

of animal and vegetable species must of necessity have gradually increased in the course of the organic history of the earth, and could only attain its highest perfection in most recent times.

The above-mentioned laws of development, together with some other general ones, which have been expressly admitted and justly emphasized by Agassiz, and some of which have first been set forth by him, are, as we shall see later, only explicable by the Theory of Descent, and without it remain perfectly incomprehensible. The conjoint action of Inheritance and Adaptation, as explained by Darwin, can alone be their true cause. But they all stand in sharp and irreconcilable opposition to the hypothesis of creation maintained by Agassiz, as well as to the idea of a personal Creator who acts for a definite purpose. If we seriously wish to explain those remarkable phenomena and their inner connection by Agassiz's theory, then we are necessarily driven to the supposition that the Creator himself has developed, together with the organic nature which he created and modelled. We can, in that case, no longer rid ourselves of the idea that the Creator himself, like a human being, designed, improved, and finally, with many alterations, carried out his plans. "Man grows as higher grow his aims," says the poet, and this remark, so unworthy of a God, must be applied to him. Although, from the reverence with which, in every page, Agassiz speaks of the Creator, it might appear that, by his theory, we attain to the sublimest conception of the divine activity in nature, yet the contrary is in truth the case. The divine Creator is degraded to the level of an idealized man, of an organism progressing in development. According to this low conception God is, in fact, nothing more than a "gaseous vertebrate."