

**THE MOSAIC COSMOGONY. A  
LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE  
FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS,  
WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
RATIONALIA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649492930

The Mosaic Cosmogony. A Literal Translation of the First Chapter of Genesis, with Annotations and Rationalia by Robert George Suckling Browne

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Cover @ 2017

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THE  
MOSAIC COSMOGONY.

A LITERAL TRANSLATION

OF THE

FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS,

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND RATIONALIA.

BY

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LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,  
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCLXIV.

*100. t. 108.*

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND SON,  
ALDRINGGATE STREET.



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THIS ATTEMPT  
TO TURN THE ENTIRE LIGHT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE  
ON THE PATH OF SCIENCE  
IS INSCRIBED  
TO THE PRESIDENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE FELLOWS OF THE  
ROYAL SOCIETY  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE little book which you hold in your hand, courteous reader, is designed to obviate and clear away difficulties by affording a correct view of the Mosaic account of the Creation. The religious and intellectual world is not, that I am aware, in possession of accurate Scriptural authority, upon which to proceed to any precise decision upon important and interesting subjects. Men of science are constantly at a loss to determine what they may and what they may not accept, as Divine communication. They are frequently brought up on a sharp curb in their excursions in the pursuit of knowledge. If this had been the design of the Author of all things and the Creator of man, the creature would have had the sole and simple duty of a meek submission. But since that benign Being has vouchsafed clear and bright disclosures, and the obscurity, that has supervened and made those disclosures unintelligible, is the result of the creature's ignorance and presumption, it can be no excess of duty if human efforts be made to dissipate that darkness, which human frailty has created.

The labour of dispersing these clouds, hanging over and obscuring Divine revelation, is not inconsiderable. Light will not always be found, how diligently soever it may be



sought, in the mysteries of criticism, or the caprices of interpretation. It is latent in regions, too little trodden and too little known. The explorers of that *terra incognita* return laden with wealth, that exposes them to the amazed incredulity of indolence. This *terra incognita* is not the page of the Word of God, as it is one while fairly, another while faintly, and not unfrequently falsely rendered in human translations; but that Word of God, which breathes the very tones and accents, in which the inspired Servant of the Most High wrote it under the dictation of the HOLY SPIRIT. These sonorous tones and these living accents, or their equivalents, it has been my labour of reverential love to awaken and to vindicate and to transfer to these pages.

The geologist will exclaim impatiently at my presumption in tracing a sketch of a theory, that suits my views of the Mosaic Cosmogony. I have observed that, with those views, this planet may have undergone various and repeated disruptions; no limit to the number, or kinds, being possible. Its ignifluous state at some period is evident. That state may have been recurrent. But there must have been, subsequently to the last recurrence of an ignifluous state, some less terrific, some modified, some explosive, disruption. By this disruption, whenever it happened, the azoic bed was broken up and inequalities on the earth's surface produced. Was it not by this last disruption, or by a series of similar disruptions, creating these inequalities, that the beds were formed for receiving "into their several places" the superincumbent waters? If so, this last disruption, or series of disruptions, was the pro-

cess adopted by the Creator to restore to habitable order the Tohu and Bohu, that exceeding desolation, which prevailed up to, or at, that time. With deference I tender these hypotheses. With a similar feeling I invite Chemistry and Astronomy to aid me in the elucidation of my sacred subject. Such strength as I possess lies not in these interesting departments of knowledge.

Whatever may be the award of Science upon these matters, I must insist most solemnly and emphatically, that no theory can be true, or acceptable, which does not respect Divine Revelation. And that Divine Revelation, given by the aid of human language, I have laboured to place, and feel assured I have placed, in its true light. Not only is there no theory of an *ex nihilo* creation propounded by the inspired Prophet, but the notion is untenable, that Moses, in the two opening versicles, intended a Creation, indefinitely before the reconstruction of the earth, introductory to the *ex humo* creation of man. "There shall be light," was not the primal behest of Omnipotence in this stage of the earth's existence. "In the beginning," here intended, God renovated, that is, He *prepared and made habitable* the earth and its atmosphere. Nor, furthermore, was the creative power exerted, nor is it represented as having been at that period exerted, in creating the sources, or places, of light: the sun, the moon and the stars. Their previous existence is as surely asserted, as is the previous existence of the earth. The Expanse is the atmosphere, in which the bird of wing flies and the fertilizing clouds are suspended. This vast laboratory, in which nature operates immense analyses, solutions, precipitations and combina-

tions ; this grand receiver, in which all the attenuated and volatilized productions of terrestrial bodies are received, mingled, agitated, combined and separated, is denominated "*the heavens.*" But the "heavenly bodies" move not in those "heavens," although through them this planet enjoys their brilliancy.

The independence of thought, I have asserted, is not incompatible with a profound respect for the opinions of others. It is the conviction that many of those opinions are grounded upon difficulties, thrown in the way of searchers after truth by translators and commentators, that emboldens me to demand a hearing and expect forbearance. Vociferous and startled prejudice has my fullest permission to envelope me in its vapour. Its volume will not shock me. My object is the vindication of the sacred Word of the God of Truth. The septuagenary has no dread of human censure ; no thirst for human applause. In patience he awaits that good time, when he may be humbly hopeful, that his strenuous and fearless efforts in the highest and most holy cause, that can engage the mind of man, may receive the, "Well done!" of his SAVIOUR and his God.