

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.

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It is distinctly stated that "the earth (when created) was without form and void,"—some have supposed, either in a fluid state or an unorganized mass covered with water: we feel disposed to incline to the latter opinion; and for this reason—the forming and disposing energy of the Spirit, is represented as brooding over and incubating this mass prior to the fiat of the Almighty, which called forth light upon the whole.

This period is generally fixed as 4004 years before the birth of Christ—consequently 5842 years before the present time—but *this* we shall hereafter notice. *The period of Creation* is spoken in the publication of the decalogue in these words—"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is"; and it is somewhat remarkable that, in the theology of the Persians, it is still taught that God created the world at six different times, in manifest allusion to the six days. The first work of Creation appears to have been that of the four elements, out of which the whole universe was composed: fire, water, earth, air—elements essentially distinguished from each other in their character and uses, yet blended together in one confused and unorganized mass:—of these a poet sings—

"Before the seas and this terrestrial ball,
And heaven's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of nature, if a face,
Rather a rude and undigested mass,
A lifeless lump, unfashioned and unframed,
Of jarring seeds, and justly Chaos named. DRYDEN.

The several days of Creation appear to have been allotted to the processes, by which the different parts were arranged in order by that Power which created the whole.

At this time, there had existed no distinctive divisions between day and night—there was, in fact, no light: primeval darkness reigned. We find, therefore, on the first day, that God said, "Let there be light," and there was light; and he divided the light from the darkness: and he called the light, Day; and the darkness he called Night. The creation of light stands as one of the most remarkable and astonishing products of the skill and wisdom of God—it is the grand medium by which all his other works are discovered, examined and understood; its flight or passage is equal to 194,133 miles in a second of time, and it comes from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,513,794 miles, in 8 min. 11²/₃ sec.

On the second day, God encompassed the globe with that elastic medium, that valuable appendage to our earth which we call the atmosphere—the word firmament simply implying an expanse, a tent stretched out. In this—principally composed of air—were floating particles of various kinds; frequently enveloping reservoirs of water, sometimes invisible and sometimes visible: at *these* times separated by the ethereal fire, which divided it into small drops, which descending, watered the earth, and supplied the moisture necessary for the vegetative process so soon to commence. At the same time, the waters were gathered into seas, and the land appeared by itself: this was speedily covered with vegetation, "and God called the dry land, earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas, and God saw that it was good."

On the 4th day the sun was created to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night, and the stars also. On the 5th, the water and the air were peopled with living creatures, and on the 6th, the terrestrial inhabitants were created, and Man, the master-piece, the crowning work, and, in a subordinate sense, the Lord of Creation, an intelligent, sentient and responsible being—to whom was given dominion "over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moved upon the face of the earth."

There are two things, which it is necessary in this part of our subject, to remark upon.

The first may have frequently caused surprize and astonishment, in the minds of those who have only partially entered into the subject, now under consideration. The fact alluded to, is this: It is invariably received, that the sun, the centre of our system, is the source of light to all the inhabitants of the earth; but, according to the order of arrangement we have just hastily recapitulated, and according to the Mosaic order of sequences, light existed prior to its source; or, in other words, on the first day God created light, and on the fourth day he formed the sun: so that, according to this account, light existed three days antecedent to the sun.

Now, in order to show the several bearings of this question, we may notice the theory of Whiston respecting this matter, as introductory to an argument of an opposite character.

Whiston supposes the sun, moon and stars to be more ancient than the earth; the chaos from which the latter was formed, he supposes to have been the atmosphere of a comet; on the first day, he conceived the more ponderous parts of the mass conglomerating into an obical form, the irregularities upon the surface being filled with water, through which was admitted some faint and indistinct glimmering of the solar rays. On the second day, he supposes the atmosphere diffused to a proper extent, and rarified and rendered suitable for the transmission of light. On the third day, the surface of the earth to have assumed that irregular form, which caused the waters to be thrown together in seas, and the dry land to appear, while on the fourth day, the lights of heaven were permitted to exercise that influence upon the earth and seas, for which they were long previously created.

This appears to be an argument only fit to hold a