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ARTICLE . III.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

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It has been observed by many biblical critics during the last six score years, that the Book of Genesis was not written by the author of the Pentateuch ; but rather compiled by him as an introduction to his own writings. Two principal documents, or sources, seem to have been used by Moses in this compilation, embracing accounts of the creation and fall, the deluge, the dispersion of nations, agreeing in a striking manner with the early traditions preserved in sundry profane writers. Those disposed to regard the Book of Genesis with reverence, as the compilation of a divinely illuminated man, look upon these traditions recorded by him as the true versions, giving us the realities ; those who wish to disparage the Bible, assume that the first book of Moses is of no more value than any of the traditions of the Etrurians, the Chaldeans, or the earlier Aryans. The latter class seize upon the anthropomorphic character of many passages in Genesis to show, as they think, that the writers had no higher conceptions of the Deity than those held by any of the pagans. To this the defenders of Moses reply, that we must consider the extreme antiquity of these fragments, that they far antedate Moses, and were addressed originally to a people more rude and uncultivated than the earliest Hebrews. Those people must be addressed in their own language and in their own style of speech, else they would not comprehend the lesson. These fragments in Genesis contain, each, a lesson well worth learning, and which can be conveyed to rude, uncultivated people, even at the present day, in no paraphrase so well and so forcibly as in the biblical form.

This general line of defence and of argument will not avail, unless it be directly and distinctly applied to the individual cases. Let us take up, therefore, the first of those two apparently contradictory accounts of the creation with which the book opens, and see if we can discover the divine lesson which it contains. At some future time we may endeavor to show that the second account is equally wonderful,—that it needs only a generous and appreciative interpretation to show that it was, for the age in which it was given, the best possible form in which the great lessons of our moral freedom and our responsibility to God could possibly have been given. But at present we will confine ourselves to the consideration of the first account, which includes the whole of the first chapter, and ends with the word “created” in the fourth verse of the second chapter; and endeavor to show the correctness of Professor Benjamin Peirce’s view, that this chapter contains in itself, just as it stands in our ordinary English translation, demonstrative evidence, first, of its extreme antiquity, secondly, of its absolute perfection of thought and adaptation to man,—thus proving that the original author was divinely illuminated, as well as Moses who made it, in preference to any kindred tradition, the introduction to his books of the law.

The late Professor Agassiz was accustomed to deny that he ever indulged in hypotheses. He thought that he studied the phenomena to be considered until they revealed to him their own meaning, and that, until this revelation was made, he held his mind in entire suspense, without making any tentative hypotheses. Most men will think that Agassiz must have deceived himself in this matter; and that the truth was, that his mind was so clear and so rapid in its action, as to reject the untenable hypotheses as soon as suggested, thus allowing them no time to impress themselves on his memory. To us it seems impossible for a finite mind to proceed in any other way in the interpretation of nature or of literature than by hypotheses and verification, in a manner analogous to that of the good old “rule of false,” so unwisely discarded from modern treatises on arithmetic.

We will, therefore, proceed in this manner in our examination of the first chapter of Genesis. It gives us, in some sense, a cosmogony. Shall we suppose that it was intended to be a literal narrative of events? If so, then the second chapter was probably written with the same view; yet the two chapters, taken as narratives of events, are irreconcilably in contradiction to each other. In a compilation made by the chosen lawgiver it is not probable that this would occur. Moreover, as a literal narrative of events, its pertinence as an introduction to the Mosaic law is not very apparent. Dr. Palfrey's hypothesis that everything in the Book of Genesis is inserted because of some valuable bearing upon the religious doctrines or the moral lessons of the Mosaic law, commends itself to our judgment as having an overwhelming probability in its favor. The first thing, therefore, to be looked for, is a revelation of the unity and omnipotence of God. Now this chapter has, above its narrative of events, a religious sublimity, which has made it revered wherever read. Jews and Christians have alike clung to it, as worthy to have come from inspiration; heathen critics have praised it, and atheists have been reclaimed by it. About forty years ago, a Chinese boy, in one of the suburbs of Canton, threw away the idols of his family, became an atheist, and ran away to America. In the city of New York he supported himself as a porter, and spent his Sundays in the streets, or on the shores of Hoboken. Curiosity led him one day to look into a church, and he was astonished to find no idols there. He asked, the next day, an explanation of his employer, who replied by simply putting a Bible into his hands. The first chapter of Genesis converted him; he became a Christian, studied and was educated, and returned a Christian teacher to China. He was in the same class with us, in 1839, and we bear joyous testimony to his good sense, ability, and character; and to the genuineness, so far as men could judge, of the conversion wrought in him by this first chapter in Genesis.

This account of the creation is very old. The Hebrew
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scholars tell us that the language in it contains marked archaisms, which set its date far antecedent to the age of Solomon, and even to the age of Moses. But without recourse to Hebraists, the English translation testifies emphatically to an extremely early date. For this is an account of the creation—a speculation on the cosmogony; yet it contains no philosophical or technical forms of expression, it betrays nothing of the style of a school; it must have been one of the very first of human speculations on such subjects. The simplest and most sublime message that can be given to man is to announce to us the existence of God. The revelation of his being is a necessary prelude to the promulgation of his law; just as the promulgation of his law necessarily precedes the mission of a Saviour, authorized to announce the terms and arrange the means of forgiveness for sin. Let us, then, make the hypothesis that this is the message of the present chapter; and, in order to put the hypothesis to the severest test, let us make what may be deemed an extreme and extravagant hypothesis,—let us suppose, for a time, that to some very early prophet, like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the injunction was given to proclaim to mankind the doctrine that God is the absolute Creator of the material universe and all its forces, and that from his will all the tribes of animate beings, including man, sprang to life; let us farther suppose that, in fitting and illuminating the prophet for his task, the whole course of nature from the beginning to the end was unveiled, and all the discoveries and inventions of man, and the speculations of philosophy, down to the present day were shown to him. Now if this hypothesis explains all the facts in the case, and if there is no fact to be found inconsistent with it, then it is fair to infer that so much of the hypothesis as may be found necessary to explain the facts is true; and this inference will be greatly strengthened if the hypothesis extends farther, and explains facts not at first taken into view; also if the imagination in vain seeks any other explanation.

In the first place the prophet would naturally seek to say

that God is the Creator of matter and its forces. But in what terms can he do this? No speculations have as yet discussed the origin of matter; there is no word signifying to create; the arts have not sufficiently advanced to make a distinction between material and product, and there is no word for matter; neither have the sciences reached the state in which the forces of nature were named. Of course, in addressing men the language of men must be used, and the prophet having no words by which to express his ideas, and being forbidden by the necessity of making himself intelligible from coining words, must use periphrases. He endeavors to declare that God was the Creator of matter by saying that God shaped the heavens and the earth, and the earth was waste and empty, and darkness lay over its abysses, and the breath of God brooded over its waters. This representation of the forming of a formless earth is the nearest approach to a declaration of the creation of matter that the language of that early day could make. Then, in order to declare God to be the author of all the forces of nature, and that he holds them under his control, what resource is there but for the prophet to select the most striking of those forces, and to say, God made that, and thus imply that he made all the rest, that would hereafter be discovered. He chooses light, the most striking and wondrous of all to the untutored eye, most wonderful in itself, in its revelations and its suggestions, and declares, God said light be, and light was. The emphasis throughout the whole chapter is upon the divine name; the proposition to be conveyed being not so much that God said, as that it was God who said—a distinction which the rude language could not make. All things sprang from his foreknowledge and his will,—this is the prophet's meaning; it is only the poverty of the uncultivated language of the time which forces him to express himself in this way. God saw that the light was good; that is, he predestined it for its multiform uses in the economy of vegetative and animal life, and in the development of the human intellect. And it was he who separated the light from the darkness; he retained

the control of the force which he had created, and appointed of his foreknowledge the alternations of day and night. In like manner with all the forces of nature afterward to be discovered in scientific research, — heat, electricity, galvanic currents, chemical affinities, actinic rays, whatever they were, — they came at God's command, they were foreseen by him as good, and designed for their uses, and they are retained in his power of guidance. How could the prophet say this to the rude people of his early time better than in those sublime words selected from their unpolished language, to shine, nevertheless, as undimmed brilliants throughout all ages: "God said let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; and the evening and the morning were the first day."

Every utterance of a mind filled with great thoughts is boldly figurative, and the figures are bold in proportion to the intensity of the speaker's emotion, and to the poverty in words expressive of his thought and feeling of the language which he is using. Thus it appears that our prophet, uttering the grandest truths that can enter a finite mind, and naturally led by his subject, after the delivery of his first proposition, to speak of day and night, is thereby induced to continue in the bold figure of describing the creation as a series of days' works. He does not bring the figure forward offensively, as has been often done by his interpreters, he does not distinctly affirm that the creation was the work of six successive days, but simply divides his description of creation into six periods, by adding at the close of each important division of his subject the poetical refrain, And it was evening and it was morning on that day. These days of creation are not, then, to be considered as periods of time, short or long, any more than if the prophet had said, "In the first place God created matter and its forces, in the second place he made the heavens above," etc., we should consider creation as having been accomplished in six successive portions of

space. The six periods are neither periods of space nor of time, but are logical divisions in the survey of the universe, which the prophet makes in the fulfilment of his mission,—to make a comprehensive and exhaustive statement of the fact that all things, past present and to come, visible and invisible, are the workmanship of God.

Having thus declared, in the first place, God to be the Creator of matter and its forces, the prophet would naturally turn to the heavens, and say that they were the work of the same God. In doing it he must use the Hebrew words: they called it a firmament, which upheld the clouds and stores of rain, and the prophet simply says, God made that firmament; without implying it to be hard and hammered out, any more than we imply that it was heaved up, by calling it heaven. In the third place he would naturally turn again to the earth, and declare its arrangement of seas and continents to be his work, and intelligently designed by him for the use of man; God gathered the seas, and raised the dry land, and saw that it was good. He also gave the earth its fertility, and adapted its grass and herbs and trees to their future uses, and saw that it was good—that the adaptation was perfect. All the work of Ritter and Guyot, all the arguments of the Bridgewater Treatises, and the Graham Lectures, are thus foretold in these brief sentences of the Book of Genesis.

In the fourth place, continues our early prophet, he who made the heavens and the earth adapted their relations to each other—the sun to give light and warmth, and the change of seasons; the moon to light the night; the two to furnish the means of chronology, signs and seasons, days and years. He made, also, the stars, whose uses it will be left for far distant generations to discover; but God saw that it was all good; he foresaw and foreordained the uses that even the stars will have in distant ages. This prophecy has been in our days fulfilled, and the stars have given to man, in the latter half of this nineteenth century after Christ, some of the grandest opportunities for intellectual triumphs that have ever been achieved by human genius.

In the fifth place, he goes on to say, it was God who gave the sea its myriad creatures, that swim in the depths beneath, or on the surface, or fly over its waves; and he saw from the beginning that it was all good — that all these creatures also were adapted to each other, to their place, and to the future uses, corporal and intellectual, of man.

Then, in the sixth place, it was God also who created the tribes of earth, from the least to the greatest, in all their variety, each with its own nature, and capable of perpetuating its kind; and it was he, also, who created man in his own image, capable of understanding and using all these works; it was he who gave us dominion over all things, and pronounced all things very good — perfectly adapted to the future needs of that human race which he had placed on the earth to rule and use it. The long course of history, slowly developing the exceeding richness of man's nature, has, at the same time, developed the divine fulness of this most ancient prophecy, declaring that God in the beginning made a grant of terrestrial sovereignty to man, and pronounced the whole universe adapted to his needs. One knows not which most to admire in our nineteenth century, the mastery which the human intellect is acquiring of the intellectual revelations of nature, or the discovery of new and useful properties in the various forms of matter.

The prophet's task is accomplished; he has made a complete and exhaustive statement of the great truth entrusted to him; he has announced God as the Creator and Controller of matter and its forces; whether in the heavens or on the earth; whether in the earth and seas, or in the plants and animals; whether in the lower animals, or in man, who is created in his Maker's image, and set to have dominion over all things below. The prophet's burden is delivered, and he feels the joy of rest. He adds, therefore, one more thought; God, the Creator of all, has not exhausted his power in his work, he ended voluntarily, — he rested on the seventh day, not because his power was exhausted, but because he chose; and he blessed the seventh day and hallowed it: he enjoys now the sight of the things which he has made.

Interpreted in this way, there is not a phrase in the whole account which militates against the hypothesis that it was uttered from the highest divine inspiration ; that is, by a man to whom the whole truth in both science and theology had been revealed ; nor is there a phrase which is not explained by the hypothesis that the sole emphasis is to be placed upon the divine name,—that the sole intent of the account is to reveal the one truth that in the beginning God created heaven and earth.

But if the account came thus by a higher inspiration than that of genius, we shall probably find, on examination, that there are other meanings in this passage ; a greater wealth of meaning than the prophet himself was aware of. The doctrine of manifold meanings in the scripture is dangerous ; and we do not propose to advocate it. The word is written to convey one thought and feeling, and is to be quoted as authority for that one end only. Nevertheless, such is the richness of God's wisdom, that if he inspires a man to speak, that speech will partake somewhat of the marvellous character of the works of nature, which always subserve multiform purposes. It is a great triumph of human ingenuity to contrive, occasionally, a tool that shall combine in itself several uses. But the substances of nature are usually applicable to multifarious purposes ; the tools of nature serve many ends ; as the tongue is used in tasting, chewing, swallowing, speaking, as a delicate organ of touch, etc. If, therefore, we find that in this account of the creation there are, besides its main meaning, as expounded above, sundry secondary meanings, each obvious, just, and true, it will confirm our faith in the divine inspiration of this pre-Mosaic speech.

But the history of Jewish and Christian literature is full of attempts to draw from this chapter meanings of various kinds, scientific and religious. It is not necessary, and would not be profitable, for us to refer to them in detail. The Jewish doctors found abstruse philosophical meanings in single words and single letters, nay, even in the parts of letters. John Scotus Erigena, the first great light in advance

of the revival of learning, found in it evidence of his grand theory of the division of nature ; insisting that the chaos was no chaos, but only a potential cosmos, the ideals of creation intrusted by the Father, for execution, to the Son, who is the Beginning, from whom the Book of Genesis is named. In our own day, Arnold Guyot, and others, have sought to find modern geology confirmed here, and Tayler Lewis has given a grand exposition of the Six Days as Time Cycles, arguing chiefly on philological grounds. None of these attempts, to make a secondary meaning become primary, have, in our judgment, succeeded farther than to show the language capable of bearing the secondary meaning, and thus giving an indication of its wonderful richness. The primary meaning attached to it by Peirce, as we have now endeavored to set it forth, being the grandest meaning capable of being put into human speech, and most perfectly according both with the language of the chapter, and with its position as the introduction to the books of the Law, the history of the revelation through Moses, must be accepted as the primary meaning ; and the secondary meanings then become of interest only as revealing the inspired character of the account ; that it is many sided, like a work of nature, and implies a divine fulness of wisdom, consciously or unconsciously held in the writer's mind.

Two of these secondary meanings are especially worthy of notice, since they do not involve subtilities of thought, or minute attention to words and verbal constructions, but are patent on the face of a translation ; the first is the natural suggestion that the six days are not only in the logical order of the prophet's thought, but in the actual chronological order of events ; the second is, that the prophet anticipates, and as it were heads off, all the subterfuges of an atheistic spirit.

First, then, the six days, although primarily but six divisions in the prophet's order of thought, actually represent six periods of time. If the mathematicians finally allow the nebular hypothesis to stand, as they seem of late years inclined to do, then there was chaos antecedent to the cosmos. And modern discoveries rapidly tend toward the conclusion that

all the known properties of matter are but modes of motion, so that the first act of creation must necessarily have been that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Another discovery of our nineteenth century is, that in every form of matter known to us, there is actually light as well as heat — absolute darkness is as unknown as the absolute zero of heat. It has been so from the beginning; and when creation flashed into being, light was the first created beam. In the very language, therefore, in which this earliest prophet announced God to be the Creator of matter, and of all the forces which govern it, there is, we might say, an implied knowledge of the great physical discoveries of the present day.

Moreover, if the nebular hypothesis is finally established, in spite of the difficulties surrounding certain portions of it, then the heavens were made before the earth; the nebulous mass separated into stars before it divided into planets, and it divided into planets before the planets became cool enough to form into continents and seas and became inhabitable. Here, then, the logical order of the second day is the chronological order of the nebular hypothesis; another instance in which this earliest religious teacher anticipates the boasted discoveries of Herschel and La Place.

Then, if the modern physiologists and geologists are right in their interpretation of the facts of nature, the third division of this chapter was actually next in the order of time. The glowing mass of the earth cooled, the steam was condensed into seas, the upheaval of the continents followed, and the protruding rocks were covered, above and below the water line, with vegetation. And now, also, comes, in its proper order of time, according to modern scientific theory, the relation established between the sun and moon and stars, on one side, and the earth upon the other. The atmosphere cleared, by the condensation of the seas, of its former perpetual clouds, allows the rays of these bodies to come in upon the thin crust of the earth; and the sun's heat becomes, according to Peirce's acute observation on the direction of mountain ranges and coast-lines on the globe, the efficient

cause determining the form of the more fully developed continents, and a perpetual witness that the obliquity of the ecliptic, and the main relations of the solar system, have not been changed since the birth of time,—since God established them on the fourth day of creation.

The fifth and sixth day's work prove, also, according to the modern discoveries of geology, to have been not only natural steps in the progress of the seer's thought, but actual steps in the order of terrestrial development. The sea was first filled with living things, swimming in its depths or flying over it, and afterward came the land animals, and as the crown of the series came man. Nay, even the seventh day's rest stands approved by the results of modern investigation, for not a trace of progress or development, or of the appearance of new forms upon the earth, can be found by the most ardent evolutionist in any rock-records since the appearance of man upon the planet,—a fact which a firm believer in development endeavored once to explain to us, by assuming that the development of all the lower orders was arrested by the presence of man as the head of the series. Sweep man from the planet, he said, and the development would again go on till man were reproduced. We may be excused for thinking the first chapter of Genesis more rational than such a speculation.

Again, this chapter may bear, as another secondary meaning, an interpretation which makes it an answer, in advance, to all the subterfuges of an atheistic or an idolatrous heart. In this light it might almost seem that the prophet had foreseen all the various speculations in which men would indulge concerning the origin of the universe, and had said, "I will anticipate them all, and in my declaration of the being of the one Almighty God, I will show to all those who deny him and turn from him, that I foresaw their errors, and lifted up my voice in the beginning to warn them from the paths that lead to destruction." "The fool hath said in his heart," there is no God,—matter is eternal, all things move on by the forces inherent in the original substance of which all is

composed. Against this oldest form of atheistic speculation comes the clear announcement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—created the very material of which they are made, and it was from his command that the forces of nature sprang. The atoms thereof are in his hand to all generations, and they never disobey his word. And the next utterances are against the oldest forms of idolatry. Jupiter, the aether, the air, have been confounded with each other and regarded as the givers of rain and of fruitful seasons, and worshipped with sacrifices of thanksgiving and supplications for continued prosperity. But, says our prophet in advance, it was God who created the firmament, and when the clouds drop fatness, it is at his command; that is, it is of his foreordaining law. Give your thanks to him who can hear and accept the offering; give them not to the unconscious creatures of his power. The earth, also, has been worshipped as the mother of all things; her divine bounty is manifest in the fruits that she pours forth; and, under various names, Terra and Cybele have received thanks and sacrifices. As if foreseeing this future idolatry, the first chapter of Genesis announces that it was God, the Creator of the earth, who gave her her power of bringing forth grass and herb and tree for the service of man, and that it is to him alone that we should give thanks for all these mercies.

Most plausible among the forms of idolatry is the worship of the heavenly host. Men who beheld the sun shining, and the moon walking in brightness, have been secretly enticed, and they have yielded to the persuasion that these were indeed gods. All literature, all mythology, is full of traces left by this worship of the stars of heaven. But in the earliest age of the world is this clear truth uttered, to forbid every future form of the worship of the sun and stars, that it was God who created them and appointed their revolutions in the sky, to mark our days and months and years, our seasons and our hours, for us; that the grand host of heaven is, after all, only one of God's gifts to man.

Other men have been seduced by the mystery of animal

life into the idolatrous worship of bulls and rams, of crocodiles and cats and ibises; and these, too, among nations of the highest of ancient civilizations. And it might seem that this was one of the reasons why the prophet commissioned so long before Moses to proclaim the unity and omnipotence of God, should, foreseeing this foul apostasy, leave it clearly on record that men had been warned against this criminal folly, and had been distinctly taught that the life in these animals is but the gift of the one God, who made all these creatures, not as objects of human worship, but for human uses; that God has given to man complete dominion over all sublunary things — given him a grant to use for his own purposes all things below, animate and inanimate.

But the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it, who shall anticipate all its errors? The crude atheism of the materialist passes away, the various forms of fetichism and idolatry are outgrown, and a highly cultivated, and speculative nation begins to inquire into the foundations of faith. They behold the science of their times, seeking the causes of outward phenomena, gradually lead to the perception of a unity in the forces of nature — to the perception that there is, indeed, but one Cause of the universe. By what name shall they speak of this one Original Cause of all causes? It is evident that no human intellect can understand this Cause, and by searching find out the Almighty, or tell out his wonders. Some, in their contemplation of this insoluble mystery are moved to declare that the First Cause is wholly unknown and unknowable, and that we can predicate of it no attributes whatever; and here they would have us rest. Others would say that the First Cause builds the universe, as the soul of an animal builds its body — it is a principle or power of growth, evolving itself ever in more and more complex forms, by a necessity of its own nature, and herein lies the insoluble mystery presented to our speculations. Others add that this soul of the universe, struggling out of brute matter into vegetable forms, struggling with more energy into the bodies

of the animal kingdom, working ever upward and climbing for something higher, reaches its fullest development in the human frame, and attains self-consciousness first in man's brain. According to this view an honest man is, not only the noblest work of God, but is himself the highest god that has yet come into being. Such is the extreme into which the conceited human intellect runs, in endeavoring to reason concerning the nature of the Deity. In the full-blown state of this egotheism a man becomes conscious of himself as being identical with the First Cause of all things; and may think of himself as causing plants to grow, and rain to fall, of leading the march of the hosts of heaven, and calling the stars to their posts of duty. Strange as this folly may seem to the ears of common sense, it passes for wisdom and high philosophy among some highly cultivated and very acute metaphysical thinkers.

To us it seems sadder than atheism; it just as effectually takes the sun out of heaven, and puts an immoveable rock over the mouth of the sepulchre; it takes all the light of love and joy out of human life, and substitutes this insane self-conceit for filial and fraternal love. We recoil with horror from these conclusions concerning the nature of the universe and the soul, and say, the First Cause is greater than all which he has made; inscrutable in his attributes though he be, those attributes must include power and wisdom and love, for the universe contains them and their manifestations; the world is the embodiment of wisdom and love through power; and the only power we know is the power of will. The answer to which our reason thus attains is simply the truth which the first chapter of Genesis was written to announce, that there is one God, whose fiat is the cause of all that is. But mark how the eye of the prophet who wrote it seems to have pierced through the long ages of idolatry in every form, and through the misty clouds of speculation which have arisen since the seventeenth century, and detected this pernicious outgrowth of the Hegelian philosophy in our time, and uttered, fifty centuries in advance, his protest

against the blasphemous folly ; saying, that creation was a voluntary act of God, and that he, of his own pleasure, created man in his own image. We are not the creators of God, the highest conscious beings, and alone in our knowledge of the laws of the universe ; but we are the creatures of God, made in his image, gifted with power of thought to apprehend partially his designs ; with affections to feel feebly what his love is ; with power that we may, in our works of labor and art, rise into awe at his omnipotence. Our powers are faint images of his, not his the weak dilution of ours.

Finally, the announcement of the seventh day's rest may be considered as a caveat against the atheism referred to in the Epistle of James, and drawn from a consideration of the unvarying constancy of the operations of nature. All things seem capable finally of reduction to constant laws of periodic return to their former condition, giving thus a suggestion that the universe may be eternal, and undergoing an eternal series of evolutions from some necessity inherent in its nature. If, in the olden days God created the things that now appear, why do we not see him now creating, at least occasionally, some things. No act of creation has ever been observed ; the law of secondary causation is unbroken ; each state of the universe flows directly from a previous state ; thus it will be forever ; thus it has been from eternity ; and " there is no occasion for the hypothesis of a Deity." The prophet, foreseeing, apparently, this form of atheism, meets it in advance, by saying, God rested on the seventh day, — he voluntarily ceased from acts of creation, for reasons of his own, which we may not fathom. Yet, as he pronounced creation very good, that is, useful in the highest degree, it is lawful for us to observe that a creation in which miracles are of rare occurrence, and the usual course of events, flowing from strictly invariable laws, is very seldom broken, is far better adapted as a school in which to develop the mind and the soul of man, than a creation could be in which miracle was too frequent. The sublime lessons given by the laws of the universe have been the means of all the development which

has brought the light of the nineteenth century out of the darkness of preceding ages ; those laws are not yet exhausted ; the progress of discovery is, indeed, more rapid now than ever before ; but all scientific study of the order of the physical universe is necessarily based on faith in the inviolability of physical law. The rest of God's seventh day has thus become the source of all the intellectual and spiritual blessings that exalt man above the beasts ; while the benefits of the first six days' work are shared by us with the mute creatures.

This then, in brief, is the exposition given by Professor Peirce to the first chapter of Genesis. The hypothesis that it is an express revelation from God, the utterance of truth by a prophet who spake with a wisdom above the reach of human endeavor, is absolutely required to explain the combination of so much knowledge of modern discoveries and modern speculations with the self-evident fact of its extreme antiquity. That antiquity is avouched to us by the language, which although treating of the highest possible themes, is neither poetical nor philosophical, but simply descriptive of phenomena, as they appear to the uneducated eye. That knowledge of human science and human philosophy, in their latest development, is shown by the order of time in which the events are arranged — in making motion the beginning of creation, and light the first effect of motion ; in making the earth covered with plants before the sun and planets, of still earlier creation, were visible from its surface ; in making animals subsequent to plants ; in making man the last comer upon the planet ; and in making a distinct denial of every form of pantheistic and of atheistic theory, down to our own day. Its primary object is not to describe the times or places or succession of the acts of creative power, but would simply lead us to bow in grateful adoration before the one God, whose will is the cause of all that is, and whose loving-kindness, looking upon the whole, pronounced it very good — all adapted for beneficent ends to the creatures whom he had made in his own image.