

protracted over half a century, or that still future time predicted in Holy Writ when the days of a man shall be as those of a tree. Having worked out these problems, we would be in a position to inquire as to the possible transition of *Homo* from or towards any other generic form. I would by no means put forward this theory of embryonic development as including the whole law of introduction of species or genera* any more than the others reviewed, but I must say that to my mind it appears to hold forth the most promising line of investigation, with the hope of arriving ultimately at some true expression of the law of creation with reference to organized beings.

What that law will ultimately prove to be, and to what extent it may include processes of derivation, it is impossible now to say. At present we must recognize in the prevailing theories on the subject merely the natural tendency of the human mind to grasp the whole mass of the unknown under some grand general hypothesis, which, though perhaps little else than a figure of speech, satisfies for the moment. We are dealing with the origin of species precisely as the Alchemists did with Chemistry, and as the Diluvialists and Neptunists did with Geology; but the hypotheses of to-day may be the parents of investigations which will become real science to-morrow. In the meantime it is safe to affirm that whatever amount of truth there may be in the several hypotheses which have engaged our attention, there is a creative force above and beyond them, and to the threshold of which we shall inevitably be brought after all their capabilities have been exhausted by rigid investigation of facts. It is also consolatory to know that species, in so far as the Modern period, or any one past Geological period may be concerned, are so fixed that for all practical purposes they may be regarded as unchanging. They are to us what the planets in their orbits are to the Astronomer, and speculations as to origin of species are merely our nebular hypotheses as to the possible origin of worlds and systems.

One word in conclusion with reference to our own work here as a Society, and as individual collectors of facts. We may not be in a position to take any leading place in the agitation of the

* It is but fair to say that Mr. Cope himself admits the action of natural selection as one cause of change.