

first half-million, the query had been propounded to him by the Creator, as the Creator questioned Job of old,—“Intellectual being, is yonder planet inhabited, or no?” and that during the million of years that followed, the query should be repeated after the same intervals in the modified form,—“Is yonder planet inhabited by rational, accountable creatures, or no?” Now, nothing can be more clear than that, reasoning on Sir Isaac’s and Sir David’s premises, the reply would be given in each instance in the affirmative. It would be seen by the reasoning creature that the distant earth-planet was lighted up and heated by the great central furnace and lamp, the sun; that it had its clouds, and therefore its atmosphere; that it had its grateful interchange of day and night, of summer and winter, autumn and spring; and further, that it had its attendant moon, to stir up its seas with purifying tides, and to light up its nights. And yet most probable it is, that the first hundred answers to the query,—those which related to the existence of mere animal being,—would have been false ones; and most certain it is, that the next two hundred answers to the query,—those which related to the existence of natural life,—would be false also. Not until after the lapse of a million and a half of years, when the question would come to be put for the three hundred and first time, would it elicit the true response. And let us remember, that whatever was may be; and that what were the first states of our own planet may be the present states of the various planets that revolve with it round the central furnace and lamp. Here again we cannot cast our argument into an exact geometrical or arithmetical shape. We cannot even say, founding on the assumption of proportionate periods already given, that as our earth was for three hundred periods of five thousand years each without rational inhabitants, and possessed of such an inhabitant during only the three hundred and first period of that length, so it is probable that of