

thought they had discovered, in the high antiquity of the Chinese, combined with the Hindoo and Egyptian races, an argument which threw discredit on the chronology of the Bible, and weakened the evidence of its divine authority. The fact, however, is, that the Chinese, like most other heathen nations, have a mythology, as well as a chronological period; the one considered by themselves as fabulous, and the other as authentic; the one connected with the history of their gods, and the other with that of their men. In the former they speak of their celestial Emperor, who reigned forty-five thousand years; their terrestrial Emperor, who reigned eighteen thousand years; followed by their human Emperor, who reigned as long; without condescending to enlighten us as to the names, characters, events, or circumstances of these wonderful individuals, any, without so much as telling us whether their dominions were established in heaven or earth, or whether they referred exclusively to China, or included other nations. In short, the vague and indistinct furnishings of these fancied Emperors shows that they were merely the figment of the imagination, introduced to supply a deficiency, and to compass the credulity. Indeed, so little credit is attached to this fabulous period by the Chinese themselves, that one of their most respectable historians, Chou-hoatze, does not venture to affirm it, but, passing by these extravagant assumptions, commences his relation at a much later period, when events and circumstances of a concrete character stamp the records of the age with greater marks of credibility."

A second class of objections to the Christian scheme may be noticed as the theories of Epicurus and Lucretius: these upheld the doctrine of the eternity of matter, and endeavoured to fix a time when this matter was organized and arranged in its present form. But what was the character of the ground they stood upon? They believed that the present component parts of this Sphere, were atoms moving about in the immensity of space; at the same time, no reason was given why they were found in motion, nor any, in fact, why they are now at rest—but that, by a mechanical contrivance, the result of necessity, these atoms came together in fortuitous connection, and by an action of the same laws, the present order, and arrangement, and beauty, and government, were established for the satisfaction, and comfort, and enjoyment of man.

To this argument, in a short time, an answer will be given.

A third, and more popular class of objections, is found in the views of some who experience a difficulty in reconciling the chronological data of the Bible with references drawn from prejudices, which prejudices are founded on premises of their own construction. The most tangible form in which this objection can be presented, is in the idea of a primitive chaotic ocean, containing the elements of all things, afterwards to be resolved, by the process of time, from a fluid to a solid state; and it has been conceded by some, that the doctrine of the eternity of matter might have lurked in the account given by Moses, because he states the mass to have been "without form and void"; and a further concession has been granted by some, by introducing the supposition, that the six days spoken of in scripture were extended periods of unlimited time; but we object to both these concessions, and to the argument itself, in a sense which we shall shortly explain; and it is because these will soon form part of our general outline and filling up, that we pass on to another part of the subject.

Having stated these objections, we come in the first place to notice, *the act of Creation itself.*

This, as we before observed, signifies the bringing into being something which did not previously exist, and the matter or mass out of which the present world was arranged. For, although the heathen Philosophers understood not the possibility of the fact, it is not for one moment to be imagined, that for the same reason, we ought to reject it too.

We acknowledge, as the first dictate of our reason, the existence of a *First Great Cause*; and it is but just that we allow to succeed such an acknowledgment, the fact, that we cannot measure our own limited knowledge, by the same standard. Again: as there can be no possible limitation fixed to the power of this Great First Cause, [for who shall be found bold to affix the same?] it is, therefore, necessarily allowed by the simplest process of ratiocination, that God could create something, nay, could create any thing, out of nothing: because it is plain, that the denial of this would involve a contradiction. For, if his power *could not create any thing conceivable*, his power would not be the greatest conceivable; and if we allow this, we Undeify the Creator—we attach a finite limit to one of his essential attributes: and if there is finitude in one, there is finitude in all. But, on the contrary, believing in the infinitude of his Power, we admit the creation of any thing and every thing, under any circumstances or in any time, to be within the reach of that Power; and, therefore, we are hereby led to the fact, that there existed power adequate to create the materials of the universe from nothing, *in an instant*,—and that they were accordingly created by that Power: "the things which are *seen* not being made of things which do appear."

You will observe, that the division is made into two distinct portions in the earliest part of the sacred narrative; those two portions being, the heavens and the earth: and there is no doubt at all, but that the latter occupies a space in the wide field of creation, but as a drop in the mighty ocean! As an illustration, take the following computation:

It is supposed, that there are not less than 75 millions of suns in the universe—the fixed stars being all suns, and having, like ours, numerous planets revolving round them;—the solar system, to which we belong, has about thirty planets, primary and secondary, attached to it: the circular field of space which it occupies is, in diameter, 3,600 millions of miles, and that which it controls, much greater; the sun which is the nearest neighbour to ours, is Sirius, distant from us about 22 millions of miles:—now, if all the fixed stars are as distant from each other, as ours is distant from Sirius: or if our system be the average magnitude of all,—what imagination can grasp the immensity of Creation!—It stands, as a plantation, containing 75 millions of circular fields, each 10 billions of miles in diameter!

Why, then, is the Earth even mentioned, amidst such an overwhelming concatenation of creative power? Because, it is the allotted habitation of the family of man—it was to be the sphere of extraordinary manifestations—it was, therefore, accounted worthy of peculiar distinction,—and, it is on similar grounds, that we give a prominence of notice to this portion of our subject, on the present occasion. (*To be continued.*)