

*to be in a fallen condition, and that this condition was foreseen and provided for, long before man's existence, so that he might find a world well adapted to a state of probation.*

*Proof* 1. It appears that the laws and operations of nature, have been the same, essentially, as at present in all ages. 2. That the same systems of sustenance, reproduction, and death, have always prevailed.

*Inf.* 1. Hence it must always have been impossible, in this world, to have avoided severe suffering; *e. g.*, pain and death.

*Inf.* 2. Hence it has never been a such a world as perfect benevolence would have prepared for perfectly holy and happy beings; though benevolence has always so decidedly predominated in it, as to show it to be a world of probation and mercy, not of retribution.

7. *Geology enlarges our conceptions of the plans of the Deity.*

1. The prevailing opinion, until recently, limits the duration of the globe to man's brief existence, which extends backward and forward only a few thousand years. But geology teaches us that this is only one of the units of a long series in its history. It develops a plan of the Deity respecting its preparation and use, grand in its outlines, and beautiful in its execution; reaching far back into past eternity, and looking forward, perhaps indefinitely, into the future.

2. Each successive change in the condition of the earth thus far, appears to have been an improved condition; that is, better adapted for natures more and more perfect and complicated. In its earliest habitable state, its soil must have been scanty and sterile, and almost destitute of calcareous matter, except in the state of silicates, which plants decompose with difficulty. The surface, also, was but little elevated above the waters; and of course the atmosphere must have been very damp; though the temperature was very high. Every subsequent change appears to have increased the quantity and fertility of the soil, the amount of the salts of lime and humus, and the dryness of the atmosphere. Should another change occur, similar to those through which it has already passed, we might expect the continents to be more fertile, and capable of supporting a denser population.

3. It appears that one of the grand means by which the plans of the Deity in respect to the material world are accomplished, is