

eternal matter. On the other hand, however, it is more obviously an attribute of the original constitution of matter than organic structure; and if it does require an independent agency for its production, it seems difficult to conceive of the existence of matter in a previous state. So that, in this point of view, this argument is more forcible than the last; and it is no small evidence that it has real strength, that it comes to us from one of the most acute and impartial minds in Europe.

In the fourth place, it is maintained that the idea of an eternal succession, or chain of being, which the atheistic advocates of the world's eternity defend, is highly absurd, and even mathematically false.

The atheist mainly relies upon this notion of an eternal series of things; for if he can defend that opinion, he will overturn the main argument of the Theist for the divine existence, namely, that from design in the works of creation. On this ground, therefore, he should be fairly met. Has he been so met by the reasoning that has usually been employed to refute his opinion? As a fair sample of it, I will here quote the leading points of the argument, as given by one of the most popular and able theologians of our country. "It is asserted by atheists," says Dr. Dwight, "that there has been an eternal series of things. The absurdity of this assertion may be shown in many ways.

"First. Each individual in a series is a unit. But every collection of units, however great, is with intuitive certainty numerable, and, therefore, cannot be infinite."

"Secondly. Every individual in the series (take for example a series of men) had a beginning. But a collection of beings must, however long the series, have had a beginning. This, likewise, is intuitively evident."

"Thirdly. It is justly observed by the learned and acute Dr. Bentley, that in the supposed infinite series, as the number of individual men is alleged to be infinite, the number of their eyes must have been twice, the numbers of their fingers ten times, and the number of the hairs on their heads many thousand times, as great as the number of men."

"Fourthly. It is also observed by the same excellent writer, that all these generations of men were once present," *Dwight's Theology*, vol. ii, p. 24.

How is it possible that such reasoning should have satisfied