

the same body as in infancy.<sup>1</sup> What but the principles of science could have thus vindicated a precious doctrine of revelation?

In the description which Paul gives of the spiritual body, a naturalist, (and I fancy no one but a naturalist,) will discover its specific identity. By this I mean that it will possess peculiarities that distinguish it from every thing else, but which are so closely related to the characteristics of the natural body in this world, from which it was derived, that one acquainted with the latter would recognize the former. Hence the Christian's friends in another world may be recognized by him from their external characters, just as we identify the plants and animals of spring with those that seemed to perish in the preceding autumn. There is neither time nor room for the proof of this exegesis, which is founded chiefly upon the principles of natural history; but for their elucidation, I must refer to another place.<sup>2</sup>

I take my next example from meteorology. It was the opinion of the ancients that the earth, at a certain height, was surrounded by a transparent hollow sphere of solid matter, which they called the firmament. When rain descended, they supposed it was through windows, or holes, made in this crystalline curtain suspended in mid heaven. To these notions the language of the Bible is frequently conformed. In the account of the creation, in Genesis, we have a description of the formation of this firmament, and how it divided the waters below it, namely, the ocean, lakes, and rivers, from the waters above it, namely, the clouds. Again, in the account of the deluge, the windows of heaven are said to have been opened. But it is hardly necessary to say, that meteorology has shown that no such solid firmament exists over our heads; that, in fact, nothing but one homogeneous, transparent atmosphere

<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that this reply to the objection was ever advanced, till the publication, by myself, last year, of a sermon on the Resurrections of Spring, in a small volume of sermons, entitled *Religious Lectures on some peculiar Phenomena in the Four Seasons*. I may be mistaken; but I cannot see why this reply does not completely meet the difficulty, and free an important doctrine from an incubus under which it has long lain half smothered.

<sup>2</sup> I hope it is not vanity to say that this subject, also, was first suggested in the sermon referred to in the preceding note. If correct, it opens an animating prospect to the afflicted Christian.