

ideal of a perfect universe which those who are opposed to his opinions may have pictured to themselves.

We may also demur to the assumption that the hypothesis of variation and natural selection obliges us to assume that there was an absolutely insensible passage from the highest intelligence of the inferior animals to the improvable reason of Man. The birth of an individual of transcendent genius, of parents who have never displayed any intellectual capacity above the average standard of their age or race, is a phenomenon not to be lost sight of, when we are conjecturing whether the successive steps in advance, by which a progressive scheme has been developed, may not admit of occasional strides, constituting breaks in an otherwise continuous series of psychical changes.

The inventors of useful arts, the poets and prophets of the early stages of a nation's growth, the promulgators of new systems of religion, ethics, and philosophy, or of new codes of laws, have often been looked upon as messengers from Heaven, and after their death have had divine honours paid to them, while fabulous tales have been told of the prodigies which accompanied their birth. Nor can we wonder that such notions have prevailed when we consider what important revolutions in the moral and intellectual world such leading spirits have brought about; and when we reflect that mental as well as physical attributes are transmissible by inheritance, so that we may possibly discern in such leaps the origin of the superiority of certain races of mankind. In our own time the occasional appearance of such extraordinary mental powers may be attributed to atavism; but there must have been a beginning to the series of such rare and anomalous events. If, in conformity with the theory of progression, we believe mankind to have risen slowly from a rude and humble starting point, such leaps may have