present existence. We refer to the gradual and progressive development of life, upon our planet, from the epoch of its earliest inhabitant down to the present hour. For a knowledge of this remark-

able though well established fact, we are indebted to the combined labors of the geologist and the comparative anatomist. It was unknown to the ancients; nor were there any phenomena, open to their observation, which could have led them to conjecture it. Indeed, it is only within the last half century that the different physical sciences have attained a degree of advancement rendering the discovery possible. The ordinary aspect of nature, as seen from the narrow point of observation occupied by a single generation, or even the entire race of mankind, would rather lead to a different conclusion, would suggest the idea of movement without progress, of change without development. As we have already remarked, life everywhere moves in cycles. In harmony with this primary law of the organic world, we observe in the phenomena of inorganic nature, whether of greater or less magnitude, the most perfect conformity to the same type. We see it in the continued round of combinations and decompositions through which each of the elements is constantly passing. We behold it in the successions of day and night, in vicissitude of the seasons, and in the more extended revolutions of the remoter cometic and planetary bodies, some of which require for their completion the lapse of centuries. These and other similar observations naturally impress the mind, when contemplating the universe, with the idea of a vast system which, complete in itself, is each moment accomplishing the entire purpose of its creation, which, though embracing all the provisions necessary for perpetuating its existence through the cycles of eternity, tends to no other or higher results than we see at present evolved from it.

To correct the erroneous impression which we are thus liable to receive from the character of the changes occurring around us, we must turn to the past history of the earth, inscribed upon the rocky tables of its crust. From the facts recorded here we learn that, beneath this stationary and unprogressive aspect of nature, in our world at least, constant advances have been making towards a higher and more perfect state.

If we examine the oldest divisions of the fossil-bearing rocks—those which were first deposited after the earth became the abode of living beings—we discover in the organic remains which they contain, only representatives of the lowest classes of the several departments of the animal kingdom. The different races, forming the higher classes, had not yet been called into existence. This general fact is true of the Radiates, of the Mollusks, and of the Articulates. It is more especially true of the Vertebrates, which constitute the highest division of animals, and of which the only representatives found in these rocks are certain inferior tribes of fishes. Hence geologists have designated

the long period occupied by the deposition of these ancient strata as the *reign of fishes*. There were as yet no reptiles, no birds, no mammals, no animals of any kind, either possessing lungs or breathing the air.

If we pass up through these ancient strata till we come to beds occupying a position midway in the series of fossiliferous rock, and examine the remains which we meet here, we shall find that a great advance has already been made in every department of animal life. Not only are the orders previously existing greatly enlarged, but animals belonging to new and higher classes make their appearance. We now have, in addition to fishes of a more advanced organization, reptiles in great numbers, some birds, and even a few mammals belonging to that remarkable family which is so largely developed at present on the continent of New Holland, and which presents a type of character in some respects intermediate between that of birds and ordinary mammals. On account of the great predominance, however, of the order of lizards during the accumulation of these secondary strata, the period has been denominated the *reign of reptiles*.

If we, lastly, direct our attention to the upper and more recently formed layers of the fossil-bearing rocks, we shall find here still further evidences of the gradual and progressive development of animal life. Mammals, such as the horse, ox, bear, wolf, elephant, lion, etc., make their appearance in great variety and abundance. Indeed, some of the families belonging to this class, seem to have been more largely developed than they are at present. This is especially true of the Pachyderms, of which nearly as many different species have been discovered in the gypsum of the basin of Paris, as are now known to exist on the entire face of the globe. Man, however, was still wanting, no remains either of him or of his works having been found even in the newest and most superficial strata. As the mastadon, elephant, rhinoceros, and other large mammiferous quadrupeds, were the dominant animals during this period of the earth's history, it has very properly been characterized as the *reign of mammals*.

At length, when the fulness of time has come, man, the last and most perfect of God's works, the head and completion of the animal creation, is called into existence. In him the long line of physical advances which we have beheld is terminated. Embracing in his bodily organization a wider variety of powers, and in his mental constitution a far more extensive range of faculties than any or all of the tribes which preceded him, he presents the highest development of the original and primary conception of life that is ever to be witnessed in connection with our planet; the complete embodiment of that perfect type, towards which we have seen, in the successive races of the lower ani-

mals, a constant and increasing tendency. The comparatively brief period that has elapsed since the appearance of this latest inhabitant, so greatly superior to all the rest, has with good reason been called the *reign of man*.

Such is a brief account of what we deem to be by far the most interesting and important fact discovered by the investigations of geology; a science which, though in its infancy, has already done more than any other, with perhaps the exception of astronomy, towards enlarging our ideas of the Creator's works, and which in its future progress, we think, is destined to shed more light upon the Divine character and purposes than even that noble science.

Although it is probable that the gradual and progressive development of life which we have witnessed was accompanied, at each step, by a corresponding development of the physical resources and capabilities of the earth, there is no reason for believing the former to have been in any manner dependent upon the latter. On the contrary, unless we regard them as two equal and parallel series of phenomena, we must suppose the material to have been evolved in subordination to the spiritual. Knowing from the beginning the purposes which he designed to accomplish through the instrumentality of our planet, God so arranged the elements in the primary synthesis of the original mass, that each of its subsequent unfoldings should be not only in perfect harmony with these ends, but constantly subsidiary to them. Whatever supposition we adopt, however, in regard to the relation between these two series of developments, they equally indicate the existence, throughout nature, of a great and fundamental law of progress, having its origin in an essential and permanent feature of the divine character, and afford ground for the belief that man, in being constituted with sensibilities in harmony with it, was only formed in the image of his Maker.

But if from the time of its first appearance in our world, life has been thus constantly advancing, assuming at each new epoch a higher and still higher type, and taking in a wider and yet wider range, if such has been its course, not for the brief period of a few thousand years, but, as geologists believe, for an incalculable series of past ages, if all this has, moreover, taken place only in accordance with a universal law of nature originating in the character of its Author, shall we suppose the long line of progress which is thus disclosed, to reach its termination in our own species? Having commenced with such humble beginnings, and gradually advanced through so many successive stages up to this point, shall life stop here, and become henceforward stationary? So far as its mere vehicles, the organizations with

which it is connected, are concerned, such will probably be the fact. As we have already said, man is obviously the head and completion of the animal creation, the perfect whole of which the lower tribes that came before him represented only parts, the great and final appearing which they from the beginning foretold, and in which all their predictions are realized. Each of the preceding races was formed for a specific mode of life, was adapted in its organization to particular physical conditions, and designed to subsist upon particular kinds of food. The constitution of man, on the contrary, is in the highest degree generalized. He is omnivorous. He dwells in all climes, and lives under every variety of circumstances. He is the universal inhabitant of the earth. He holds relation to the surrounding world at all points, and everywhere renders it tributary to him. Fire, air, earth, and water, nay, the elements themselves, vie with one another in doing him service.

But although there be no probability that any new and more highly endowed animal will ever be created, it does not however follow from this, that life on our globe is henceforward to remain stationary. On the contrary we find, in the being last called into existence, a new element, an element of progress, which was altogether wanting in the preceding races. In consequence of this, the advances which had previously taken place by the successive introduction of new species, fitted each for a higher sphere of existence, are now carried forward in the same species, through the improvement of its successive generations. The mode of the advance is changed, but the law still holds. Man is so constituted as to be capable not only of individual progress, but of progress as a race. The two chief instruments of human progress are wealth and knowledge. These are both transferable, and therefore tend to accumulate. The possessions which have been acquired by the father, descend to the son. The discoveries made by the individual become the property of society. Each generation is, in this way, enabled to start from the vantage ground which has been gained by the generation preceding it. The science, arts, and inventions originating in one age, are transmitted to the following, in which they become the means of a more advanced civilization, of higher individual and social life. The discoveries, improvements, learning, all the accumulated possessions of this age pass to the third and become, in their turn, the instruments of still further progress. Life, as it flows on through the successive generations of our race, may be, in this aspect, compared to a river which is constantly receiving, at each new turn in its course, tributary streams, so that it grows broader and deeper in proportion as you recede from its source. Whoever will

take the trouble to compare, in his own mind, the varied experience of a cultivated European, the wide circle of his activities and enjoyments, the entire assemblage of his consciousnesses with those of a South African, a Hottentot, or even an American savage, will be satisfied that what we are saying is not mere theory. The result will be equally satisfactory if he compare the knowledge of man at the present day, his power over nature, the arts and institutions which he has built up, and all the innumerable resources which he has opened to modern society, with anything which existed even in the most enlightened periods of antiquity. Indeed it is probable that, during the same length of time, life has never made greater progress on our planet than since the introduction of man, if we except perhaps the period immediately preceding and including that event. It deserves also to be noticed that in the present mode of advance, each succeeding step not only carries the race so much forward, but at the same time renders more secure the ground that has been gained. By the invention of gunpowder and the art of printing, wealth and knowledge, the handmaids to civilization, would seem to be forever placed beyond the reach of those casualties to which they were previously exposed, and which, at different epochs in the past history of mankind, have occasioned for a time apparent, perhaps real retrogradation.

The question naturally arises, how long is this progress of the human race destined to continue? Will it go on forever, or are there natural barriers which must finally limit it? Will this new mode of advance prove permanent, or must it, like that which preceded it, ultimately exhaust itself? The latter, we think, is the only supposition that can be adopted.

In the first place nature itself, so far at least as it is open to the investigations of man, is finite and limited. The different kinds of elementary matter are few in number. The powers of each are definitely circumscribed, and all their manifestations are governed by laws which are fixed and invariable. This is true not only of the material atoms, but also of the masses which are formed from them. These, whatever may be their dimensions, are pervaded throughout by gravity, that universal force which not only regulates and controls all the larger terrestrial phenomena, but, extending into the celestial spheres, determines also the different motions of the planetary bodies. The subtle, invisible, and imponderable agents which are everywhere associated with matter and which especially within the domain of life, play so important a part in the evolution of its changes, are equally limited in all their powers and equally governed in the exhibition of them, by fixed and determinate laws. The field for human research is

therefore definitely bounded, and however far it may extend on all sides beyond what we are now able to see or even imagine, by continued exploration its limits must be finally attained. Indeed, at the rate at which discovery is at present advancing in every direction, a mere fraction of the time occupied by the entire past history of the earth, would, in all probability, be sufficient for reaching them.

In the second place, besides this outer boundary, determined by the finite character of nature, there is another lying, it is probable, far within it, which is fixed by the limited capacities of man. As the progress of the race can take place only through the individual, any restriction on the powers of the latter must operate as a barrier to the advancement of the former. Now whatever be the capabilities of the soul, all its attainments in the present state must necessarily be limited on account of the extreme brevity of human life. Man only begins to learn, begins to make progress in knowledge and virtue and character, begins to acquire the means and qualifications for a higher and better existence, when his career, almost before it has commenced, is suddenly terminated by death. Nor is this all. The acquisitions of the individual are still further restricted by the necessities of his corporeal nature. The brain, which is the organ of the mind, the medium or instrument through which its powers are exercised, is subject to the same laws as the other parts of the bodily frame. Its capabilities are limited. It cannot work incessantly, but time must be allowed for the repair of its exhausted energies, by frequent intervals of rest. In the neglect of due regard to this essential condition of a sound and healthy brain, the organ at length suffers, and all its functions become more or less seriously impaired. From these and other necessary limitations of the capacity of the individual for acquisition and improvement, the race, it is probable, will cease to advance long before it shall have exhausted the means of progress offered to it by the surrounding world.

Is life then, at last, to become stationary? Shall the long line of progressive developments extending, as we have seen, from that remote epoch in the history of our planet when it first became the abode of living beings down to the present time, and destined to extend, as there is reason to believe, far onward into the distant future, shall it at length reach its termination in the perfected attainments and condition of our own species? Beyond this point are no further developments to take place? no further advances to be made? Shall the great law of progress which has hitherto marked the gradual unfolding of the divine purposes as connected with our world stop here, and all beyond be unprogressive and unchanging? Having attained this point, shall life henceforward stand still, or perchance retrograde, or

become extinct it may be, and the whole material creation which was formed to minister to it, sink back into its original nothingness, without having accomplished any permanent end, or left behind it evidence of any kind that it ever had been? Such an idea is contradicted by every principle of both reason and analogy. The entire history of the past is against it. The whole aspect of the present is opposed to it. The element of progress so intimately incorporated with every part of our being, is at variance with it. The ideas which we necessarily have of the attributes and character of God, whether derived from the immediate suggestions of our own natures, or inferred from what we behold of his works, are inconsistent with it. All of these point to still further advances, still higher developments, still wider and more glorious expansions of the original but divine conception of life.

But how shall this take place? The first mode of advance has already exhausted itself, and given place to a second. This, too, is in process of exhaustion. When it shall at length fail, by what third mode shall it be succeeded? One answer and only one, so far as we are able to conceive, can be given to this question, which shall fully meet the case—which shall at the same time harmonize all the analogies and satisfy the requirements of our intellectual and moral natures. That answer is found in the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, and its endless progress in knowledge, virtue and happiness. For such progress, all that we know of it would seem specially to fit it. Its desire for knowledge, its capacity for improvement, its ideas of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and its aspirations after them, its power of tracing events back to their causes, of passing behind the seen and visible and laying hold of the unseen and invisible, of tracing in all around it, evidences of design, purpose and plan, and thus rising from the study of nature to the contemplation of the Being that formed it, of taking in the sublime ideas of the universe, God, and eternity, these wonderful endowments and faculties of the soul, all tend obviously to qualify it for so glorious a destiny, clearly point to it as the medium through which the mighty progression we have been contemplating is to be continued.

Nor is this all. There are certain intuitions and apprehensions belonging to the human soul, which, if duly considered, can hardly be regarded otherwise than as intimations of that future life which all the analogies of nature thus indicate, and for which its capacities so plainly fit it. Man is endowed with the power of distinguishing between actions as right or wrong, as worthy or unworthy. He is, moreover, so constituted as to have an instinctive feeling of obligation to perform such actions as seem to him right and worthy, and to avoid those

which appear wrong and unworthy. The neglect or violation of this feeling of obligation, awakens within him a sense of guilt and degradation, a consciousness of ill desert and an apprehension of punishment; while acting in accordance with it is followed by an inward peace and satisfaction and by a feeling of security. As this constitution comes from God, it must be regarded as a revelation of the moral attributes of his character, as indicating not only his approbation of right and disapprobation of wrong, but also his purpose respectively to reward and punish them.

But under that government which God exercises over men in this world, partly through the nature with which he has endowed them, and partly through the circumstances under which he has placed them, although we see enough to confirm these indications of his character, we do not witness that complete vindication of the Divine justice which we should naturally expect. Virtue is evidently favored and vice is discountenanced and frowned upon, sufficiently so to leave no doubt as to the manner in which they are viewed by him; but there is not that exact meting out of rewards and punishments which strict regard to their deserts would seem to require. Nay, more than this. In numerous instances, the good are allowed to endure hardship, to meet persecution, to pass their whole lives under circumstances of destitution and suffering, while the bad are permitted to enjoy, almost without interruption, every form of worldly prosperity and happiness. It was the contemplation of such cases that led the Psalmist to exclaim, in bitterness of spirit, "Behold! these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Now only one explanation can be given of this apparent mystery, only one we mean in harmony with those natural sentiments of justice and right with which the Creator has endowed us. It is the explanation which the Psalmist himself immediately suggests, and to which the thoughts of devout and good men in all ages of the world have uniformly turned. It is the appointment to man of a future state, in which the wrongs of the present shall be righted, in which the righteous government of God, only commenced here, shall be carried on to completion, in which all the attributes of the Divine character shall receive a full and final vindication.

If then the analogies of nature thus point to another and higher existence beyond the present, if especially the great and fundamental law of progress, having its origin, as there is reason to believe, in an

essential feature of the Divine character and illustrated by each successive event in the past history of our planet—a law too, in accordance with which we ourselves are constituted, if that require it, if the endowments and faculties of the human soul plainly fit it for such an existence; if, moreover, such an existence explain, and if it be the only thing that will explain what we see in this world consistently with those moral attributes which our whole being leads us to ascribe to its Author and Governor, who shall gainsay the doctrine? who would gainsay such a doctrine resting upon such evidence? Who would do ought to weaken in himself or in others a faith which thus has its foundations in reason no less than in revelation; which tends to strengthen all the higher aspirations and better impulses of our natures, which chastens the joys and tempers the sorrows of life, which spreads beauty over decay and death, and makes the tomb the portal to a higher and more glorious state of existence.

ARTICLE IV.

THE DELUGES OF OGYGES AND DEUCALION.

The Deluges of Ogyges and Deucalion: were they real and specific events, or were they altered traditions of a universal deluge? By M. Cuvier.

Translated from the French, as given in Ovid's Works, Oxford edition, 1826, Vol. 3d. By Rev. J. Richards, D. D., Hanover, N. H.

GEOLOGISTS have admitted, from the actual state of the superficial strata of the terrestrial globe, that the surface of our planet must have experienced, at an epoch relatively not far remote, a grand revolution, which engulfed beneath its waters the continents then inhabited by men, and from which there escaped but a small number of individuals, the sole ancestors of the nations who successively re-peopled the new lands which that same revolution disclosed. Divers nations have preserved a tradition, more or less confused, of this catastrophe, whence recommences, necessarily, the history of men, such as has been transmitted to us; and, what is very remarkable, those nations who have preserved the slightest relations with one another have yet agreed in placing this event at about the same time, that is to say, from 4,000 to 5,000 years before the year now current (1820).