

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE CREATIVE LAWS AND THE SCRIPTURE
REVELATION.

BY THE REV. S. H. KELLOGG, D.D., TORONTO, CANADA.

A RECENT writer complains of an eminent Christian apologist that "he examines the Bible in the light of science, instead of science in the light of the Bible." The truth is, however, that both methods are legitimate, each in its own place and under due limitations. Each may serve equally well for the confirmation of faith in the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth of the gospel they set forth. When in Scripture we find any deliverance bearing upon asserted scientific truths, we certainly do well to compare such alleged truths with the unerring Word, sure that, if contradiction shall be proven, science will have to revise its conclusions. Only all experience warns us that in so doing we must take heed that we distinguish the declarations of the Word from our own interpretations of that Word. Infallibility belongs to the former, but not to the latter. But if it be legitimate to examine science in the light of the Scriptures, it is no less so to examine Scripture in the light of science; and he who does this, does not imply that he is in doubt as to the absolute truth and authority of the Scripture.

Each apologetic method has its special use and application. The former applies especially to our dealing with

those *theories* which are often set forth, with some looseness of language, as a part of the science of the day; the latter is of special application to scientific *facts* and *truths* such as have secured the general consensus of competent judges. To examine the Scriptures in the light of these is not only not derogatory to the authority of Scripture, but is sure to help greatly in the confirmation of faith. As experience has often shown, such examination is sure to yield, from time to time, new evidence that the Author of nature is the author, in a sense unique, of that book which is the charter of the Christian's faith. The inner harmony between nature and the Word is thus ever more and more clearly evinced to be such as is inexplicable on any other supposition.

In illustration of this, it is proposed to examine the general teaching of the Scriptures in the light of six laws, according to which, by the common consensus of competent authorities, the Creator worked in the production of this present terrestrial order.

1. The first of these laws is the law of *progress*. It may be taken as a fact, settled by overwhelming scientific evidence, and no less clearly affirmed in Genesis, that the world was not created all at once, and that there was a certain order in which its various parts appeared. It was, without an exception, an order under a law of progress; first, that which was lower, afterward that which was higher. The illustrations are so familiar that they scarcely need to be mentioned. First, there was a time when in all the earth there was only inorganic existence. Then came life, first, in its lowest forms, apparently plant life. It is indeed true that the evidence of this is inferential rather than direct. Still, the indirect evidence is so strong as to have constrained the judgment of geologists as eminent as Professor Dana, Sir William Dawson, and others.¹ Then followed animal life; but this, too, not all

¹ Professor Dana has expressed himself on the beginnings of plant life in the following terms: "No distinct remains of plants have been observed [in

at once, but in slow succession, still according to this law of progress; first, the lower forms; afterward those which are higher. First, the lowest forms of Invertebrate life, the Protozoa, the Mollusca, the Articulata. Then came in the Vertebrata, still according to this law; first, the fishes; after them the amphibians, and then the reptiles and the birds; and, last of all, the mammals, ending with man.

Such has been the history so far, a history divinely administered under this unvarying law of progress. Now as we contemplate this unbroken progression which has at last brought in man, this prince among the creatures, who can stand on the earth, and weigh and measure even the stars, and by his spiritual sense apprehend the invisible, it becomes a question of intense interest, no less from a scientific than from a religious point of view,—Is this law of progress still in force; or is the progress ended, and is man, as we know him, the last and highest form of life that earth shall see?

the Archæan time]. The occurrence of graphite in the rocks, and its making 20 per cent. of some layers, is strong evidence that plants of some kind were abundant.”—*Manual of Geology*, 3d edition, p. 157.

Sir William Dawson has used the following language on the same subject :

“Theoretically, plants should have preceded animals;.....but the oldest fossil certainly known to us is an animal! What if there were still earlier plants whose remains are still to be discovered! For my own part, I see no reason to despair of the discovery of an Eophytic period preceding the Eozoic.”

And his reason for this view he elsewhere gives, agreeing with Professor Dana as to the probable interpretation of certain facts. Thus, he says: “The existence of such creatures [the Laurentian Foraminifera] supposes that of other organisms, probably microscopic plants, on which they could feed. No traces of these have been observed, though the great quantity of carbon in the beds probably implies the existence of larger seaweeds..... The immense deposits of carbon and iron in the Laurentian would seem to bespeak a profusion of plant life in the sea, or on the land, or both, second to that of no other period that succeeded, except that of the great coal formation.”—*Story of the Earth and Man*, 8th ed., pp. 32, 25, 26.

Professor Guyot held the same view as to the antecedence of plant life to animal.—See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xliii. p. 587.

The answer to this question must apparently depend upon the further question, whether there is reason to believe that in man the end of the creation has been reached. If not, then, accepting the principle of the uniformity of law, we must assume that the law of progress is still in force, and that we have to expect a form of being yet higher than the animal man, as we know him.

It must be admitted that a higher type of organized life, in certain respects, is at least conceivable. Surely we can easily imagine a created being of a higher order than man as we see him; an organization which should have a much more extended "correspondence with environment" than man has, and therefore fewer limitations; a being, e. g., who should be able to live in the heavenly spaces, who should have faculties as different from ours as the power of flying from the faculties of a mollusc. It is true indeed that this has been denied; at least it has been confidently asserted that, so far as the physical organization is concerned, the end of the "evolution" has been reached; that henceforth the progress can be only psychical and spiritual.³ But who *knows* this? How can it be proved? Grant that, with matter *as we are familiar with it*, no higher organization be possible; recent speculations point to the high possibility, at least, of other forms of matter; and if so, who knows what new possibilities of organization there may be with a form of matter less gross, more plastic? Such assertions as the above are based on our ignorance, and cannot be authoritative. One might imagine an intelligent fish, in like manner arguing, in the Devonian age, against the possibility of creatures of a higher order than those he knew, and drawing the conclusion that the only progress possible was psychical, in the line of more intelligent fishes! But the end would have proved that reflective ganoid wrong!

The impossibility of further progress cannot therefore be argued on the ground of inconceivability. It can only

³ See, for instance, Mr. John Fiske's *Destiny of Man*, *passim*.

be established if it be proved beyond controversy that the end of creation has been reached in man. Is there sufficient reason to believe this? Reason itself teaches that if there be a personal God, the Creator of all, then the self-manifestation of God must be the highest end of the earthly creation. To affirm a lower end were to maintain that a perfect Being could place before himself something less than the highest and best end. Has this end then been reached in man as we see him? Certainly we must say, No! Man is clearly, in certain most important respects, a manifestation of God, demonstrably presenting, in some degree, the image of the unseen Creator; but he is far enough from being a perfect manifestation of God. If created in the image of God, that image has become sadly defaced and obscured. We need no Bible to tell us this. What then? Plainly the end of creation is not yet attained. Can we imagine that a perfect Being, administering the history, should stop short of the attainment of the end? If not, then we must look, according to this primal law of progress, for further progress in the future. We must anticipate, on the principle of the uniformity of law, that the progress will not stop till a perfect manifestation of God shall be reached; in other words, till there shall appear a form of embodied life which shall perfectly image God. This anticipation seems to be justified on scientific grounds.

And now we turn to the New Testament to see whether this professed revelation has anything to say which bears on this question. And the first thing which meets us is just this, that it represents the most momentous and significant fact in all human history to have been the appearance of One upon the earth who claimed to be exactly this: a perfect representation of God on earth, so perfect that whoever saw him could be truly said to have seen the Father!³ In accordance with his own teachings on this matter, we find that his disciples describe him as

³ John xiv. 9.

being "the brightness of God's glory," and "the express image of his substance;"⁴ and affirm that not the first Adam, and the proto-Adamite humanity, but He, the second Adam, was and is the *telos*, the end of creation.⁵ We speak not now of the mighty proofs which this Man gave of the truth of his remarkable claim, but simply insist on the fact that this appearance in the earthly creation in this human period of a manhood of higher order than ours, is exactly what, according to the principles above set forth, we should have been led to anticipate.

But even this is not all. For the same Scripture teaches us that this "second man,"⁶ like the first, is the head of a race, the original of a new type and order of manhood, connected indeed by natural descent, through physical generation with the first Adam, but by regeneration of the Holy Ghost begotten into the image of God through a vital union with this second man, his Son, Jesus the Christ.⁷ This is represented as more than the improvement of the old humanity; it is the introduction of a new order of life, and is thus precisely what, according to the law of progress from the lower to the higher, we should naturally expect. The apostle Paul has expounded this matter in language most precise and in terms of scientific accuracy. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians he distinguishes two orders of manhood, which he calls *ψυχικός*, "natural," and *πνευματικός*, "spiritual."⁸ In chap. xv. he further teaches that hereafter the spiritual man will receive a bodily organization correspondent to his divinely given spiritual nature. For we read "there is a *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, "a natural body," and a *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, "a spiritual body" (ver. 44). All will agree that in this last-cited passage the common rendering of the Greek *ψυχικόν* is wanting in exactness. We might better render, in imitation of the Vulgate, *corpus animale*, "an animal body."⁹ Of these two or-

⁴ Heb. i. 3.⁵ Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 47.⁷ John iii. 5, 6; Col. iii. 10; Gal. ii. 20, *et passim*.⁸ Chap. ii. 14, 15.⁹ So the French and Spanish Versions: *un corps animal; cuerpo animal*.

ders of manhood, the psychic, or animal, man, is the natural man of this present age ; a man in whom the organizing and regnant principle is the *psyche*, or principle of mere animal life. So the present bodily organization is "animal," as Paul, with perfect accuracy, terms it. But the apostle further teaches that this present type of organization is not the final type, even as the present "natural man" is not the highest order of manhood. He formally teaches that the ancient creative law of progress is still in force, and is to receive a new and stupendous illustration when in resurrection shall appear in full manifestation that new order of manhood, only germinally existent as yet, which he calls the "spiritual." With what scientific exactness he speaks ! "If there is a natural [animal] body, there is also a spiritual body. Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual [which had been a violation of the law of progress], but that which is animal ; afterward that which is spiritual." And then he goes on to discriminate these : "The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is of heaven ; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "The new manhood is to have then at last a corresponding physical organization, of a higher order than the present. That this should be so, is just what the law of progress would require in such a case. Precisely so has it been in the introduction of each new order of life from the beginning ; each presented an organization of higher order than that which had preceded.

When, therefore, the Holy Scripture tells us of the appearance on earth of a God-man, the perfect "image of the invisible God,"¹⁰ and of a new order of manhood begotten by a new birth into union with this second man, and renewed after the image of the Creator, to be manifested hereafter in a corresponding embodiment and in a changed environment, through a resurrection from the dead, all this is so far from being contrary to the order

¹⁰ 1 Cor. xv. 46, 47, 49, R. V.

¹¹ Col. i. 15.

established in creation, that it is in full accord therewith, and only furnishes a new illustration of that law of progress according to which God worked from the beginning.

2. A second law which has been discovered to have been characteristic of the creative process, is the law of *progress by ages*. That this was the law of divine procedure is clear both from the book of revelation and of nature. There were *periods* of creative activity. The work had its evenings and its mornings, repeatedly recurring. The line of progress was not a uniform gradient; not an inclined plane, but a stairway, in which the steps were æons. These different ages are not indeed so sharply divided in the record of the rocks that one can tell precisely when one ended and the other began. As in the natural, so in the cosmic days, evening dawns slowly into morning. Yet as to the fact of distinctly marked ages, there is no dispute. This is one of the commonplaces of geology. What is meant by this has been very clearly explained by Professor Dana in these words: "The reality of an age is marked by the development of some new idea in the system of progress."¹ Thus there was, first, the primal or inorganic age; then life was introduced, a new idea marking thus a new age; then animal life, first a long age of Invertebrate life, wherein such animals as star-fish, worms, and their congeners formed the highest type of life; then the age of Fishes; then the age of the Coal Plants and the great Amphibia; then the age of Reptiles; and then, lastly, the age of Mammals, culminating with the appearance of Man, the "natural man," with his "animal body," as Paul has it. In each instance a "new idea in the system of progress" was introduced, and that fact constituted, in part at least, the new age.

But it may be further remarked, that each new age was marked, not merely by the presence, but by the dominance, of a higher type of life than the one preceding.

¹ Manual of Geology, 3d ed., p. 137.

In the new age many previously existing forms still continued, where the environment was not so changed as to forbid them ; but such older forms of life no longer ruled. Thus, in the age of Fishes, there were still Protozoa, Molluscs, and Articulates ; in the age of Reptiles there were still fishes, but it was the wonderful development and commanding position of the gigantic reptilian life that gave to the Reptilian period its distinctive character. So is it even in the present age. Forms of life still exist which have come down through all the changes from very early periods, but they are no longer dominant." They have sunk to a very subordinate position in the kingdom of life.

Now we have seen that, according to Scripture, the law of progress is still in force ; after man as he now is, shall appear manifested in the earth a humanity of a higher type than the present animal man, namely, the "spiritual man," as Paul calls him. Does the Scripture also recognize this plan of progress *by ages* as still the plan of God? Nothing, we should say, can be clearer, though the fact is somewhat obscured in the received version, which has rendered two, or indeed three, distinct words by the same term "world ;" " whereas the one of these, *αἰών*, is strictly a time-word, and, as the margin of the Revised Version always reminds us, is more precisely rendered "age." Remembering this, it will at once come to mind how the Scriptures describe the present period as "this *age*" or "the present *age*,"¹⁴ and teach us that in due time this present age shall have an end," and shall be succeeded by another age, termed *ὁ αἰών ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, "the age to come," and *ὁ αἰών ἐκεῖνος*, "that age." To this coming age our Lord explicitly refers where he tells us of some "who shall be counted worthy to attain that

¹⁴ Examples are the Lingulæ and the Nautili, which have survived even from the Cambrian period till now.

¹⁵ *Αἰών, κόσμος, οἰκουμένη* (sc. γῆ).

¹⁶ Matt. xii. 32; Gal. i. 4; *et passim*.

¹⁷ Matt. xiii. 39, 40; xxviii. 20.

age, and the resurrection from the dead, being sons of God, and children of the resurrection." The contrast between the present age and that which is to come, is indeed one of the fundamental things in the inspired representation of the divinely established order. And we can now see how, in this mode of representation, the Scriptures speak with scientific precision, and harmonize completely with the best certified conceptions of nineteenth century science. Not only, according to their teaching, is there to be still further progress, progress manifested in the introduction of a new and higher type of manhood, even that which is "from heaven," but the introduction of that new manhood of the resurrection to dominance in the creation is uniformly represented as marking the beginning of a new age. And just herein, according to the Scripture, lies the contrast between the age which now is and that which is to come; that in the age which is now, the dominant type of life is that of the natural, or "animal," man; in that which is to come, the dominant type of life shall be "spiritual" or resurrection manhood, manifested in men described by our Lord as those "who cannot die any more, but are equal unto the angels." When, therefore, the Scriptures tell us of a time that is coming which shall be marked by the introduction and dominance of a higher order of manhood than the present, they speak with scientific accuracy in calling, as they do, that coming time an "age." It will be distinguished, in a more marked degree if possible, than any of the great geologic ages that have preceded it, by the introduction of "a new idea in the system of progress."

3. Another law of the divine working in the by-gone ages of the earth's history, we may call the law of *anticipative* or *prophetic forms*. This law has been formulated by Professor Agassiz in the following words, which have been endorsed by the most recent authorities as correctly representing the facts: "Earlier organic forms often ap-

¹¹ Luke xx. 34-36 and parallels.

¹² *Ibid.*

pear to foreshadow and predict others that are to succeed them in time, as the winged and marine reptiles of the Mesozoic age foreshadow the birds and cetaceans (that were to succeed them in the next age). There were reptiles before the Reptilian age; mammals before the Mammalian age. These appear now like a prophecy in that earlier time of an order of things not possible with the earlier combinations then prevailing in the animal kingdom."

We may cite also, in the same connection, the words of Professor Dana, who has stated the facts as follows: "The beginnings of the characteristics of an age are to be looked for in the midst of a preceding age; and the marks of the future coming out to view are prophetic of that future. The age of Mammals was foreshadowed by the appearance of mammals long before, in the course of the Reptilian age. And the age of Reptiles was prophesied in types that lived in the earlier Carboniferous age. Such is the system in all history." "

Such, then, has been the law in all the past ages. Is it still in force, or is its operation ended?

What a momentous question! How full of both scientific and religious interest! For even on scientific grounds, as has been shown, we are led to anticipate an age to come which shall be marked by the dominance of a type of life higher than the present. And, as we have seen, the suggestion of science is in this case confirmed by Scripture, which describes the life and characteristics of that "age to come," as science could not. Such descriptions are not very minute, but so far as they go they are very definite and clear. Perhaps the most full and clear single statement is that found in the words of Christ to the Sadducees, to whom he spoke of an age to follow

¹⁰ *Manual of Geology*, 3d ed., p. 137. So also Sir William Dawson tells us, "The life of all these geological periods is full of mute prophecies, to be read only in the light of subsequent fulfilments."—*Story of the Earth and Man*, 8th ed., p. 78.

the present, to be inherited by men in resurrection; a type of men who "neither marry nor are given in marriage, for neither can die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."³⁰ Men incapable of subjection to death, sons of God, perfectly holy,—such is the race which shall come to headship in creation in the future age.

Keeping these words of Christ before us, we may now recall the law thus enounced by Professor Dana: "The beginnings of the characteristics of an age are to be looked for in the midst of a preceding age." The conclusion is obvious. According to this law, if there is indeed to be, in an age that shall follow the present human age, such a type of manhood as is above described, then we ought to be able to discover sporadic manifestations of a manhood of this type even in the present age. And also, conversely, if there should appear anywhere in history, however rarely, instances of this type of life, the law would require us, *on scientific grounds*, to regard such individuals as *prophetic* of a type that shall come to full manifestation in an age succeeding the present. Which brings us face to face with the purely historical question. Are there any intimations in human history that such an extraordinary type of manhood as Christ has described has appeared in this present age? Every one who reads the Bible is familiar with the answer which must be given. For it is the fact that, in the records of the Old Testament, we read of Enoch, as a man who "walked with God and was not; because God took him;" words explained in the New Testament as a "translation," "that he should not see death."³¹ Much later, we read, again, of Elijah, who is also said to have ascended into a heavenly life without dying.³²

But if these brief Old Testament intimations be unsatisfactory to any, we have, most significant of all, the remarkable story of Jesus of Nazareth, written, as even a

³⁰ Luke xx. 35, 36.

³¹ Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5.

³² 2 Kings ii. 11.

Renan admits, by his own contemporaries and intimate friends," all four of whom testify to him in effect as follows: that he did no evil, was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners; that he constantly claimed to be "the Son of God;" that he was crucified, died, and was buried; that he rose from the dead on the third day after his death, and for the space of forty days appeared from time to time alive unto his disciples, with whom he often conversed, and even ate and drank after he rose from the dead.

Further, they testify that in that resurrection life he was evidently endowed with a bodily organization very different from, and of a higher order than, that of the natural, animal man. It was a body which came and went, appeared and disappeared, without warning, apparently quite at his volition; it was a body to which material obstacles offered no impediment. Finally, they unite in the testimony that in this wonderful body of the resurrection he visibly ascended into heaven, having first assured them that he would hereafter return again to introduce a new age, wherein all his people should also be raised from the dead into the same exalted order of bodily life into which he thus gloriously entered!

Herein again, then, the record of Scripture is consistent at once with the system of law as revealed in the past, and with itself, in that, having predicted an age to come, to be inherited by the higher order of resurrection manhood, it sets forth also, as historic fact, the appearance of *anticipative forms* in the age which now is. Not to speak of the cases of Enoch and Elijah, we have an illustrious instance of a prophetic type in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In him was manifested a type of life transcending beyond measure embodied life as we know it here. It appeared in One who claimed to be the Son of God, and who manifested powers, in proof of this claim, such as well befitted it,—powers which later, by one of his dis-

²² Life of Jesus, pp. 12, 13, 21.

ciples, were suggestively called "powers of the age to come;"³⁴ and who finally became the first-born from the dead, being the first-born son of the resurrection. As we look upon him, can we help recalling to mind, that high scientific authority has assured us, as an induction from the facts of the past, that "the marks of the future coming out to view," in any given age, "are *prophetic* of that future," and of the type of life which shall then become supreme? Plainly it appears, in the light of this law, that if the resurrection of Christ be granted, we have not only scriptural but scientific ground for expecting that the present age shall end, and be succeeded by another, wherein they shall come to headship in creation who shall be accounted worthy to attain the resurrection from the dead, and shall therein become perfectly conformed to the image of the risen Son of God.³⁵ The law of anticipative or prophetic forms holds good for this present age, as well as those which have gone before. Such is the New Testament representation, fully accordant with what creative law, as ascertained by science, would require, under the given conditions.

4. Another law to be observed in the divine working in the early history of the earth, is the law of *creative interpositions*. In making this affirmation, let us not be misunderstood. We are not concerned to affirm it as a scientific fact, that what we call species can, in no instance, have been originated through natural processes. It is quite possible that the original types in various orders of life may have been much less numerous than what we now call "species;" and if any one can prove that, in any case, certain existing species have originated by any evolutionary process out of earlier forms, this will not necessarily affect the truth of the present statement as to a law of

³⁴ Heb. vi. 5. *Δυνάμεις*, in New Testament Greek, when denoting personal gifts, always denotes *supernatural* powers. See Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, loc. cit.

³⁵ Rom. viii. 25.

creative interposition. Neither is it intended, in affirming this law, to suggest that the creative power always worked after the same manner. Even the narrative in Genesis forbids us to maintain this.* The power might create the new thing *ex nihilo*; or it might operate on pre-existing material, whether inorganic or organized, as in the *ovum* of a previously existing organism; the one would be as truly an instance of creative interposition as the other.

With these explanations, we may now affirm with confidence that the record of the past, as we have it in the rocks, tells us that in the order of the divine activity in the past we may discern a law of creative interposition. We may concede much, if desired, to natural causes working by an evolutionary process, and yet the fact will still remain, that breaks in the line of progress appear which cannot be explained unless we assume an intervention of creative power *ab extra*. All the evidence combines to show that the living cannot be evolved from the not-living, the organic from the inorganic. Again, there is no proof whatever that forms of life which act under the law of spontaneity have ever been able, by whatsoever change of environment or by means of any internal power, to lift themselves into the rank of moral agents having a power of free self-determination. No explanation of the facts is thinkable except there have been, in these cases at least, creative interposition.

If it is true that the advance of geologic science seems to have supplied missing links in some cases where the evolutionist had desired them, as, e. g., in the case of the horse family, and in that of the *archæopteryx*, as a link between reptiles and birds; this seems rather to make the total failure to find such missing links in the great majority of cases, only the more conspicuous. In the case of the origin of man especially, we may still say to-day, with

* Note the different Hebrew verbs used to denote the creative act; and the varying phraseology in ver. 1, 3, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 27.

Professor Virchow in his Munich Address, that "every step of positive progress has only removed us further away from the goal;" from any proof of the origin of man by natural processes. What Professor Dana wrote some years ago in his "Geology" is still true, that the transitions between genera and species in geological history, are, "with rare exceptions, abrupt."²¹ And making all allowance for the imperfection of the geological record, it remains true that there are many breaks so remarkable that it is likely that science will have to look for some other cause for the abrupt appearance of new species beside imperfect records. In particular, we may note Professor Dana's unambiguous words regarding the origin of man: "For the development of man, gifted with high reason and will, and thus made a power above nature, there was required, as Wallace has urged, the special act of a Being above nature, whose supreme will is not only the source of natural law, but the working force of nature herself."²²

In the light of all the facts, then, and following the judgment of men like Mr. Wallace, Professor Dana, and others, second to none in the scientific world, we are justified in affirming a law of creative interpositions as comprehended in that divine order according to which the world has been brought into its present condition. How frequently these may have occurred is an open question, and has nothing to do with our argument. Scripture and science indeed agree in suggesting that such interventions of creative activity have been occasional and rare, and have marked great crises, between which things went on under the operation of merely natural forces. The days of creation had their evenings and their mornings; but each evening was followed by a morning, with a new manifestation of creative power, introducing a new and higher order. We must, on scientific grounds, affirm creative intervention at least in the orig-

²¹ Manual of Geology, 3d ed., p. 601.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 604.

ination of matter, and of life, and of free moral agents. The only alternative is absolute agnosticism on this subject.

So much, then, as regards the past. Creative interposition appears as included in the system of law. How is it as regards the future? Are we now done with these manifestations of creative power, or shall they, according to the Scripture, be witnessed again in the future? Looking at the past, and remembering the facts already noted, we should say that this were to be expected, if the system of law is uniform. For we are taught, as we have seen, that the present age, marked by the presence and dominance of the animal man, shall end; and that another age shall then follow, marked by the introduction of a new physical order, "a new heavens and a new earth,"—an order of things to be inherited by an order of men called by our Lord "children of God and sons of the resurrection," sexless, sinless, and incapable of dying. Has the man of the present age power to raise himself into this exalted order of life? No one will pretend this. We are therefore quite prepared to find that the Scripture teaches that the new order of things shall be introduced by an interposition of creative power. It insists on the truth, patent to us all, that the present order cannot, by means of any the forces resident in it, raise itself or develop itself into the order of that age to come. In particular, the natural, or psychical, animal man of the present age cannot by any self-development or self-culture raise himself into the order of the spiritual manhood of the coming age. For regeneration and for resurrection alike he is powerless. Hence Holy Scripture tells us with utmost plainness that what has been in time past, is now and shall be again. It tells us that even in this present age the creative power of God is secretly working, in the "new birth" of those who are chosen to become the sons of God and heirs of the age to come, and therefore styles the regenerated man "a new creature." As yet, however, it

is but the faint dawn of the creative morning. When the day breaks, the same Scriptures teach us, shall be seen a new and magnificent display of the creative might of God, introducing "a new heavens and a new earth,"²⁹ and bringing in also the sons of the resurrection with their spiritual bodies to inherit the glory. For as the new order of the new age shall itself be introduced by creative power, so shall the new manhood which is destined to inherit that order. For resurrection is by no possibility the outcome of a natural process; it will be the direct result of an act of the almighty power of God. The Son of God, who, as the "Eternal Wisdom," was in the beginning with God as "the Master-Workman," when in the beginning "he appointed the foundation of the earth,"³⁰ shall again appear; and all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth."

Such is the testimony of the Scripture concerning things to come. A new age is coming, and with it a new material order, and therewith new men in Christ Jesus to inherit it; and all will be brought about by a stupendous exercise of creative power. However incredible this may seem at first thought, let it be remembered that it is only in full accord with the divinely established order in the past. It will but be a new illustration of the ancient law that, where a new order of life is to be brought in, there must be creative intervention.

5. Reference may be made to another law of the divine administration in the earlier terrestrial history. It may be called the law of *exterminations*. The rocks bear testimony to the fact that from time to time during the long creative ages, at the close of one great period after another, there occurred exterminations, more or less extensive, of various orders of life. Professor Dana, for instance, tells us, "At the close of each *period* of the Palæ-

²⁹ See 2 Peter iii. 13, comparing Isa. lxxv. 17, noting the use of the Hebrew *bārā*, as in Gen. i. 1, of the first creation.

³⁰ Prov. viii. 29, 30. R. V.

³¹ John v. 28, 29.

ozoic ages, there was an extermination of a large number of living species; and, as each *epoch* terminated, . . . one, in most cases, less general." ³³ In particular, he says, again, that at the close of the Cretaceous age there was an extermination "remarkable for its universality and thoroughness;" "the vast majority of the species and nearly all the characteristic genera disappeared." ³⁴ The same thing occurred again at the close of the Tertiary, ³⁵ and again in the Quaternary. ³⁶ The causes of these various extirpations were different in different instances. Often they were due to the elevation or submergence of extensive areas of the earth's surface; sometimes to the more sudden and rapid action of earthquakes; sometimes, within narrow limits, they were caused by fiery eruptions from the interior of the earth. Sometimes, again, they were due to changes of climate more or less extensive, through the operation of causes which need not be here detailed. ³⁷ The only point which we specially need to notice in this connection is this, that there are forces resident in the earth which have been able, at certain critical epochs in the earth's history, to effect the extermination of whole orders of life. As a matter of fact, it appears that the inbringing of a higher order of life and organization commonly involved the extermination of various genera and species unsuited to the new environment. This was demonstrably a part of the plan of God in the development of his creative thoughts. Even lesser divisions of the great creative æons were sometimes marked in like manner. Up to the present human period, therefore, there has been in force a law of extirpations, operating under the conditions specified. But yet another age, according to Scripture, is to succeed the present. Is there reason to anticipate that when the point shall be reached of transition from the present

³³ Manual of Geology, 3d ed., p. 384.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 487, 488.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 558.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 488, 843, 844.

to the coming age, the law of exterminations will again take effect? Does Scripture give any hint in answer to this question, and is it here again in harmony with scientific discovery as regards the laws of the past?

One is here reminded at once of the Deluge, a world-catastrophe attested both by Scripture and the unanimous and universal tradition of all races of men; a catastrophe which sharply divided what one might call the first watch of the night-time of this present age from the watches that were to follow. So marked was the difference, both regarding the spiritual and the physical life of the race, between the antediluvian and the postdiluvian age, that all have perforce recognized the fact. It is commonly described, in theological terminology, by saying that the Deluge introduced a "new dispensation." All accounts agree that this great catastrophe, dividing one dispensation or age from another, issued in the destruction of nearly every individual of the human species from the face of the earth, and with them, of multitudes of the land animals also. In perfect harmony with the geologic record of former catastrophes, the record in Genesis ascribes the Deluge to the joint operation of two *natural* causes; namely, a great "rain," and the "breaking up of the fountains of the great deep."³⁷ It thereby intimates that God used great cosmical forces to accomplish his ends, and prepare the way for the introduction of a new age or dispensation of his government on earth. And the result was a great extermination of life, marking the transition from the one age to the next. We thus are able to say that in this history we have direct evidence that the law, according to which the way for a new age is prepared by exterminations of previously existing life, was still in force in the early portion of this human period. Is it in force still? It will be granted that, as we have both scientific and scriptural reason for expecting another age to succeed the present, we certainly have some scientific

³⁷ Gen. vii. 11, 12.

ground for anticipating that this so momentous transition will again be marked by an extermination more or less extensive of types of then existing life. We should expect that types unfitted for the new environment of the new age should be destroyed out of the world as the new age comes in. Has the New Testament, which speaks so often of the end of this age and the coming of the new, anything to say on this matter?

The reader will have anticipated the answer which must be given. For it is the repeated declaration of the New Testament Scriptures that the present age shall end, as earlier ages have sometimes ended, with catastrophic changes; this next time, with a catastrophe, not of water, but of fire, giving a new and very terrible application of the ancient law of exterminations. For we are told that a day is coming when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."³⁸ And it is also particularly said that the ultimate result of this awful visitation shall be the extirpation from the earth of all those men who are by nature and character disqualified for the inheritance of the new heavens and the new earth which shall then be brought in. The day for which the present heavens and earth are "reserved into fire," shall also be a "day of the perdition of ungodly men."³⁹ It is said that in that day the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, as the second Adam, the Lord and head of the new creation, "shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel."⁴⁰ He said in his earthly life that in that day, he, as the Son of man, would gather out of his earthly kingdom "all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity," and "cast them into the furnace of fire;" and that then, and then only, in the new order of things that should succeed, should the righteous "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."⁴¹

All these remarkable and at first thought so incredible

³⁸ 2 Pet. iii. 10. ³⁹ 2 Pet. iii. 7. ⁴⁰ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. ⁴¹ Matt. xiii. 42, 43.

predictions are evidently in full accord with the order established of old, long before man appeared upon the planet; for in that order it was provided that new ages should be ushered in by an extermination of species not adapted to the new environment.

6. Yet one other law of the creative working may be discerned as we study the record of the rocks. We may well call it the law of *preparation*. It were thinkable, since God is almighty, that each age should have been introduced as something absolutely new, having no connection with the ages that had preceded it; that he should have prepared the earth for the new orders of life which were to inhabit it, by a direct act of creative power. But, as a matter of fact, God did not do in this way. On the contrary, he so constituted the successive ages in the earth's history that each was a preparation for that which was to come afterward. Illustrations are as numerous as the ages and periods of geologic time. Each age had its roots, so to speak, in the age or ages that had preceded it. In the primal inorganic age, nowhere in the earth was there a germ of life, even of the lowest order. In those primitive ages, with the earth like a hot volcanic cinder, there was not, could not have been, even soil in which any green thing could root itself. The very soil had to be made, by processes no doubt essentially identical with those by which soil is now being made in some lands out of volcanic rock, by the disintegrating influence of heat and cold, and air and water. Plainly the whole Archæan age was an age of preparation for the ages of life that were to come. Apart from that it had no significance.

Another familiar and very striking illustration is found in the age of the great Coal Plants. This again was emphatically an age of preparation for higher forms of life to follow in succeeding ages. The work of the coal plants is sufficiently plain from the result of it as we have it in our coal-beds. Through that long age, these ancient

plants were, in their successive generations, silently withdrawing from the air its superabundant carbon. Until this should be done the life of latter ages was impossible. They would require a purified atmosphere; and for this, preparation was thus made in the earlier time. More might be said, but the fact is so familiar that further illustration were superfluous.

Does this law still hold good? Is there reason to believe that the present age, in its turn, is also a period of preparation for the age that is to come? If the law of preparation is still in force we should expect that the Scriptures would emphasize it. The reader of the Scriptures will not need to be reminded that this is just one of the thoughts upon which they lay the greatest stress. It is one of the chief thoughts of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, that the age or dispensation in which we live is preparatory to another which is coming, called by Paul "the dispensation of the fulness of the times."⁴² The sacred writers make it to be the radical and fatal mistake of those who in striking language are called "children of this world" or "age,"⁴³ that they persist in living as if this present age were final, when in fact it is not final. They either know not the Scriptures nor the power of God to be manifested yet in resurrection and the in-bringing of the new age; or, if they know it, they ignore it. Whether men will regard it or not, however, the Holy Scriptures continually insist that the ancient law of preparation in the one age for the following, holds in full stringency also in the present time.

Indeed, the whole Scripture history is a series of illustrations of this law. Just as in the geologic ages there were subordinate periods, less sharply distinct indeed, into which the greater ages were subdivided, so the Scriptures divide the whole present age of the natural man into what, in theological and biblical language, we call successive "dispensations." In the case of each of these we

⁴² Eph. i. 10.

⁴³ Luke xvi. 8; xx. 34; cf. Ps. xvii. 14.

may see this law of preparation exemplified. Each dispensation was in order to another which was to follow. The Adamic age prepared for the Noachian; the Noachian, for the Mosaic; the Mosaic,—and indeed all of these, again,—for the Christian. So also, according to the same revelation, shall it prove to be as regards the whole great age of the natural man. In a manner still more momentous and comprehensive, this age is set forth as a preparation for the age which is to come, the resurrection age.

This may be true even in a physical sense. For in the new age, according to Isaiah, Peter, and John, there is to be a new earth, which shall appear out of the fires which shall yet consume the present world; and for this and the physical changes which shall thus be brought about, we know not what forces may not even now silently be working beneath our very feet. But of more practical importance is it that we emphasize the fact that the present age is a preparation for that which is to come, as respects the moral and spiritual part of our being; and that, in so teaching, the Scriptures but enounce the continued application of a law which has been standing since creation.

They teach this as regards regeneration and sanctification. These are preparatory in their nature. It is thus that the new man is “made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.” Even death, whether it be of the saint or of the sinner, has its part in the preparatory plan. In the case of the sinner, it takes him out of this earthly order which he has defiled, that he may defile it no more forever; in the case of the saved man, it is the preparation for the assumption of that new spiritual body which he will require, that he may be able to live under the new conditions to which the age of resurrection manhood will introduce him. For “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”⁴¹ In all these respects,

⁴¹ 1 Cor. xv. 50.

again, it is plain that the teachings of the Scripture but affirm the continued application of the law established by the Creator long before man's day, when in the beginning he laid the foundation of the earth, that the ages shall be so constituted and administered that each in succession shall be a preparation for the age or ages which are to come after.

The *apologetic* bearing of the foregoing is evident. It appears undeniable that, in the representations of the Holy Scriptures regarding the divine administration of earthly history, both in the past and in the future, there is a very remarkable agreement with the system of law which science reveals as having been operative during the geologic ages. Indeed, if the Scripture teachings be true, then the human age and the predicted future age are seen to be continuous and harmonious with the plan on which we know that the Creator worked throughout all the pre-human ages. The Scripture record simply takes up the story where geology leaves it, and carries it on unhesitatingly through the present and into the future, according to the same unvarying laws. Now in this remarkable feature of their teaching, the Scriptures are unique among other so-called "sacred books," and the traditions and cosmogonies of the nations. It is indeed true that in certain of the great systems of religious thought, we have intimations that their writers had glimpses of some of these laws; although at best they were but broken and confused, and are set forth dissevered from their true relations. Especially is this the case as regards the law of *preparation*. Conscience speaks too clearly, even in the heathen world, for the truth to be ignored that for the individual the present time is to be regarded as preparatory to a life after death. We look in vain, however, for the much broader, grander truth that this is also true as regards the whole present order. Ignoring this, the recognition, as in Hindooism and Buddhism, of *exterminations* as occurring at the end of the ages, has

but little of the far-reaching significance and harmony with natural law which we find in the Scripture teachings on the same subject. As regards the other laws which form the ancient system of divine administration, the divergence in non-Christian religious teachings from the truth revealed in nature is still wider. There is, for example, as we have seen, a law of *progress*, manifested from the beginning of the creative work. The cruder cosmogonies in many instances even contradict the law, making the higher to precede the lower. Even the Chaldean cosmogony makes Assur, the ancestor of the Assyrians, to have been brought into being on the first creative day. The Tonga Islanders in their traditions make men existent before land plants and animals; while certain Negro tribes on the West Coast of Africa, the Ochis for example, exactly reverse the scriptural order, and ignore the principle of progress throughout, making the order of creation to be, the woman, the man, animals, plants, stones! As regards progress in the future, such tribes seem not to have had a glimpse of the truth. They are "without hope." Among the higher races, as, e. g., the Persian and Indian Aryans, we do not indeed find so great divergence in this matter. In their cosmogonies there is progress, sometimes roughly approximating to the actual order of facts: and so also we find, both in Buddhism and Brahmanical Hindooism, the doctrine of successive *ages*; but, beyond this, all is divergent alike from the system of law revealed in nature and from the teachings of the Christian Scriptures. In Hindooism, the four ages, Satya, Dwápur, Treta, Kali, into which human history is divided, instead of being represented as marked by an advance of each one upon the one preceding, are set forth as being continually retrogressive. At the end of the great *kalpa*, or æon, which comprehends all these, comes indeed a universal extermination, but not in order to the appearance of a higher system. Instead of this, all things are then resolved again into the Primal Spirit, out of

whom, again, a similar retrogressive universe evolves in a succeeding *kalpa*, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Very closely similar, only leaving out the idea of even a pantheistic deity, is the Buddhist doctrine of the ages. In this, again, there is movement,—progress, if one choose so to miscall it; but ever progress only in vast circles of regeneration and degeneration, wherein we come around, after incalculable ages, to the exact state of things which had existed before. In each case, deterioration, ending in total destruction, marks each great cycle. There shall then indeed be a new earth, but not new in the sense of the New Testament; not *kainos*, but only *neos*. It shall be new only that it is another. It shall be an earth, filled with ever increasing evil, just like this earth; and it shall be destroyed like this one, and so on forever." In both these great systems alike, creation and destruction mean no real progress in the development of a divine plan, such as science reveals and Scripture affirms. They are but the diastole and systole of the Universal Spirit, or of the Unknowable.

As for any suggestion of a knowledge of the remarkable law of *prophetic types*, which is so informally brought before us in the Christian Scriptures, it is hardly necessary to say we look for it elsewhere in vain. The Hindoo conception of the *Avatāras*, or the Buddhist *Bodhisattwas* or Pacceka-Buddhas, stand in no such relation to types of life to become afterward dominant, as do the prophetic types of the geologic ages to the following races, or the risen Christ to the resurrection manhood of the age to come. In the Mohammedan system the absence of this and other conceptions is all the more remarkable that so much of the Koran is taken from those very Scriptures which evince in these matters such an unvarying harmony with the system of law and order as

⁴⁸ For a fuller comparison of Buddhist and Christian eschatology, the writer may be permitted to refer to his book "The Light of Asia and the Light of the World:" Macmillan & Co., London and New York, pp. 248-266.

discovered by science.

The application of this is evident. Whence such a harmony in the one case, and in such unexpected directions, for which we search in the authoritative books of other religions in vain? Whence had these men who wrote the Scriptures this their wisdom? Assume what they claim for themselves, a special inspiration from the Former of the universe himself, and then the harmony with the original system of natural law which pervades the representations of the past, present, and future, is what we should expect. Deny this, and how shall the fact be explained?

Further, it is evident that the facts to which our attention has been directed, reverse the argument which one often hears from unbelievers against the probability of the truth of Scripture history and prophecy, derived from the observed uniformity of the system of natural law. Instead of saying that the observed invariability of the system of natural law makes the Scripture teachings with regard to the incarnation, the resurrection, the new heavens and the new earth, and the judgment by which they shall be introduced, to be intrinsically improbable, we must say the opposite! We must say, inasmuch as these six laws, of progress, of progress by ages, of prophetic types, of creative interventions, of exterminations, of preparation, have evidently been included in the system of law from the beginning, and inasmuch as the presumption is for the continued uniformity of this system of law, therefore, except it shall be proved that the present order is final, we must expect to find examples of the operation of these laws in the present age, and also in any trustworthy revelation of the future. And although we could not have imagined just how these illustrations would appear; yet, when the Scripture quietly assumes these laws, and points to illustrations of the divine adherence to the established order, in the manifestation, e. g., of a second man of an order higher than the proto-Adamite humanity,

in its doctrine of progress, and of progress by successive ages, marked at their initial and terminal points by the disappearance of unsuitable types of life, etc., we must admit, that such doctrines and revelations are in so complete accord with the observed system of law as to be in themselves fully credible. Even because of the uniformity of law, the presumption is for their truth, and not, as is too often assumed even by some Christian apologists, against it.

We may add, as a corollary to these remarks, that the observation of these laws, and of the harmony therewith of the representations of Scripture, will also have, and should have, a decisive influence on our *interpretation* of Scripture. It will forbid us, for example, to deny to the assertions of the Word concerning the exalted dignity of Jesus Christ, their natural sense, and maintain a doctrine concerning him which shall make him merely an individual of the natural order. It will also incline us to that natural interpretation of the records of his resurrection which accords with the idea of his being a prophetic type. It will incline us also to explain the predictions of the resurrection of believers in the normal sense, as pointing to the manifestation on earth of a new and higher order of embodied life than the present; and it will forbid us, with some interpreters, to regard the new heavens and the new earth, and the fiery catastrophe which shall introduce them, as merely a gorgeous mirage of oriental imagery, veiling quite ordinary processes in the future moral elevation of the race.

These thoughts also have a bearing on *the theodicy*. Much in the present age is dark with painful mystery. If there be a God infinite in holiness, goodness, and power, then, it has been asked in all ages, Why such a miserable, imperfect world? Why the earthquake, the pestilence, and the famine, with the destruction and agony they bring? Why sorrow, and sin, and death? Why the disappointed hopes, the darkened homes, empires wrecked,

races degenerating, and disappearing from sight at last in a morass of moral corruptions? These questions burden the holy, while the scoffer answers in his desperation, "There is no God such as you dream!" If this were the last age of earth, it is hard to see how such questions could be answered. But if we recall to mind the ancient law of progress, and progress by ages, and that other law, of preparation, we may be able to see,—not indeed the answer to our questionings, but so much as shall enable us to hold fast, without wavering, our faith in the God of nature, of history, and of revelation. Let us imagine the state of things in one of those old creative days. Suppose, for instance, that an angel flying through the heavenly spaces had come upon this earth in that second day, when, a glowing, fiery cinder, enshrouded in impenetrable clouds of vaporized oceans, it was hissing along its orbit. How easily he might have started questions, which, apart from a revelation of God's purpose touching the ages that were to come, no created intellect could have answered! He might well have asked, Of what possible use this huge, fiery ball, on which is neither life nor chance for any? To what end all this waste of energy? How can such a display of mere power be worthy of a God who is not merely power, but righteousness and love? And no one could have answered without a knowledge of the ages that were to come. Or let us suppose, again, that at a later day some wandering spirit had lighted on the earth in the Reptilian age; when the whole earth presented nothing nobler than those gross, unwieldy forms which crawled about those primeval lagoons, dense with deadly exhalations, or basked in the murky sunshine in the solitudes of a world where higher than themselves there was nothing. Might not such a celestial intelligence have raised many a difficulty which no one ignorant of the coming ages could have answered? He might have vainly asked, How can a God boundless in power, delighting in the noble and the beautiful, be

content with such a world of life as this, filled with creatures all essentially incapable of knowing their Maker, or of lifting themselves above the slime which bred them? And, without prophetic vision, no one could have answered. Never, in a word, in all those geologic ages, was there a state of things which, considered in itself, might not have justly seemed unworthy of its Author. But the solution of the mystery of each successive age lay just in this, that it was not final, but preparatory to other nobler ages that were to follow, especially to the human age, in which we live. In this, its preparatory character, lay its chief significance. Little difficulty to us now about the arrangements of those ages! Even the lonely coal swamps existed for a moral end, and one not unworthy of God.

And so we may reason now. This age, like those that went before it, is full of mystery; deeper, no doubt, because man is here, and sin, and misery. But the analogy of the past ages, no less than the word of Holy Scripture, calls us in our doubting to look forward and upward, and have confidence in God. It points us to an age to come, which the righteous shall inherit, wherein shall appear the reason of the present.

And we believe in the life of that age to come. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and, "according to God's promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," "and by reason of the glory of which, the present "shall not be remembered nor come into mind."⁴⁷ Believing this, we can now easily believe that this present age, like those that have gone before, is simply an age of preparation for a better age that is to come; and that in this fact is concealed the answer to the mysteries that perplex us. And when we consider this, we shall find that the mystery of the present age, if not removed, is lightened. For we can now begin to see, in the light of true science as well as of Scripture, how it

⁴⁷ 2 Pet. iii. 13.⁴⁸ Ps. lxxv. 17.

may indeed be true, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, that all things are even now working together for good to them that love God ;²⁰ and how it may easily be that, just as out of the desolation and ruin of that age of ice and death which, as the rocks tell us, preceded the appearing of man upon the planet, came the beauty of Eden and the habitable earth as formed for man's reception ; so it may also be that out of the moral wreck and ruin, and the fires which shall overwhelm the world at the end of this age, shall emerge a new earth, as the Holy Scripture promises ; an earth such as John in vision saw, in which there shall be no more sin, and no more crying, and no more sickness and no more death ;²¹ an earth wherein at last the mystery of God shall have been finished, and where in the light of God all who are accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead shall at last see light ; and having been here by the new birth made partakers of the life eternal, shall together with the whole creation "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."²²

²⁰ Rom. viii. 28.²¹ Rev. xxi., xxii.²² Rom. viii. 21.