

day, give us disastrous and incontestable proofs. On the other hand, our seas are continually forming new land: the bed of the Baltic Sea, for instance, is gradually rising, in consequence of the deposits which will obviously fill up its area entirely in an interval of time which it might not be impossible to calculate.

It is, then, probable that the actual condition of the surface and the respective limits of seas and continents have nothing fixed or definite in them—that they are, on the contrary, open to great modifications in the future.

There is another problem much more difficult of solution than the preceding, but for which neither induction nor analogy furnish us with any certain data—viz., the perpetuity of our species. Is man doomed to disappear from the earth some day, like all the races of animals which preceded him, and prepared the way for his advent? Will a new *glacial period*, analogous to that which, during the Quaternary period, was felt so rigorously, again come round to put an end to his existence? Like the Trilobites of the Silurian period, the great Reptiles of the Lias, the Mastodons of the Tertiary, and the Megatheriums of the Quaternary epoch, is the human species to be annihilated—to perish from the globe by a simple natural extinction? Or must we believe that man, gifted with the attribute of reason, marked, so to say, with the Divine seal, is to be the ultimate and supreme term of creation?

Science cannot pronounce upon these grave questions, which exceed the competence, and extend beyond the circle of human reasoning. It is not impossible that man should be only a step in the ascending and progressive scale of animated beings. The Divine Power which has lavished upon the earth life, sentiment, and thought; which has given organisation to plants; to animals, motion, sensation, and intelligence; to man, in addition to these multiple gifts, the faculty of reason, doubled in value by the ideal—reserves to Himself perhaps in His wisdom the privilege of creating alongside of man, or after him, a being still more perfect. This new being, religion and modern poesy would present in the ethereal and radiant type of the Christian angel, with moral qualities whose nature and essence would escape our perceptions—of which we could no more form a notion than one born blind could conceive of colour, or the deaf and dumb of sound. *Erunt æquales angelis Dei.* “They will be as the angels of God,” says Holy Scripture, speaking of man raised to the life eternal.

During the Metamorphic epoch the *mineral kingdom* existed alone; the rocks, silent and solitary, were all that was yet formed of