

that pervades the present creation, modified only, as it now is, to meet peculiar circumstances. This is true not only of the osseous, but also of the muscular, circulatory, nervous, lymphatic, and nutritive organs. Hence, as we might expect, we have evidence of the prevalence of the same functional or physiological laws then, as now. Respiration was performed, as it now is, and with the same effects. Vegetable and animal food was then, as now, masticated, digested, and assimilated; and since animals possessed the same senses, we infer that their habits were essentially the same. There is not, indeed, any evidence that ancient animals and plants exhibited any peculiarities of structure or function, save those necessary to adapt them to the circumstances, so unlike the present, in many respects, in which they lived.

We are sure, also, that death has ever reigned over all organic nature. It has always been produced by the same causes, and attended by the same suffering. And its ravages were repaired by the same system of reproduction as now exists. All this we might presume would be the case, upon the discovery of an identity of laws, mechanical, chemical, and organic; but we have direct evidence, also, in the countless remains of animals and plants entombed in the rocks, more than twenty thousand species of which have been disinterred by naturalists and described.

I might multiply facts almost without number to sustain the position, that the same mixed system has ever prevailed upon the globe; for geology is full of the details. But in a subsequent lecture, the subject will be more amply discussed.

Such are the facts respecting the divine benevolence, as they are presented in the volume of nature. Though benevolence decidedly predominates, it is modified by other divine attributes, and ever has been, since organic existence began upon the globe. Let us now, *in the fourth place, see what inferences are fairly deducible from the whole subject.* For those inferences, if I mistake not, will not only clear away every cloud from the divine benevolence, but throw much light upon man's condition.

In the first place, the subject shows us that the world is not in a state of retribution.

As a general fact, virtue is to some extent rewarded, and vice to some extent punished. But it is not always so. Indeed,