

2. It has pleased the Adorable Supreme to give existence to a dependent world, in part spiritual, and in part material. Of the material part of the universe, one great division is insensitve, and consists, so far as we know, of only aggregated and crystallized matter: the other is sensitive and its structure is *organized*; that is, it is composed of a system, arranged by divine skill, of tubes or cells, in which fluids circulate, the more solid parts being perpetually in motion of receiving and giving, each particle passing on in a course of change, the whole endowed with the mysterious property, or functional possession, called *life*, and distributed into a classification of kinds, descending from larger to smaller groups, till we arrive at an individual. The individuals reproduce similar ones: each individual is born, grows, becomes mature, decays, dies; and the dead organic matter is seized upon by appropriated agents; some of which effect a recombination of certain portions with the mineral kingdom; others, being themselves organic and living, both vegetable and animal, take and recombine with their own structure, certain other portions. Thus all living organized beings are maintained in life by the assimilation into themselves of portions of dead organized beings: and this is the universal circle of process in *all material nature* that is endowed with life, vegetable and animal.

3. The law of dissolution, that is death, is therefore *necessary* to organic life. Each individual has its term; then it dies, and enables others to live. Through a vast period, the *species* continues; it at last ceases, but other species of the same genus appear, and enjoy their time of duration. Mightier cycles revolve, during which great changes take place in the temperature and the strata of the globe, and whole *genera* live no more. The life of man, however, does not extend to witness the commencement and the extinction of a single species: yet the period of the human race upon earth has outlived several *species*, some of which obscurely appear in the traditionary history of nations, and one (the dodo) has become extinct within the last two hundred years: and finally, we have not the slightest reason to think that any *genus* has ceased, "since the day that God created man upon the earth."

4. A system of nature, according to which organized creatures should *not die*, would be totally incompatible with the plan which the Creator has been pleased to establish in this department of his works. But let us try some hypotheses.

(1.) Put the case, that there be no death. Upon this supposition, two or three modes are conceivable:

*a.* Life prolonged without food. But this would be irreconcilable with a system of successive production, nutrition, assimilation, and