

the practice of the language, the Hebrew phrase has this signification: *The earth was waste and desert*, or, as others prefer, *empty and vacuous*; that is, *uncultured and unfurnished* with those things with which the Creator afterwards adorned it." *Antiquiss. Tell. Hist.* pp. 19-23.

Upon the whole, there is no evidence whatever, either in nature or revelation, that the earth has ever been in a state corresponding to the common notions of a chaos; while, on the other hand, there is strong proof that the present laws of nature have been in operation from the beginning. These laws have varied in the intensity of their action, and we have strong reason to believe that organic laws did not always exist; but none of these laws have ever been suspended, to leave the elements to mix in wild disorder in a formless mass. It is high time that religion was freed from the indescribable incubas of a chaos.

*Finally, the most important conclusion to which the mind is conducted by this subject is, that the present and past conditions of this world are only parts of one and the same great system of infinite wisdom and benevolence.*

We have seen that the same wise and benevolent laws, organic and inorganic, have always controlled, as they now control, this lower world. It is true we find modified conditions of the globe in its past history; but they were always the foreseen result of the same laws, and in harmony with the same great plan. And the modifications of organic structure, which were great in the successive economies, were always in perfect correspondence with the earth's physical changes. No where do we meet with conflicting plans; but throughout all nature, from the earliest zoöphyte and sea-weed of the silurian rocks to the young animals and plants that came into existence to-day, and from the choice gems that were produced when the earth was without form and void, to the crystals which are now forming in the chemist's laboratory, one golden chain of harmony links all together, and identifies all as the work of the same infinite mind.

"In all the numerous examples of design which we have selected from the various animal and vegetable remains that occur in a fossil state," says Dr. Buckland, "there is such a never-failing identity in the fundamental principles of their construction, and such uniform adoption of analogous means to