

otherwise stumbling fact of the great actual wretchedness that is now in the world. Out of the observed phenomena of life and an assumed immortality together, a tolerable argument may be raised for this most pleasing and amiable of all the moral characteristics; but it is obvious that the doctrine of immortality enters into the premises of this first argument. But how is the immortality itself proved? not by the phenomena of life alone, but by these phenomena taken in conjunction with the Divine benevolence—which benevolence, therefore, enters into the premise of the second argument. In the one argument, the doctrine of immortality is required to prove the benevolence of God. In the other, this benevolence is required to prove the immortality. Each is used as an assumption for the establishment of the other; and this nullifies the reasoning for both. 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;