

No. 7861.82



Boston Public Library.

2763

PAMPHLETS.

Geology.

8168

GENESIS AND GEOLOGY;

OR,

THE TWO RECORDS OF CREATION.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

* 7861.52

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHERBROOKE, ON SUNDAY MORNING,
JANUARY 28, 1877,

BY THE

REV. ISAAC BROCK, M.A.,

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD,

CO-RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH.

“Men have perverted Creation: instead of using it as a glass through which to see God, they have turned it into a veil to hide God.”—*McLeod Campbell.*

T. J. TUCK, SHERBROOKE, P. Q.

1877.

10 CENTS.

To the Hon. G. E. Winthrop
with the author's kind regards
Oct. 20. 1877

GENESIS AND GEOLOGY ;

OR,

THE TWO RECORDS OF CREATION.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHERBROOKE, ON SUNDAY MORNING,
JANUARY 28, 1877,

BY THE

REV. ISAAC BROCK, M.A.,

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD,

CO-RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH.

"Men have perverted Creation: instead of using it as a glass through which to see God, they have turned it into a veil to hide God."—*McLeod Campbell.*

T. J. TUCK, SHERBROOKE, P. Q.

1877.

10 CENTS.

I publish this Sermon at the request of several members of my congregation. It is little more than a condensation of some of the prominent features of the argument contained in the works that I refer to. I trust that this extremely brief, and necessarily imperfect statement of the harmony between the two records of God's Creation may be useful to some who have not access to larger works on the subject, or have not perhaps time to read them.

Sherbrooke, Feb. 3, 1877.

I. B.

GENESIS I; 1. "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth."

You have listened to-day to the opening page of the Revelation of God to man. That page contains the inspired record of creation. As a record of creation it stands not alone: there is another record; and that other record is written not on the perishable leaves of a book, 'tis engraven in imperishable characters on the everlasting rocks.

Both records are from God—the written record of Moses, and the engraven record of the rocks. Therefore between the two there can be no contradiction. If ought of contradiction appear, either we have not read aright the record of the rocks, or we have not interpreted aright the record of Moses. Certain it is that God's works cannot contradict His words, nor God's words His works. We may fail to see the harmony: but the harmony exists.

There was a time when some timid believers in Divine Revelation regarded with suspicion and distrust the discoveries of the Science of Geology; that day, I trust, is for ever passed away. For now, instead of being called on to show the harmony between Revelation and the Science of Geology, we may go much further; we may summon that youthful Science as a witness to the exact truth of the record of creation with which the Bible opens: we can show that the course and order of creation described in the record of

Moses are the course and order of creation disclosed by that record of the rocks, which the modern Science of Geology has enabled us to decipher.

This is what I purpose attempting this morning, as far as the brief limits of a sermon allow.

One preliminary matter must first be touched upon—the meaning of the word “*day*” in the Mosaic record of creation. Geology shows that the creation days were periods of time, embracing many millenniums of years. Does Scripture warrant this use of the word “*day*” to express an extended period of time? It does. We need not pass beyond the record of creation for proof. In the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis we read: “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heaven.” There the word “*day*” is used to describe the whole period of time during which God was creating the heaven and the earth.¹

The fourth Commandment, however, is referred to by those who maintain that creation days were merely days of twenty-four hours duration. But as McCausland in his “*Sermons in Stones*” remarks: “It is obvious to every candid enquirer that what is intended to be conveyed by the terms of the Divine precept is simply, that as God wrought during six successive periods—*His* days—and rested from His labors on the seventh, so ought man to work in his six natural periods

(1.) The six grand eras of creation were called days by Moses, because it was the current term used by his countrymen to designate periods of long as well as of short duration. See the expression used in the “*Prayer of Moses*,” Ps. xc. 4; and refer also to II. Peter III. 8.

The placing of “the evening” before “the morning” in the designation of the respective days was probably caused by a custom which prevailed among the Jews, and indeed almost all Eastern nations, of commencing the natural day at sunset.

of days, and rest on the seventh. The distribution of his time ought to be similar to that of the Divine Author of his existence. On the other hand, the tenor of this commandment would appear to furnish a strong argument in favor of the extended sense of the word "day." For ever since the creation of man, God has been resting from His work of creation : God's seventh day has not yet reached its termination."

There is another view of this matter brought out by Hugh Miller in his "Testimony of the Rocks," which which may tend to elucidate the meaning of the language of Moses. *How* was the history of the creation conveyed to Moses? Probably by a series of visions. Thus most frequently Divine communications were made to man. If then, the work of the six mighty creation days was presented to Moses in a series of visions occupying six natural days, the language of Moses, while harmonizing with the fact that creation days embraced almost countless ages, would yet describe what he actually saw and heard in six successive visions during six natural days.²

In showing you that the course and order of creation described in the Mosaic record correspond with that disclosed by the record of the rocks, I can, of course, only touch on the salient points of this correspondence, leaving those of you who desire to pursue this most important subject into its details to read the works I have referred to, or others which might be mentioned.

(2.) If the various scenes of the creative drama were communicated to the inspired historian in a succession of visions, each being a vision of the evening and morning, there is an expression in the Book of Daniel which may be compared with the Mosaic record, Gabriel says to Daniel, "The vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true."—Dan. viii., 26.

I. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

This verse discloses the fact there was a beginning, and a Creator of heaven and earth: it gives no direct information as to the *time* of the commencement of creation. Geology and Astronomy both teach that millions of years must have elapsed since the heaven, (including the sun, moon and stars,) and the earth were ushered into existence. But though "the beginning" spoken of by Moses was in the most remote of remote ages, still Geology, confirming Holy Scripture, most distinctly shows that there was a beginning when the Universe was formed out of its gaseous elements.

The first picture of our planet after its entry on the stage of its existence, is disclosed in these words:

"The earth was without form and void, (literally, was invisible and unfurnished,) and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The earth was "invisible," inasmuch as it was covered with water and enveloped in darkness; and "unfurnished," inasmuch as no organic forms of plants and animals had as yet been called into being. Our planet in those remote ages then, was a dark untenanted watery waste.

Geology gives us reason to believe that the lowest base of rock, on which all the subsequent strata of rock were deposited, was formed in the depths of a warm ocean, which rolled its unbroken billows from pole to pole, and from which rose a thick cloud of vapour enveloping the entire surface of the deep, and causing the darkness referred to in the sacred record. In that lowest, primordial base of rock, geology has discovered, notwithstanding the most diligent search, no fossil remains whatever of animals or plants; thus furnishing

at least negative evidence that the earth during those remote ages was "void"—empty—unfurnished with ought of animal or vegetable life.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon (literally, was brooding over) the face of the waters." Had the brooding of the Spirit of God over the waters of the primæval ocean no effect? Most decidedly it had. If not, why is it recorded? What then does it mean, and what did it effect? By comparing this passage with other texts of Scripture, we are convinced that it declares that the Spirit of God had commenced His active creative work in those mighty waters,—that He was impregnating them with organic life. In other words the passage declares that the grand era of physical life had commenced: and where? Obviously in those waters over which the Spirit of God was brooding. Hence, the first created of living creatures must have been wholly submarine. Geology confirms this deduction from the Mosaic record.

Passing upwards from the azoic³ section of the Laurentian rocks, we arrive at the limestone section of the same rocks, in which the Zoophyte (the earliest specimen of organic life) has been discovered. Thence we pass up to the Cambrian and Silurian strata of rocks, which belong to the second creative day, in which have been discovered the fossil remains of Mollusks, Crustaceans, fishes, and other forms of organic life: all these early forms of organic life are exclusively submarine. This not only confirms the deduction from the Scripture record, that the presence of God's Spirit indicated the commencement of life;

(3.) The granite section of the Laurentian rocks, which forms the base of all succeeding strata, has been called "azoic" because in it no fossil remains of animal or plant life have been discovered.

it confirms also the Scripture statement that no dry land appeared till the third day.

Further, the Mosaic record implies that life existed *before* light. "The Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters." Here is the dawn of life. What follows? "God said, Let there be light; and there was light." Here is the dawn of light, which like life, was progressive. Does Geology confirm this order—life first, and then light? It does. The sightless Zoophyte of the limestone band of the Laurentian rocks is an earlier creation, than the Crustaceans and other organisms of the Cambrian era, which were endowed with the organs of vision. The adaptation of light to the eye and of the eye to light is so obvious, that we naturally conceive that the existence of the one necessarily implies that of the other; and therefore the absence of the visual organs in the earliest created animals confirms the Mosaic narrative that "the Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters," infusing into them life *before* light had been permitted to penetrate their depths.

II. But we must hasten on. The great work of the second day, according to the Mosaic record, was the separation by the firmament of the waters below, from those which are bound up in the clouds above. This points to the creation of the aerial atmosphere necessary for the diffusion of light, the transmission of sound, and for the purposes of respiration. The close of the Silurian epoch marks the close of the second, and the opening of the third creation day.

At that epoch Geology tells us that our planet was inhabited by a population wholly submarine, but requiring both light and air for its existence,—the fossils

of that era show that animals existed then with organs both of sight and hearing. So far all is harmony. Even the silence of the sacred historian is what we would expect under the circumstances. He chronicles only what he saw and heard. A shoreless ocean circled the globe : living creatures tenanted its mighty depths, but as these could not be seen in the vision given to Moses, their existence is unrecorded beyond what may be implied in the announcement, "The Spirit of God was brooding over the face of the waters."

III. The Scripture narrative of the third creation day is simple : the appearance of dry land above the wide expanse of the waters, and the creation of land vegetation to grow and propagate itself upon the surface. The sacred historian does not explain *how* it was that the dry land appeared. He merely states it as the result of the Creator's command. But Geology both explains the causes by which the Creator effected this result, and points to the opening of the third creation day as the time when it was brought about ; thus again confirming the Mosaic record.

The close of the Silurian era, and the opening of the Devonian, or Old Red Sandstone epoch, was marked by very great volcanic disturbance. The position of the Silurian strata of rocks, on the great mountain ranges of the world, proves to a practical geologist, that their creation took place at the period referred to—the close of the long Silurian era, which corresponds to the opening of the third creation day.

During the third creation day—the epoch of the Old Red Sandstone—the Creator caused the earth to "bring forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind." Sir C. Lyall and Dr.

Dawson tell us that grass-like plants are abundant in the Old Red Sandstone of Scotland, and that in the same formations in Nova Scotia there is ample evidence of the existence of fruit-bearing trees. Again all is harmony between the two records: the correspondence of order is exact.

The Mosaic record implies that the vegetation which commenced to deck the earth on the third day must have developed with amazing rapidity. The direct rays of the sun did not reach the earth till the fourth day. Till then a dense canopy of clouds overhung this planet. Hence the earth was in the condition of a vast shaded humid hot-house, and must have been covered with the most luxuriant growth of giant ferns and other succulent plants, such as flourish in uninterrupted shade, heat and moisture.

Did such a vegetation exist at this period of the world's history? Geology for answer points to our coal measures, which proclaim the fact that at this era, (the close of the third and the opening of the fourth day,) a vegetation, which has never been paralleled in the most prolific of tropical climes, spread over every part of the world in which dry land was to be found. From the coal measures too we may learn the nature and texture of the plants of which the mighty forests of that era were composed. They are all of that soft and succulent character, which the conditions of shade, heat and moisture, implied in the sacred record necessitate.

IV. Before the close of the fourth creation day, the sun's unclouded rays shone out on our earth, and with the moon and stars appeared in the firmament of heaven, thenceforth to be "for signs, and for seasons, and for

days, and years." Such is the record of Moses. ⁴

Is it confirmed by the record of the rocks? Two simple and well established facts of Geology tell the tale that now at length the sun's unclouded rays had reached our globe. Passing from the Carboniferous strata of rocks to the next in order, the Permian, which correspond to the close of the fourth day, we first meet with the fossil remains of trees of hard texture, and possessing season rings, which could only have been produced by the presence of the unclouded sunbeam.

The other fact is this: the fossil remains of plants and animals found in the different strata show that at this era the climate of the earth changed from a *uniform* temperature to a *varying* one, dependent on the sun, which mainly produces the phenomena of the seasons. The fossil remains of all the strata of rocks prior to the Permian, are found to be the same in all parts of the world, showing a uniform temperature. But from the Permian strata upwards, the fossils differ very materially, according to the latitude they are found in, showing that the sun had commenced to give to our world its varying seasons and diversity of climate.

V. The fifth creation day is vividly marked both in the sacred record and in the record of the rocks. I adopt the more literal translation of McCausland of the twentieth verse of the first chapter of Genesis, "Let

(4) LeVaux in his "Twin Records of Creation," says: "The language of Moses does not sanction the views of those who deny that the heavenly bodies were created at the dawn of the beginning: for most positively Moses does not say that the substance of the celestial luminaries was created on the fourth day, no more than he says that the substance of "dry land" was created on the third. It is obvious that he himself declares that the heavens,—sun, stars and plants—were created "in the beginning," and contemporaneously with, if not prior to, the creation of the earth. His statement concerning the appearance of the celestial luminaries on the fourth day, if interpreted according to the context, simply means that on that day the heavenly orbs became visible agents in the creative drama, and were appointed for the first time to perform certain offices in reference to our globe."

the waters bring forth abundantly the reptile that hath the breath of life : and let fowl fly over the earth upon the face of the firmament of heaven. Then God created great sea monsters, and every soul of the creature that creepeth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and all winged creatures after their kind."

Thus, the creations of this era emanated from the waters in great abundance, and consisted of three classes : (1) great sea-monsters, (2) large reptiles, (3) winged creatures. Geology contains ample proof that these were the productions of the fifth day. The Trias, Lias, and Oolite strata correspond to the fifth day,—and so vast and abundant are the fossil remains of this era in those strata, that geologists have called it "The Age of Reptiles." The record of the rocks exposes to our view the organic remains of the three great and dominant classes of this era. None of the scenes of the primæval world have more particularly attracted the notice of geologists, than that which the earth presented during the day of the deposition of the Lias and Oolite strata. The extraordinary abundance and the vast dimensions of the reptile population of that era have been the favourite themes of wonder to all geologists ; and it is remarkable that the only portion of the Creation, as recorded by Moses, in which he gives any information respecting the size or extent of the created animals, is on the fifth day. He states that creeping things were brought forth abundantly, and that there were great sea-monsters. Again, is not all harmony between the two records ?

VI. These numerous and gigantic forms of organic life pass away, however, in the course of ages. The

sixth day dawns : and according to geology the mammal races of animals appear on the scene and take possession of the earth ; and so teaches the Mosaic record to which we have just listened. “ God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth on the earth after his kind.”

For a long series of ages, represented by the formation of the Tertiary rocks, the quadruped mammal reigned supreme in creation ; till that lordship was given by God to another made in His own image ; God said, “ Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ; and let them have dominion.” Once again note the harmony of the two records. Last in the Mosaic record stands the creation of man, (I cannot enter now on the question of antiquity of man.) 'Tis thus too in the record of the rocks. It is only on the surface of the Upper Tertiary rocks that we discover for the first time relics, (human bones and works of art,) characteristic of his presence. Thus again all is harmony between Genesis and Geology.

What then is the difference between the two ? Only that which must necessarily exist between a sketch and full details. Genesis has furnished us with a sketch, but Geology has supplied us (so far as our planet is concerned,) with full details of creation— with a complete history of the Creator's marvellous works during the far-off years of distant ages ; Geology fills up, without correction or erasure, the grand historical outline penned by Moses under the Inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Inspiration and Geology then we may regard as twin sisters ; offspring of one and the same God, mutually elucidating the glorious plan and wonderful order of creation, both unfolding the marvellous deeds of the

Creator of the heaven and earth, during the distant ages of the mighty past—both, therefore, leading us to adore Him, “Of Whom, and through Whom, and to Whom are all things.” Whether then we study the record of creation in Genesis, or the record engraven in the rocks,—let us not miss the superscription of the Creator, let us not be like those blinded materialists.

“Who on God’s works no seal of Godhead find.”⁵

Rather, let our prayer be to our God as we study His works

“Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding,
Creation’s golden steps, to climb to Thee”

One thought more. The past is the prophecy of the future. Hitherto, the law of creation has been *the law of progress*. From the humble Zoophyte, up to Man made in the image of God, progress has been the law of God’s creation. Has the climax been reached?

Man has fallen—but man has been redeemed—and the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, has more than repaired for all His people the ruin effected by the first Adam.

In Him then—the Son of God—the second Adam, the new Head of the human family, we look for progress here and hereafter. Now, renewal of the spirit by living union with Him—hereafter, the resurrection body and the life everlasting. “Now, are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

(5) Christian Year. Third Sunday in Advent.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

MODERN SCIENCE
IN ITS
RELATION TO RELIGION.

A SERMON

On the Theory of Force and the Theory of Evolution
in connexion with belief in a Personal God.

Preached at the visitation in July, 1876,

OF THE
RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

T. J. TUCK, SHERBROOKE, P. Q.

15 CENTS.



