

LITERARY.

CREATION.

A LECTURE,—DELIVERED BEFORE THE HALIFAX MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, ON DEC. 12, 1838.

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ONE of the most striking confirmations of the Mosaic history of the creation, from heathen sources, is the general adoption of the division of time into weeks, which extends from the christian states of Europe to the remote shores of Hindostan, and has equally prevailed among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and Northern Barbarians. The other divisions of time rise from natural causes respecting the sun and moon. The division into weeks, on the contrary, seems perfectly arbitrary, and to have been derived from some remote tradition, (as that of the creation) which was never totally obliterated from the memory of the Gentiles.—T. H. HORNE.

THE impossibility of comprising distinctly, in a single lecture, the outlines, even, of that vast subject, which has been announced as the theme on which we are this evening to be engaged—perhaps, ought to have been sufficient to deter from the present attempt; but the consideration that subjects in themselves, when extended and diffused beyond the grasp of common intellect, may, in a condensed form, be received and impressed upon the mind, not only in their general bearing, but for purposes of usefulness—has induced the desire to throw together a few ideas, or rather to separate a few principal features, from the general mass of information on this subject,—to illustrate the generally received and popular account, of the CREATION.

At the same time, it is, perhaps, better distinctly to avow, that it is intended, on this occasion, to take the word of God as the foundation of the argument, and to endeavour, not to bring the standard thus furnished down to the level of human reason—but to raise reason itself to the standard, and to elevate the powers of mind, furnished to us by the Great Creator, so as to endeavour to comprehend the subject in the light of Divine Revelation.

It would, indeed, be a vain attempt, to try to accumulate entirely fresh matter, on a subject which has been so diligently and elaborately illustrated:—it will be, therefore, due to this audience to state, that the present lecture sustains, not so much the character of original research, as of varied and collated compilation.* Perhaps it may be thought interesting, before we enter more fully upon the subject, to present some of the crude notions, which have been entertained and held, by men of enterprising minds, in former periods, respecting the world, and its formation.

Burnet, in his 'Theoria Sacra', observes: "The earth was first invested with an uniform light crust, which covered the abyss of the sea, and which being broken up for the production of the deluge, formed the mountains by its fragments."

Whiston, in his 'New Theory,' remarks: "The earth was formed from the atmosphere of one comet, and deluged by the rain of another. The heat which it retained from its origin, was the cause of exciting

* NOTE. The different authorities, to whose writings reference has been given, or from which extracts have been freely made, in this lecture, are not all noticed as they occur. The principal works which have been made use of are, Buckland's and Roget's Bridgwater Treatises; Dr. Dick's Lectures on Theology; Watson's Institutes; Clarke's Commentary, &c. &c. &c.

its inhabitants to sin; for which they were all drowned, except the fishes, which, having been fortunately exempted from the heat, remained innocent."

Another writer [in the Leibnitz Protogea] says: "The earth was an extinguished sun, avitrified globe, on which the vapours falling down again after it had cooled, formed seas, which afterwards deposited limestone formations."

"The Deluge" says Woodward, "was occasioned by a momentary suspension of cohesion among the particles of mineral bodies; the whole of the globe was dissolved, and the paste thus formed became penetrated with shells."

"God raised up", says Snenckzer, "the mountains, for the purpose of allowing the water to run off, and selected those places on which were the greatest quantities of rocks, without which the mountains could not have supported themselves."

Again, Demaillet writes: "The whole globe was covered with water many thousand years. The water gradually retired. All the land animals were originally the inhabitants of the sea; Man was originally a fish; and there are still fish to be met with in the ocean, which are half men, on their progress to the human shape; and whose descendants will, in process of time, become men."

Buffon's Theory introduces the following view: "The earth was a fragment of the sun, struck off red hot by the blow of a comet, together with all the other planets, which were also red hot fragments. The age of the world, then, can be calculated from the number of years which it would take to cool so large a mass, from a red heat down to its present temperature. But it is of course growing colder every year, and, as well as the other planets, must finally be a globe of ice."

The two following ideas are extracted from the German Philosophers:—

"All things were originally fluid. The waters gave birth to microscopic insects; the insects, in the course of ages, magnified themselves into large animals; the animals, in the course of time, converted a portion of water into calcareous earth; the vegetables converted a portion into clay. These two substances, in the course of ages, converted themselves into silex, and thus the silicious mountains were the oldest of all. All the solid parts of the earth, therefore, owe their existence to life, and without life, the globe would still be entirely liquid."

Again: "The earth is a great animal; it is alive—a vital fluid circulates in it—every particle of it is alive—it is instinct and volition, even to the most elementary molecules, which attract and repel each other according to sympathies. Every mineral has the power of converting immense masses into its own nature, as we convert food into flesh; the mountains are the respiratory organs of the globe. The schists are the organs of secretion,—the mineral veins are abscesses,—and the metals are the products of disease, for which reason, most of them have a repulsive smell!"

Such are the opinions of men, who have blindly followed the tortuous and mazy windings of a wild imagination; who have scarcely followed the leadings of