

THE MOSAIC COSMOGONY.

BY O. W. GRIFFITHS.

(Continued.)

A press of work of various kinds, and some indisposition during the hot weather, prevented my continuing the "Mosaic Cosmogony" in time for the September number of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL.

Glancing over what has been already written, I felt confirmed in a suspicion I had begun to entertain, that I had committed myself to a criticism of an, after all, not very important article, so minute as to be likely to prove wearisome. I propose, therefore, not to follow the *Quarterly Reviewer* into much more detail, though several points might be made by doing so, but rather to lean to a generalization of the subject, which may I trust be rendered of some interest by the authorities which I shall quote.

I am, however, bound to advert to a remark I made in that portion of this article which appeared in April, i.e., that "the *Reviewer* would be hard pressed to define his 'act of creation,' but that I would presently help him towards tracing the nebular vortex-ring to one act or point." I do not pretend to point out the initial act or point; simply to suggest a step towards it; and the suggestion is a very simple one. Every particle of matter attracts every other particle with a force proportionate to its mass, and every particle of matter has its own poles of attraction and repulsion. Now, I am myself but indifferently versed in the details of science, though that is a deficiency which does not by any means incapacitate from sound generalizations, or a broad grasp. It does not therefore present itself to my mind as a very difficult conception, that those two properties, should at any instant of favorable conditions, find themselves compelled so to interact on each other, as necessarily to induce the rotary motion on which all the subsequent developments would appear to depend, and none but an orthodox arguer would, at this stage of investigation, feel himself necessitated to resort to a "creative fiat" as the initiatory impulse.

We see that the orthodox argument is a strenuous endeavor to twist the very bald text of the so-called Mosaic documents into accord with the nebular hypothesis. It so happens that the vague grandeur of the record has afforded scope for some apparent possibility of dovetailing, though, as we see the joiners work will not stand a close inspection. If science should find cause to replace the nebular hypothesis with a newer theory, sacerdotalism would shortly succeed in stretching the first chapter of Genesis to cover that ground also, and I do not doubt that many such 'changes of venue' will take place, before the placidity of the flock will be disturbed by any doubt as to the shepherd's clearness of vision, and power of direction.

In the meantime it may be well to bear in mind that, although the nebular hypothesis fulfils nearly all the demands which, as yet, astronomical science sees its way to make of it, the retrograde motion of the satellites of Uranus warn us that we may not be standing on perfectly sure ground. It would be a ludicrous waste of orthodox endeavor at reconciliation should it hereafter be found necessary even to materially modify the present theory.

The ultimate object of the article from which I have quoted so much is, as against the assumptions of Geologists in favor of stupendous periods of time, to establish their improbability. As the lowest estimate the *Reviewer* can find authority (that of Professor Tait) for screwing down to, is "ten or fifteen million of years," it would seem that "le jeu ne vaut pas 'a chandelle." If the sacerdotalists conceded ten thousand years only, it would upset the Mosaic literalism as effectively as ten millions.

The *Reviewer's* article, indeed, consists of two lines of argument—one to prove that the Mosaic record covers any number of eons of time that may be required by the chronic exigencies of the sacerdotal exegesist; the other to prove that, after all, the world did not take such a very long time to mature. Endeavoring to gain half an advantage from each position, one is impressed with the idea that either proposition goes some way towards neutralizing

the other. Like the dog who in the fable grasped at the shadow, he misses the substance, and falls between two stools.

At the foot of the first page, according to the custom of the *Quarterly* and other reviews, is a list of six works which furnish the materials for review. They are all geological. Other works are incidentally quoted, and indicated by foot-notes, but not the "Aids to Faith."

"Aids to Faith," was published about 1862, in answer to the famous "Essays and Reviews," and it is only fair to its contributors to admit that orthodoxy has since produced nothing better. The writers of the several essays are Professor Mansel of Oxford; Dr. Fitzgerald, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross; the Rev. T. C. Cook, Prebend of St. Paul's; Professor Rawlinson of Oxford; Dr. Browne, now Bishop of Winchester; Dr. Thompson, now Archbishop of York; Dr. Eliot, now Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol; and Dr. McCaul, Professor of Hebrew, Kings College, London.

The tone and temper of the work besit the learning, the gravity, and the social position of the authors—grave, mild, and courteous, as well as marked by great ability and critical acumen, it is impossible not to recognize in it the hands of men better than their creed, though "tied and bound with the chain" of their zealous faith in inspiration, and weak as water to the preceptions of an unbeliever in the great snake story.

The *Quarterly Reviewer* must have found in it still more attractive qualities, for the chief reason of my mentioning it is, that about one-third of the whole article, including nearly all the quotations I have given, are extracted from it almost verbatim, and without acknowledgment. It would thus appear that a defender of the orthodox faith, writing in 1877, could find no more recent sources of support than published in 1862, a work which, however respectable, is now out of date. It is, indeed, eminently satisfactory to gather from such indications, that while the attack advances and strengthens from year to year, the defence if not retrograding, remains stationary.

(To be continued.)

MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

BY MRS. ELMINA D. SLENKER.

No. 6.—Amphitrite.

The biography of Mrs. Neptune is scant and meagre in its detail. Being only a woman, even though a Queen, she is thought to be of little account and worthy of little notice. She was born of good parentage. Her father was Nereus, a sea deity, the eldest son of Pontus (the sea) and Earth. He was distinguished for his knowledge and his love of truth and justice, and was called the Sea elder, and his daughters were Nereids. Her mother, Doris, was also an Oceaniad and the sister as well as the wife of Nereus. Amphitrite was the most noted of the fifty daughters of Nereus and Doris. Propertius makes them a hundred! Just think of it. Old Neptune surrounded at each family reunion with ninety-nine sisters-in-law! What a gathering there must have been in that palace under the sea. Only two children were born to Neptune and Amphitrite—a son called Triton and a daughter named Rhoda, but the children, as is usual with the godly line, had lots of half-brothers and sisters through the amours of their father Neptune, who, like his brother Jupiter, was fond of a pretty face. Triton was the trumpeter of Neptune, and terrified the giants in the war with the gods by the sound of his instrument, which was made out of a shell called concha. It was also blown at the command of Neptune to soothe the restless waves of the sea. The upper portion of Triton was like that of a man, and the lower part that of a dolphin. The island of Rhodes, which lies in the Mediterranean Sea forty-three miles from the main land, is named for the daughter of Amphitrite. It was on this island that she was seen by the sun god, who, captivated by her beauty, married her, and became the father of seven sons and