

Being made in the spiritual image of God, he is competent to rise to the conception of His plan and purpose in the works of Creation. Having also a material body, like that of other animals, he is also in a condition to understand the mechanism of organs, and to appreciate the necessities of matter, as well as the influence which it exerts over the intellectual element throughout the domain of Nature.

4. The spirit and preparation we bring to the study of Nature, is a matter of no little consequence. When we would study with profit a work of literature, we first endeavor to make ourselves acquainted with the genius of the author; and in order to know what end he had in view, we must have regard to his previous labors, and to the circumstances under which the work was executed. Without this, although we may perhaps enjoy its perfection as a whole, and admire the beauty of its details, yet the spirit which pervades it will escape us, and many passages may even remain unintelligible.

5. So, in the study of Nature, we may be astonished at the infinite variety of her products; we may even study some portion of her works with enthusiasm, and nevertheless remain strangers to the spirit of the whole, ignorant of the plan on which it is based, and fail to acquire a proper conception of the varied affinities which combine beings together, so as to make of them that vast picture in which each animal, each plant, each group, each class, has its place, and from which nothing could be removed without destroying the proper meaning of the whole.

6. Besides the beings which inhabit the earth at the present time, this picture also embraces the extinct races which are now known to us by their fossil remains only. And these are of the greatest importance, since they furnish us with the means of ascertaining the changes and modifications which the Animal Kingdom has undergone in the suc-