

future change will be, like the past ones, an improvement as to soil and climate; for the change, as Scripture teaches, will be accomplished by fire; and so different will be the state of existence in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, that we cannot say how far the present system of nature will be introduced. But that it will be an improved condition, we can hardly doubt, if we infer any thing from the splendid figures by which it is described in the Bible, and from the character of those who are to be its denizens.

Some of the facts of modern astronomy impress us with the idea that this principle of progress may extend to other worlds. Some of these are in a gaseous state, some condensed into fiery liquid globes, some covered with a crust of solidified volcanic matter, and some surrounded by a liquid, like water. Do not these facts justify the supposition, that the changes which our earth has undergone are merely a single example of a great principle in God's government of the natural world? If so, it presents the divine wisdom in an interesting aspect. We see the Deity employing the same matter for different purposes. Instead of creating it for one single economy of organic beings, he seems to have made it the theatre for the display of his benevolence through successive periods; but at the same time not losing sight of the highest use he intended to make of it, by the introduction of rational and immortal natures upon it. Human wisdom would have pronounced this impossible; but divine wisdom, prompted by divine benevolence, could accomplish it.

Finally, geology discloses to us chemical change as a great animating, controlling, and conservative principle of the material universe.

When Newton brought to light the principle of gravitation, and showed how it controls and keeps in harmonious movement the heavenly bodies, he developed the great mechanical power by which the universe is governed. And this power was supposed for a long time to be superior to all others. But geology has brought out a second great controlling and conservative agency, the chemical power, "the second right hand of the Creator," as Dr. M'Culloch expressively calls it. Suppose matter under the control of gravity, and let it be balanced by a centrifugal force. You have, indeed, harmonious motions among the celestial bodies, and if no disturbing cause come in, you have