

Man acquire the spiritual part of his being, and become endowed with the awful attribute of immortality? '\*

Before we raise objections of this kind to a scientific hypothesis, it would be well to pause and enquire whether there are no analogous enigmas in the constitution of the world around us, some of which present even greater difficulties than that here stated. When we contemplate, for example, the many hundred millions of human beings who now people the earth, we behold thousands who are doomed to helpless imbecility, and we may trace an insensible gradation between them and the half-witted, and from these again to individuals of perfect understanding, so that tens of thousands must have existed in the course of ages, who in their moral and intellectual condition, have exhibited a passage from the irrational to the rational, or from the irresponsible to the responsible. Moreover we may infer from the returns of the Registrar General of births and deaths in Great Britain, and from Quetelet's statistics of Belgium, that one fourth of the human race die in early infancy, nearly one tenth before they are a month old; so that we may safely affirm that millions perish on the earth in every century, in the first few hours of their existence. To assign to such individuals their appropriate psychological place in the creation, is one of the unprofitable themes on which theologians and metaphysicians have expended much ingenious speculation.

The philosopher, without ignoring these difficulties, does not allow them to disturb his conviction that 'whatever is, is right,' nor do they check his hopes and aspirations in regard to the high destiny of his species; but he also feels that it is not for one who is so often confounded by the painful realities of the present, to test the probability of theories respecting the past, by their agreement or want of agreement with some

\* *Physical Theories of the Phenomena of Life*, Fraser's Magazine, July 1860 p. 88.