

Either of these terms—that is, the divine benevolence, or a future state of compensation for the evils and inequalities of the present one—either of them, if admitted, may be held a very sufficient, or, at least, likely consideration on which to rest the other. But it makes very bad reasoning to vibrate between both—first to go forth with the assumption that God is benevolent, and therefore it is impossible that a scene so dark and disordered as that immediately before us can offer to our contemplation the full and final development of all his designs for the human family; and then, feeling that this scene does not afford a sufficient basis on which to rest the demonstration of this attribute, to strengthen the basis and make it broader by the assertion, that it is not from a part of His ways, but from their complete and comprehensive whole, as made up both of time and eternity, that we draw the inference of a benevolent Deity. There is no march of argument. We swing as it were between two assumptions. It is like one of those cases in geometry, which remains indeterminate for the want of data. And the only effectual method of being extricated from such an ambiguity, would be the satisfactory assurance either of a benevolence independent of all considerations of immortality, or of an immortality independent of all considerations of the benevolence.

7. But then it should be recollected that it is the partiality of our contemplation, and it alone which incapacitates this whole argument. There is a sickly religion of taste which clings exclusively to the parental benevolence of God; and will not,