

inundate heaven. The world is enveloped in darkness, and the universe is reduced to one vast ocean. The breath of Vishnu next becomes a strong wind by which the clouds are dispersed, and the Deity then appears in the form of Brahma reposing on his serpent couch upon the deep. As soon as he awakes the world is renewed, to be again destroyed and again renovated after each kalpa, or day of Brahma's existence. "For there are creations and destructions of worlds innumerable." At the end, however, of a hundred years, each consisting of 360 kalpas, and each kalpa of 4320 millions of our years, Brahma himself, and all things with him, will cease to exist.

Among the Jews there has been extant, from time immemorial, a prophecy that the world was destined to endure 6000 years—2000 before the Flood, 2000 under the Law, and 2000 under the Messiah. This belief is cordially accepted and strongly insisted upon by a majority of the Christian fath

From the East the doctrine of periodical revolutions found its way, with the migrations of men, into Europe. The Persians, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the Phœnicians adopted it in Western Asia and in Africa, while the "Orphic Hymns" afford us the earliest germination of the Eastern faith in Greece. Orpheus and Menander, who flourished in the very twilight of Greek poetry and civilization, and who undoubtedly derived their philosophy from the Egyptians, reproduce the myth of the Annus Magnus, and teach that the universe is destined to be dissolved on the completion of this cycle. Like the Indians and Jews, the authors of the Orphic Hymns assigned a definite duration to the Annus Magnus, as has been already stated.

In the Sibylline Books, whose origin dates back, perhaps, 1300 years before our era, this ancient faith is shadowed forth in another guise. The world is destined to endure