

we know not. Our record is limited to ourselves. But we mark the enasms in it which we cannot supply : or which we can supply only by dangerous speculation. The great convulsion in the spiritual world is omitted : the fall of the angels, and its possible connection with the destiny of our earth. It has been a favourite hypothesis to assume that between the first verse and the second there is a break ; that the words *the earth was without form and void* indicate a disorganisation and ruin which had come upon all things for reasons unknown ; that the six days were periods of re-adjustment, or of a first restitution of all things answering to that *restitution of all things* which will take place at the end. But *תהוה* does not necessarily mean ruin : *He created it not in ruin*, *תהוה*, *He formed it to be inhabited*. Moreover, this theory does not solve, it only evades, our great difficulties. In the strata of the earth's crust there lie the remains of animals which had lived under the dominion of disease, and rapine, and death : a prelude of human history which is as deep a mystery, and must remain so, as that other prelude, the sin of angels.

Gen. i. 2

Acts iii.

21.

Isa. xlv.

18.

EXTRA-BIBLICAL COSMOGONIES.

Gentile
Cosmo-
gonies

In almost all the religious annals of mankind there are to be found traditions of the creation, which, for the most part, are entirely independent of the Hebrew Scriptures as to their origin, while their form is often strikingly parallel with the Mosaic account. They are found among nations to which the Hebrew Scriptures could never have penetrated, from the ancient Aryan tribes to the islands of the Pacific. Yet a few points, common to all, seem to indicate one primeval Cosmogony, of which, as we believe, the Biblical is the genuine text. In the Indian Vedas the Eternal One thought "I will create worlds," and water came into existence, with the germs of all life ; but we read of the original chaos, the formless mist in which being was mirrored, and the creative word. In the Persian Zendavesta, Ormuzd, the god of light, as well as Ahriman, the god of darkness, arose out of the abyss of primitive being ; the former fashioned the world in six long successive periods, a remarkable parallel with the account in Genesis. With this agrees most strangely the Etruscan cosmogony from quite a

different quarter. In the Egyptian, as handed down by Diodorus Siculus, the moving wind separated heaven and earth out of chaos, and the successive periods of formation followed. In the Phœnician the origin of all was a dark, windy chaos, on which the Spirit rested; producing the original matter of creation. Hesiod's Theogony begins with the universal void, and goes on with an order of production that strangely accords with our record, though many of the details are inverted. Not unlike this is the Latin, according to Ovid's version. In all these the chaos, the brooding spirit, and the successive separations and creations of Genesis, appear in some form or other. But there the parallel mostly ends. The grotesque and utterly extravagant conceits from which every instinct recoils, and of which the imagination is ashamed,—the "world-egg" playing a prominent part from China to the South Seas—place a great gulf between all the cosmogonies of the world and the sublime simplicity of the record in which faith hears the voice of God and nought beside.

Evolution.

EVOLUTION.

With the modern, or rather the revived, theories of Evolution, the Cosmogony of science, we have nothing to do save as they are related to theology. They are considered at this point, because they are not necessarily to be placed among Pantheistic, Dualistic, or Materialist errors. Undoubtedly, they are propounded by many in these three several interests, or rather in the interests of the first and last of the three. But it cannot be too distinctly remembered that their entire terminology, almost from beginning to end, implies that they are describing the production of all things phenomenal out of things that do not appear through the operation of some laws which necessarily connote a power guiding the law. Evolution is either the law by which that power constructs the inorganic universe, or that by which it orders the development of life in all its manifestations.

Cosmical.

COSMICAL EVOLUTION.

Bold hypothesis, sustained by mathematical science, has assumed that elementary matter existed in a highly attenuated state, for the expression of which every material word is too gross. This nebula, fire-mist, or dust of creation had in it or received all the power

and potentialities of the vast future. Some flash of energy threw this silent depository of all known laws into eternal activity. Rotation, radiation, cooling, produce centrifugal force which detaches the nucleus of future planets, and these by known laws necessarily seeking their origin again are thrown into orbits, meanwhile throwing off in their turn, during the process, attendants of their own. On the vastest scale this is the universe ; on a smaller scale the solar system ; on the smallest scale our little earth with its endless molecular, chemical, and dynamical laws. But the central fires are not lighted to burn for ever. The dissipation of heat must sometime bring all motion to a standstill ; for that heat, so far as science knows, does not return to its place. Systems must therefore collapse, to engender heat for other great evolutions into system. But this cannot go on for ever. The beginning of any system can be calculated ; so can its end. This rough sketch of the Nebular Hypothesis gives us a Cosmogony which is not inconsistent with the Scriptural Genesis as to its beginning ; nor is it inconsistent with the prophecies of Scripture as to its end. But the gigantic fallacy is that such mathematicians as Laplace should think that they have no need of the hypothesis of a God ; and that such philosophers as Hegel should say that the final cause of the universe is only its inward nature. Whence the forces residing in matter ? Whence the beautiful order into which it falls ? Whence the variety of elementary substances with all their endowments of gravitation, chemical affinity, and magnetic attraction ? And how could these evolve the minds that make them all objective, and, by becoming their historians, show that they are themselves of another and a higher order ?

ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT.

One of the most remarkable evolutions of modern science is the attempt to account for the phenomena by assuming the principle that from one primordial germ all the infinite varieties of organic life have been developed through a very long series of ages. Perhaps, it would be more fair to say that students of natural history have thought themselves justified, by a great number of observations, in supposing this to be the law of the living universe. But whether they work downwards from a bold hypothesis, or

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Develop-
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work upwards by bold generalisations, the fact remains the same, that this is what the theory known as the Darwinian aims at. If, however, the law is not absolute, if there are exceptions anywhere, the simplicity of their cosmogony is gone, and the principle of the Mosaic creation must be conceded. The theory is most exacting. It is held by pantheistic Positivists, who imagine they believe in immanent final causes, and undirected evolution; it is held also by the Agnostic thinkers, who muse over the unknowable force that displays such cunning; and it is held by men who assume that the Eternal Creator simply appointed this method of evolving His universe. These last believe that Heredity, the inscrutable power of transmitting peculiarities; Natural Selection, or the survival of nature's best types; and, lastly, a Law Unknown in human knowledge, conduct the great development under the eye of the Eternal Whose rest, as the Creator of all, began not on the seventh day but on the first.

Broken in
Introduc-
tion of
Life.

1. The continuity of this development suffers a fatal breach at the outset: it has no link between the inorganic and the organic worlds. The Mosaic Genesis has that link; it tells us that the Creator has prepared the material world by progressive stages to be the habitation of life. And the New-Testament Genesis tells us that the development is yet proceeding towards a consummation when all things will again be made new. The modern hypothesis desires that this should be left an open question: it may hereafter appear that under certain conditions inorganic matter may be formed into cells containing the germ of life, in which case the continuity would be complete. Meanwhile, the doctrine of Biogenesis, that all life comes from life, holds the field against all experiment, or rather in the strength of all experiment. Spontaneous generation has never yet been attested. But that is not the only gap. The genesis of a new species of any kind, whether of plant or animal, has never been observed by man: has the universe come to its consummation, and reached its sabbatic rest? Again, it is the opinion of the majority of those competent to speak that there are absolute limits to the variability of species; that many fossil transitional forms are utterly and most conspicuously absent. And, most fatal gap of all, the leap from the highest approximate to the appearance of man himself is one over

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other
wise.

a great gulf as fixed as that between Paradise and the lower Hades. But of Man we must speak hereafter.

2. As held by its best advocates this theory pays a high tribute to the truth against which it seems to contend. No writings have done so much, certainly none have done more, to open men's eyes to the infinite variety, and beauty, and wonderfulness of the adjustments of the vegetable and animal worlds, than those which are written in opposition to the doctrine of occasional Divine interventions in the economy of things. Moreover, they have called attention to some truths that are too generally neglected as to the degree in which it has pleased the Creator to use the principle which they so much dishonour by exaggeration. He has committed much to development. Within certain limits the fauna and the flora of our earth are replenished and beautified by manifold variations, through which, however, His original types are clearly seen by every unbiassed eye. They have also taught us to appreciate the wonderful relation in which man is placed to the creatures whose all is bound up with the earth; that, as created out of the dust, he is a development of older physical types, a final development on which evolution has spent itself, found worthy at last to be the receptacle of an immortal spirit. By tracing so elaborately the dim and impersonal reflections of our mental and moral characteristics in the lower creatures, it has read us some important lessons: pre-eminently, the necessity of accurately distinguishing between instinct and reason; between the only "unconscious cerebration" of which we ought to speak and the thought of a personal thinker; between the animal soul, which, using a physical brain, may have its resemblances in the brutes that have brains also, and the immortal spirit whose consciousness and conscience and feeling for the infinite can have nothing resembling them in the lower economy. But, when this theory of long, slow, cyclical development is burdened with the production of all things, the growth of moral and spiritual sentiments included, it has two unrelenting opponents: Science cannot allow time enough since the calculated beginning of the solar system; and Religion protests in the name of God, and for the honour of His incarnate Son, and for the dignity of man himself, the descendant of Adam, *Which was the Son of God.*

Estimate
of Evolu-
tion.

Luke 22.
38.