

oras was drawn from the older civilization of Egypt and Persia.

The Ionics discoursed much of the origin of things, and agreed with the Epicureans and Stoics in their doctrine of secular catastrophes.

Plato, the preceptor of the Academics, admits that the earth is subject to the transformation of deluges and conflagrations, but expresses the belief that the universe, as a whole, is something so beautiful and noble that the goodness of God will perpetuate its existence.

Aristotle alone, of all the ancient philosophers, maintained the eternity both of the matter of the universe and of the existing order. He confesses to a pride in this, since the doctrine, as he claims, is at variance with the unanimous belief of antiquity.

Among the Romans, Lucretius, Lucan, and Ovid openly discourse upon the prevalent doctrine of periodical catastrophes; and Cicero, who intermeddled with all learning, assures us that the memory of mighty deeds can not be eternal, since conflagrations and deluges periodically obliterate all record of human achievements.

The Celts, according to Strabo, held the same traditions in the west as were current among the nations of the east of Europe. Their Druids secured the world an immortality only through periodic ordeals by fire and water.

The Persians represent their god, Fire, as the final avenger of the sins of men, and the destroyer of the world.

Among the Arabians and Indians, the story of the Phœnix is an allegory of the earth. This bird of fable no sooner crumbles to ashes than she rises again in more than pristine beauty. They have a similar fable of the eagle, which is represented as soaring so near the sun as to renew his youth. Allusion seems to be made to this myth in the Psalms, where David says: "Thy youth is renewed like the