

Moreover the present condition of mankind points to their origin at a very remote period. The comparatively recent progress of art and science; the very partial occupation of the globe by our constantly multiplying race; and the inconsiderable improvement which the world has hitherto made in civilization and the refinements of life all confirm the fact. So, also, the histories and traditions of all nations tell of a first father, created, not begotten.

For many reasons, therefore, we reject the hypothesis of an endless succession of existence.

2. That of progressive development is equally unworthy of credit. This theory was promulgated in various forms by ancient philosophers according to their crude ideas of nature, but in our own age, as became the scientific character of the times, has been more minutely and systematically set forth.

The French philosopher, La Place, in his nebular hypothesis, undesignedly furnished a foundation for its reconstruction. Observing in the celestial heavens bright cloudy appearances, which telescopic vision could not resolve into clusters of stars, he conjectured that these "nebulae" were substances out of which worlds are gradually being formed. Further reflection led him to believe that our own solar system was at one time an indefinitely rarified and intensely heated body of nebulous matter, incalculable in extent and revolving according to certain centripetal and centrifugal laws around a fiery nucleus. From this great blazing and whirling cloud he supposed that our system might have been evolved by the operation of known causes. These conjectures were purely astronomical and were intended to explain the original formation both of our planetary system and of the whole stellar Universe.

Others, however, and in particular the author of "The Vestiges of Creation," a book published anonymously, took the ideas of La Place and have grafted quite different ideas upon them. To use their own terms they suppose that certain inorganic particles of the fire-mist had in them the power, after the different worlds had assumed shape and become fit for living inhabitants, to construct themselves into various organic bodies, vegetable and animal, and that the process thus begun resulted in the successive appearance of new species of organic beings. The