

THE WORKS AND DAYS OF MOSES

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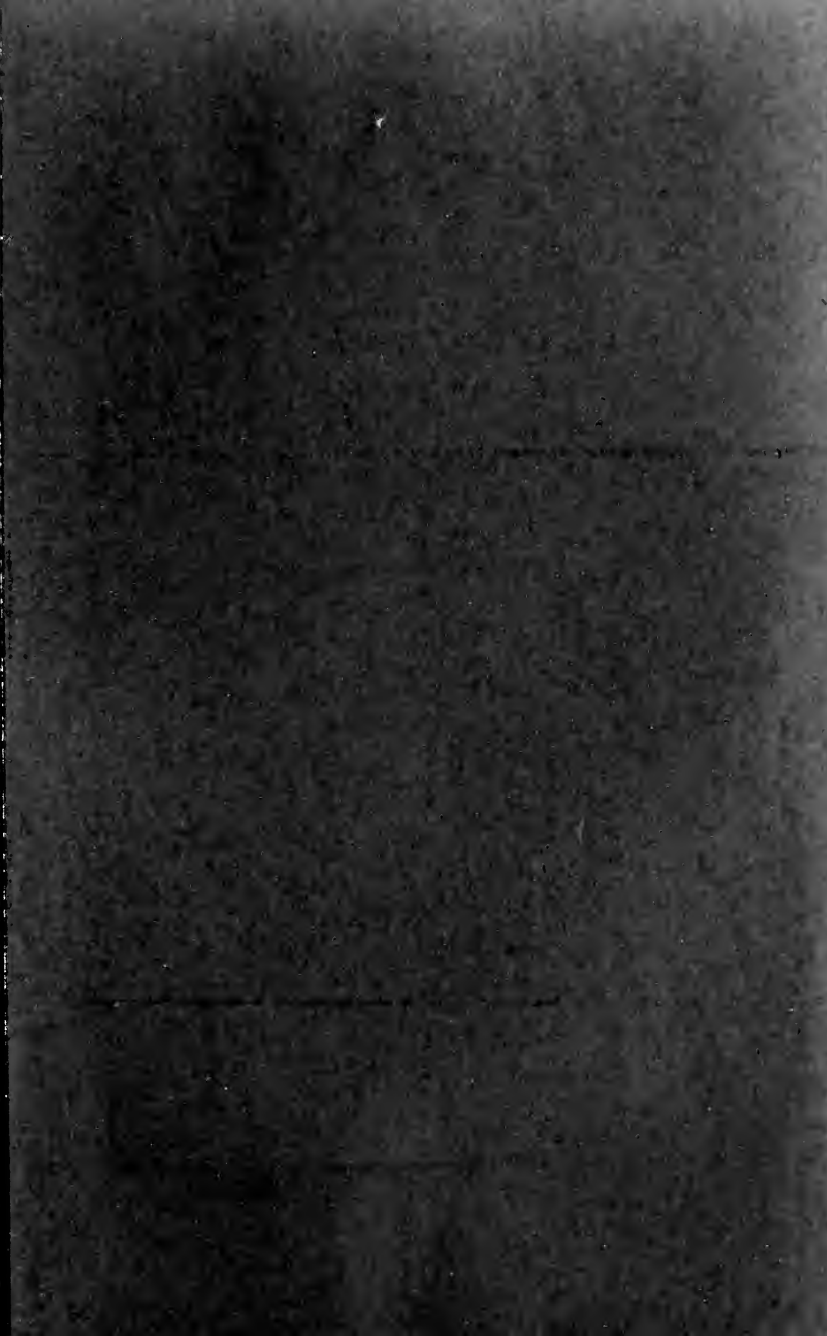
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THE
'WORKS AND DAYS' OF MOSES.

OR

*A CRITICAL DISSERTATION ON THE FIRST
TWO CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.*

BY

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PREFACE.

IT will be admitted by every intelligent and impartial critic, that at a first view there is a marked discrepancy, not to say a manifest opposition, between the account which we have of the world's creation in the first two chapters of the book of Genesis, and that which is imprinted in stupendous characters in the vast encyclopædia of the universe itself. Over and over again distinguished literary potentates have come forward to offer explanations and to propose terms of agreement, with the view of terminating the long conflict between Biblicists on the one hand and Scientists on the other; but no one, so far as I am aware, has yet succeeded in negotiating a settlement by proving that the Mosaic narrative is a scientific possibility.

Where so many have failed, do I flatter myself that I shall succeed? I will tell the reader exactly what I have done.

I have divided my matter into nine short chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a consideration of the main purpose of the Pentateuchal Scriptures, and the extent to which the writer may be accepted as an authority on a question of cosmogony. My second

chapter marks out certain limitations which were imposed on him by the intellectual condition of his age. In a third and a fourth I review the two chapters of Genesis which are the more immediate subject of our inquiry, drawing particular attention to what I conceive to be the most conspicuous characteristics of each. A fifth chapter prepares the reader for certain difficulties which lie in our way. In the chapters which follow, I start with the assumption that the day of Moses is susceptible of its literal and natural signification, and I show how this is possible consistently with the just and reasonable requirements of Science. As, however, to make good this position, I have to ask for larger interpretative concessions than may by many be deemed admissible, I next try what may be done with the theory which makes the day a figure of notation for an indefinite number of years; there is more, I think, to be said in favour of this view than has been commonly urged for it; nevertheless, as it is in parts cloudy and obscure, in my last chapter but one I open out a new creation, which I venture to affirm leaves ample room for every syllable and letter which Moses has written, and every fossil and footprint which Geology has discovered. Such, then, is a synopsis of my work, respecting which this much I can assure the reader, that that cannot with truth be said of it, which was said of the axe-helve of old, 'Alas, master, for it was *borrowed*.'

P. P.

*Llandovery, Exmouth,
September, 1889.*

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THE
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CHAPTER I.

PROLEGOMENA.

IF, as we have good reason for supposing, the book of Genesis is to be ascribed to Moses as its author—I, of course, except a few passages in it, which, being of a later date than Moses, must necessarily have been inserted after his death—we can hardly be wrong in conjecturing that the main object of his writing was to furnish the people of Israel, at that critical period in their history when they were first welded into a nation under the Divine government, with a well-authenticated record of God's mercies and

promises to their fathers, and of the singular faith and obedience of those great God-fearing men, to the end that they might have those things in perpetual remembrance, and teach them to their children from generation to generation. And this conjecture becomes almost a certainty, when we carefully examine the contents of the book. Of the fifty chapters into which Genesis is divided, no less than three-fourths are taken up with an account of the life of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob and his sons; the whole of the preceding history, extending over a period of some two thousand years, if we may assume that the Biblical chronology is more or less correct, and comprising such momentous events as the creation, the fall, the peopling, and, after the deluge, the re-peopling and distribution of the inhabitants of the earth, has but ten chapters apportioned to it, of no more than average length. Even those chapters scarcely form an exception to what I may call the Israelism of the book. The first chapter is especially remarkable for the prominence which it gives

to two of the most important articles of the Jewish religion—the worship of God the Creator, and the Sabbatical rest. In an age, in a country, in a world, where the worship of the creature was almost universal, we can trace in this exordium the wisdom of the legislator. Practical religion, not abstruse science, it was his aim to inculcate—theology, not geology. The six days' question, though it has well-nigh absorbed the attention of some modern controversialists, is, after all, in Moses' scheme, merely a secondary one. Nevertheless, provided we do not lose sight of the grand features of the Mosaic landscape, which have, and which were intended to have, the most conspicuous prominence, there is no harm in passing under review some of the minor details, about which there has been, and there still is, no little diversity of opinion.

But, before we proceed, it will be advisable to make sure of the ground on which we stand. The ultimate authority on all matters appertaining to God's work of creation must necessarily be that work itself—the earth and the heavens—

the true original document written by Jehovah Himself in clear and telling characters, which, however, because of its immensity, and because of its variety, and because of the changes which it is incessantly undergoing through the operation of certain laws, it is not always easy to decipher, and it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to explain. This, I say, is our chief textbook, our theological primer, our highest standard of authority, which we are bound to consult and follow, and for neglecting the plain testimony of which long ago St. Paul declared that the creature-worshipper was without excuse. All which has ever been written, or which may yet be written, on this, is but a commentary, and can only be of value in so far as it is true. Moses' narrative is one of such commentaries—the earliest, and, until comparatively recently, generally considered the best. Of him we are told, that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, that is to say, he was one of the most learned men of his day; moreover, he was a great legislator, a great leader of the people,

and a chronicler of no mean order; a man, therefore, whom no one now living, be he who he may, can afford to cheapen or despise. This Moses, then, though he could not have had a very extensive knowledge from personal observation of the earth on which he lived, much less of the sea, has left us (which may well excite our wonder) a very simple, a very striking, a very comprehensive, yet at the same time most compendious history, of the world's creation, not confining himself (be it observed) to vague generalities, which it would be easy to fabricate, and it might be difficult to refute, but committing himself to some very minute, extraordinary, and what I may call unconjecturable, particulars concerning it, specially with reference to the formation of the first human pair; telling his tale withal with a positiveness and a precision, which leave no manner of doubt in our minds, that he himself at any rate was fully impressed with the belief that what he wrote was true.

In striking contrast with him there has arisen in modern times a new school of commentators,

renowned for their ability, their industry, their sagacity, their research, who, not content, as many great intellects have been in times past, to take their information second-hand from Moses, have gone to the original text-book, the earth itself, and examined it; and, although they have not been able to agree with one another in their interpretation of all the marvellous phænomena which they have found there, are pretty nearly all of them agreed in this—that Moses cannot possibly be right. And, considering the exceptional advantages which they have had for making experiments and registering observations—the world mapped out before them, the earth bored and tunnelled, the deep sea dredged, the heavens opened more and more to view by means of the most refined and perfected instruments—we might be disposed to accept their conclusions, and to excuse the author of Genesis as having given us the best sketch which he could of an immense and complicated subject agreeably to the crude conceptions of a rude and unenlightened age, were it not that there was a suspicion—some would say,

a certainty—and here I am introducing a most important factor, which, although I have hitherto purposely excluded it, must on no account be left out of calculation—that Moses, as having been a prophet and seer, titles which the modern scientist would not think of allowing to be ascribed to himself, obtained his information directly from the great Author; that by the illumination of the Divine Spirit he was enabled to declare, what, but for that guidance, he could not possibly have known anything about; and consequently that his account, if rightly understood and applied, cannot conflict with what the same Spirit has inscribed on the innumerable pages of the volume of the universe, albeit it may not square with certain theories, which, though remarkable for their ingenuity, and striking for their novelty, and dressed out in a brave show of plausible argument, have never yet been, and probably never can be, conclusively demonstrated.

The very possibility of Moses' inspiration makes us eye more jealously than ever every line and word which he has left on record. It is

all very fine for certain persons to exclaim, 'A prophet is nothing;' but the monumental evidence, which history affords, that such a body of men have indeed existed, cannot be puffed away with a breath; nor can it be denied that the title was conceded to Moses by the Jew, by the Christian, and, I had almost said, by the Pagan writers themselves, who were not ignorant either of his name or his claim. What, then, will be the effect, supposing that Moses was supernaturally inspired to write his chapters on creation? It will not alter one letter which has been set down in the Scriptures of the earth; but it will compel us, before we jump to the conclusion that we have sounded the depths of the Mosaic revelation, to reflect whether we have made allowance for certain peculiarities which distinguish the writings of prophets. Let us pause for a moment to notice one or two of those peculiarities.

In the first place, the prophet did not necessarily know, certainly had not a full and perfect knowledge of, the things and times about which he spake; had he been challenged to give a clear

exposition of his own utterances, he positively could not have done it; he believed them, however, and called upon others to do the same.

Secondly, the prophet often groups together in the same verse, or in consecutive verses, events which not only had no immediate chronological sequence, but were not unfrequently separated by a long interval of years; the remote future is spoken of as if it were all but present; nay, occasionally—so certain is it considered of accomplishment—as if it had already past.

Thirdly, though the prophet reveals the future in language which, when the event has taken place, is found to be marvellously appropriate and accurate, his meaning is as often as not hidden from those whom he addresses, and he himself perhaps is looked upon as no better than a dreamer or an organ of a *dæmon*.

It would be easy to cite instances of the peculiarities mentioned, but I conceive that they are too well known to be seriously disputed. It is true that Moses in his chapters on creation looks back to the past, whereas the prophets I refer

to look forward to the future ; but, in so far as both were under special Divine direction, both stand on the same lofty pedestal, and the writings of both must be measured by the same canon of spiritual interpretation.

Let it not seem strange, then, if it should turn out that Moses groups together in a single chapter, or in a portion of a chapter, acts of creative energy which were separated by a long lapse of intervening years ; the prophet overleaps these petty divisions of time, and comes at once to what has been in the past, or to what will be in the future. And again, let it not be thought strange, if it should turn out that the Catholic Church, that all denominations of Christians, have all along missed the true significance of the Mosaic record. Just as the doctors of the Jewish Church, though they had the oracles of God committed to their charge, misconceived and misapplied them, till Messiah appeared, and showed their true meaning by Himself fulfilling them, so may not professing members of the Christian Church, though they have long had

the writings of Moses in possession, from superficially reading them, or too literally expounding them, have failed to grasp their true significance, till the volume of Nature, which is the book of God, was opened and examined, and men began to inquire in what way the wonderful tale, which is there unfolded, could be reconciled with the simple and concise account of the Hebrew prophet?

But it will be said, 'Is this the case? Where is the proof?' I dare not pretend that I shall be able to demonstrate that there is an exact correspondence in every particular between what Moses has sketched and what geologists have discovered; but I hope to be able to show by something more substantial than figures of rhetoric or fictions of fancy, that Moses, so far from being a mere mythologist, or a registrar of the geological fallacies of his day, or (which is the most that some will allow him to have been) a careful compiler of Hebrew traditions, was, if we may judge of him by his account of creation, a recorder of truths which could only have been revealed to him in his capacity as seer,

and those truths he has recorded faithfully, in human language indeed, and with a necessary and prudent regard for the rude conceptions and imperfect faculties of the people of Israel, but uncorrupted by any admixture of human error. Make but due allowance for the undoubted fact, that what we have from Moses is a brief summary, addressed to the religious instincts of a particular and peculiar people, while geologists enter into the minutest details, and appeal to the scientific faculties of every individual of the human race, and we shall find that there is as striking a general resemblance between the two versions as can reasonably be looked for. A record, the very first words of which carry us back thus vaguely to 'In the beginning,' cannot be expected to be quite exempt from difficulty; but the difficulty is not insurmountable, and, when the whole subject is viewed aright, we may rest assured that the handwriting of Moses will not be found at variance with the handiwork of God.

CHAPTER II.

MOSES' LAW OF WRITING.

THE book of Genesis having been written at a comparatively early period in the history of the world, and having been primarily intended for the edification of the children of Israel, we should not be surprised if we find in it—rather should we be surprised if we did *not* find in it—a primitiveness in some of its conceptions, and I will not say a crudeness, but let me coin a word, and say a *humanness*, in some of its expressions, which testify alike to its antiquity, and to its suitability to the capacity of a rude and unenlightened people. No reasonable man can doubt that God, had He so willed it, could have withdrawn for Moses the veil which hides the wonders of the natural world, and enabled him

to anticipate discoveries which have only come to light after centuries of painstaking observation and diligent study—that He could have endowed him with powers of utterance, whereby he might have expressed in no mundane fashion the mysterious ways of God; but such transcendental spiritualism would have been fit only for a congregation of angels, and such physicisism would have been far too advanced for the people of Israel. Whatever truths were directly opposed to what they were accustomed to see with their eyes (and it must be remembered that Moses is constantly appealing to what their eyes had seen), and whatever expressions far outreached the stretch of their minds, would have diverted them rather than otherwise from those large and lofty truths which it was Moses' special mission to inculcate; they would have been perplexed by a *double revelation*, part bearing reference to the spiritual world, part to the natural; the one essential for present knowledge, the other of no immediate concern to them; the result would probably have been, that that revelation which

was the least important would have had the greatest importance attached to it. Accordingly, Moses uses weapons which came ready to his hand, and which, if rude and primitive, were sufficient for the work which he had to do. Was the firmament supposed to be a sort of roof to the earth, or a floor to the heaven? Moses neither yeas it nor nays it; he takes it as he finds it; introduces it into his narration, where it passes unchallenged, as a matter of course. Were the stars supposed to be as small in reality as they are in appearance, and the sun and the moon to be the only great lights? Moses simply says, 'God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also.' 'The sun was risen upon the earth'; 'The sun was going down'—such a description of solar phænomena was optically true, was popularly correct. On such subjects Moses was no wiser than the men of his generation; nor was special information vouchsafed to him; he uses, therefore, the language of his age, nor does any one

even in the present day, however scientific, scruple to speak of the rising and the setting of the sun. 'God rested'; 'God planted a garden'; 'God made coats of skin, and clothed them'; 'It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart'; 'The Lord shut them in' (the ark); 'The Lord smelled a sweet savour' (of the sacrifice); 'The Lord God hardened his spirit'; 'The Lord God is a jealous God'; 'The Lord is a man of war'—here is another group of expressions intensely human and homely; *irreverent* some would call them, if they had not from long use become familiarized with them, and if they did not know that Moses was their author; yet such expressions did not startle, much less shock, the people of Israel. *They* listened with childlike simplicity and awful reverence, and accepted the lessons which were so conveyed to them of the providence, the policy, the power, the presence, the perfect goodness of God. The doctrine was excellent, the diction only is exceptionable; yet we must remember that even St. Paul was

obliged to speak to some of the most enlightened people of his much more enlightened age 'after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of their flesh.' The object of revelation is not through what men do *not* know, but through what they *do* know, or what they think they know, to tell them that which, but for the revelation, they certainly could not know. This is what Moses has done, and who will say that he should have done otherwise?

Nor was it only in his description of natural phænomena, or in his use of certain picked phrases, that we trace what I may call this law of adaptation. Throughout every part of the book of Genesis, throughout all the books of the Pentateuch, the colour of the narrative is more or less assimilated to the character and circumstances of the congregation of Israel. The drama of creation is cast in six acts, which extend over six days, and end with a seventh day of rest. Who cannot discern in this arrangement a reference to the religious observances, perhaps also to the secular occupations, of the

Israelites? The contemporaries of Moses would see in God's rest-day an archetype of their own earthly sabbaths, though they might not have the remotest conception that it cast a shadow very much farther—even to that heavenly *σαββατισμός*, which 'remaineth for the people of God.' Yet this was the use which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews made of those words, showing that the first chapter of Genesis looks as far forward as it does backward—spans the vast interval between the old heaven and the old earth which were long ago created, and the new heaven and the new earth which apostles and prophets have declared are yet for to come. The busy work-people in the Egyptian brick-fields, who well knew what it was to have a definite portion of work assigned to them, the tale of bricks strictly enjoined and rigorously enacted, and who went forth to their labour in the morning and returned in the evening, could never forget that the God of Israel had revealed Himself as a workman, whose day was bounded by 'the evening and the morning,' and who on

each day had had a set portion of work to finish. All this, so far from presenting any difficulty to the commonalty of Israel, would be a natural picture, alike intelligible and impressive. Of the strata of the earth, of the myriads of creatures whose remains had for myriads of years been imbedded therein, they never dreamt; nor probably did Moses; what, however, they *did* understand, and what he with all his might strove to make them remember, was, that 'In the beginning *God* created the heaven and the earth.'

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

AFTER reading over and over again the first chapter of Genesis, and being charmed with the simplicity and the freshness of the narrative, and the masterly manner in which a mass of most interesting information is packed together in a small compass—for is not the erection of the tabernacle and its hangings told with greater detail of circumstance than the creation of the heaven and the earth?—bearing in mind that it is a very old document which we have before us, which professes to give an authoritative exposition of the origin of the world which we inhabit, we approach the subject with some diffidence, but with a fixed determination to throw our whole energies into its examination; and we are

struck at once quite as much by what the writer has *not* said as by what he has said. If we take up any other book which professes to treat of the primordial condition of the earth, we are sure to find in it copious references to the composition and internal structure of the earth—to the strata upon strata in regular succession, each distinguished for the peculiarity of its character. Not one word of this do we find in Moses. He confines himself, at least as it would seem, to an account of the creation of what I may call superficial phænomena—that splendid garniture which delights the eye and raptures the soul—the light, the waters, the earth, in the first three days; and again in the second three days (*in the same order*, be it observed), the light, the waters, the earth; but, in the second triad, light not primally diffused, but concentrated and ordained for a purpose; waters not merely distributed and confined, but teeming with animal life; earth not covered merely with seeding herb and fruiting tree, but covered also with a vast variety of creatures having breath, of which man, the last

created, is appointed lord of all. Now it can hardly be supposed that a man like Moses—captain, statesman, antiquarian, historian—was utterly incurious of what lies beneath the surface; here and there, where least we might expect it, he glances incidentally at some of earth's hidden treasures. Here, he says, is the onyx stone; there is bdellium; there the gold is good; out of such and such a place may be dug copper. The Hebrew prophet, if he could not have been a scientist, could have made some very shrewd observations on those portions of our planet of which he is so significantly silent. The declination was no doubt deliberate. To what purpose to have composed a lecture on rocks and stones for a host of newly-enfranchised serfs? The brickfields, or, if you like, the provision-fields of Egypt engrossed their thoughts. The aim and effort of the Hebrew leader was to call them away from that little strip of world, where Pharaoh ruled, and to lead them up through the great panorama of the heaven and the earth to the contemplation and adoration of that one

almighty invisible Being, who had made all, who was Master of all, and who was in an especial sense their Deliverer. It was for this that, foregoing all mention, without in the least denying the possibility, of secondary causes and intermediate agencies, he repeats the name of God no less than thirty times in thirty-one verses, that is to say, in almost every verse. Elohim—God the Creator—this is the pivot on which the chapter turns; this is his Alpha and Omega, his beginning and his end. In no other work that I am aware of, either ancient or modern, is this great necessary cardinal doctrine so plainly, so pointedly, so persistently stated; and, if Moses had contributed nothing more to the literature of the subject than this, his work would deserve its imperishable renown. It is a perpetual protest against all low and unworthy notions of the world's origin. Whether under this seeming superficiality (if I may so term it) of the Mosaic narrative something deeper lies, we may yet have to consider. For the present it will be sufficient to say, that time and circumstance, aim and

object, have to be taken into account, while reading the first chapter of Genesis. And in this respect it is interesting to compare it with the Jehovistic reference to the works of creation in the book of Job. There the occasion and the object were altogether different, and the method of treatment is also different; the language is stately and grandiloquent, the tone lofty, the matter more diversified, the descriptions more diffuse; yet, notwithstanding this, we feel, after we have finished the questions of *that* catechism, that the most which we have learnt from it is, how little we know of it.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it,

And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Without hazarding an opinion whether the founding of the earth and the disemwombment and cradling of the waters here described were or were not antecedent in time to what Moses tells us in the opening verses of his first chapter, it will be safe to remark that no one can possibly read of the 'waters having a cloud for a garment, and thick darkness for a swaddling-band,' but must be forcibly reminded of the equally expressive but more simple description of Moses, 'Darkness was upon the face of the deep.' Had the writer of Job taken counsel with the author of Genesis?—or whence got he this vision of the Hebrew prophet?

Let us turn our eyes once more to the great panorama which is miniaturized for us in the first chapter of Genesis. Is there any one of the six days' works which, from the largeness of space allotted to it, or the greater fulness with

which it is described, seems to have been marked out by Moses above the rest as the *chef-d'œuvre* of God's creation? We observe that the account of the sixth day's work occupies very nearly one-fourth of the chapter; we need not hesitate, then, to say that man, though mentioned last, ranks first, the crown and finish of all God's works. Next after the name of God, he it is whose figure holds an unquestionable pre-eminence in the chapter. And this perhaps is another reason why Moses passes lightly and superficially over the earth to which the minds of so many now gravitate, saying just so much about it as was sufficient to show, how wisely it was ordered, how beautifully furnished, how bountifully supplied with food, with water, with metal, and with stone, whether for ornament or use, for the coming man. It is not so much geology, then, it is anthropology which is Moses' theme. We must not expect, then, to find anything more than the most cursory and general reference to the former science; but, whatever he tells us of the latter, we should do well to lay to heart and ponder,

and all the more so, if we have reason to suspect that what he uttered was not of his own coining, nor yet borrowed from other people's exchequers, on either of which assumptions it would be pretty sure to contain some alloy; but sterling metal drawn from the treasure-house of the high King.

There is another important item in the first chapter which must not be overlooked. Seven times in the chapter—so that we cannot but be struck by it—seven times in a short summary of but six days' work we come across the words, 'God saw that it was good.' Such repetitions are not unfrequent in the writings of Moses; they are wont to be introduced where his object is to emphasize a certain lesson or incident. In this instance he would impress the doctrine that this creation of God (explain it how we may) was not merely generally and upon the whole good, but good in every stage and in every particular—in its climate, in its produce, in its animals of the sea and animals of the land, but above all in man. This was the sort of world

which God 'saw.' What a contrast to the world which God looked down upon just before the Flood! What a contrast to that world which Israel saw and knew, with its high-stalking tyranny and its low-crouching idolatry, its superfluity of naughtiness, its universality of evil, and the leaven of evil working among themselves! Yet this evil Moses distinctly assures us was not 'in the beginning'; was not of God's creating; was a plague, then, which had crept in afterwards; so that, no matter what any may say to the contrary, neither had evil deities any part in the creation of the world, nor is evil a necessity, nor is it eternal, nor is it man's creation-right, although it is now his birthright—I had almost said his birthwrong—nor is it his proper, nor is it his permanent, condition. That one short unmistakable comprehensive declaration concludes it all, 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.' If in the book of Job we see the terribleness, in the book of Genesis we behold the goodness, of God. Thus did He show Himself; thus He is; thus He

would be known. In this seven-times-repeated assurance we fancy we see a shadow—is it not something more than a shadow?—of an eventual restoration of all things to original goodness. But, whatever we see, or fancy we see, in this grand old mirror which has come down to us from the time of Moses, two principal figures are clearly and distinctly reflected in it—*God*, the Creator of all things, and *man*, the chief of all things created.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

HAVING cursorily surveyed the most commanding features of the first chapter of Genesis, we will next proceed to notice the characteristic marks of the second. Some critics, perceiving, as they fancy, an irreconcilable contradiction between the two chapters in their geological conditions, and observing also a slight difference between them on a point of theological nomenclature, have come to the conclusion that they were not the original production of one and the same author, but were made up of waifs and strays of patriarchal traditions, which, having floated down the stream of time, were rescued from oblivion by Moses or some Jew of later date, and tied together in the same bundle,

whence they have come down to us in the compact and handy form in which we now possess them. Without being drawn into a controversy, from which I might find it difficult to effect a retreat, I will merely remark that an acute and learned writer has observed that there is not a single old-world word or phrase in the opening chapters of Genesis, nor a single word used in a different sense from that which it afterwards bore, whence he infers that the two chapters were not made up of distinct documents which had come down from Enoch or Seth or Adam. This judgment, pronounced after a careful examination of the language, will not, I think, be reversed, if we consider and compare the matter. The two chapters are not like two blocks of granite which have been placed alongside of each other without fashion and without fitment; they are rather as pieces of a superb mosaic cunningly wrought and nicely dovetailed, so that the one seems almost a necessary complement of the other. There is brain and method in the arrangement. The workman, I

venture to affirm, was no other than Moses. What are the chief differences between the two chapters, putting aside for the moment those to which I have referred above, and about which I shall have something to say by and by? I need hardly repeat what, I suppose, has been over and over again observed, that the first chapter contains an account of the large world and all its inhabitants, whereas the second tells only of a small portion of that world and a few only of all its inhabitants; but I will notice a circumstance, which may not equally have arrested, although perhaps it deserves, the attention of the reader; that, whereas in the first chapter Moses refers every work to the immediate interposition of the great *First Cause*, who commands and it is created, in the second chapter he condescends to mention one or two of those *secondary causes*, by which the Creator is pleased to regulate and maintain the universe. Through a want of rain, we are told, the earth was unproductive and barren; 'there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole

face of the ground.' Here we have a glimpse of some of those intermediate forces for which we look in vain in the first chapter. We see as it were some of the wheels of the vast machine in motion; as for the most part they required then, as now, time to work out their effects, the mention of them gives some countenance to the theory that a much longer period than six days must be allowed for the creation of the visible universe. From this scene of sterility and solitude we are transported to the oasis of the garden of Eden. If we cannot fix its exact position; if we know not the land of the onyx, the bdellium, and the gold which is good; if we cannot identify the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, either because they are no longer existent, or no longer accessible, or no longer efficacious, we have an unerring clue to the garden's whereabouts in the mention of the river Euphrates, whose mighty waters attest that, whatever may be the right view to take of the world as it is delineated in the first chapter, in the second chapter we have no ideal type, no

airy fabric presented to us, no picture or pattern merely of a conceived creation, but a geographical reality, a veritable bit of *terra firma*, an Asiatic paradise replete with beauty and with life.

When I read in the first chapter that 'God said Let us make man,' I understand the word 'man' to be a general designation, comprehending the whole of human kind, who immediately afterwards are subdivided into 'male and female'; but in the second chapter 'man' is undoubtedly used for a particular individual, the first specimen of the race, and the 'female' is styled the 'woman'—they are Ish and Isha, each being called by a distinctive appellation. If this is not a mere airy fancy, the shade of difference may be of use to us by and by in our endeavour to determine the relative value of the two chapters. I observe, too, that the beasts now have *names* given to them. In the account of the woman's formation a certain evolutionary process is described with some minuteness, which fact may afford some justification for the belief that, if there had been anything similar in man's

descent, in the second chapter, if anywhere, we should have discovered traces of it; but there is not a vestige of any such doctrine, unless it be enwrapped in the statement that 'the Lord God formed man *of the dust of the ground*,' and '*out of the ground* the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.' Herein, according to Moses, consisted the common relationship subsisting between man and the lower animals.

Perhaps, however, the most striking portion of the second chapter is that in which we have some additional information concerning the constitution, nature, position, prospects of the newly-formed man.

It is true that his likeness to his Maker, and his dominion over the creature, are related clearly and with sufficient circumstance in the first chapter; but in the first chapter more is said of his lower animal nature than of his higher. He stands in his rank as one of many creatures; equally with them he has the green herb apportioned to him for his food; equally with them he is to

propagate his kind; it is the carnal and corporeal man who is *chiefly* here portrayed to us; but in the second chapter it is not so. There we see a psychic being, for the sustentation of whose higher life a special food has been provided. He has high relations and high responsibilities; his living figure stands before us; he is actually engaged in administering the affairs of his little kingdom; capable of language, endowed with the faculty of invention, he is viewing, classifying, naming the creatures successively presented to him; placed in a world to which evil has access (whence it originated, or how it came, no one can explain), he has a charge to keep, and *a character to maintain*—‘Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’—words these not of harsh menace, but of kindly warning, hinting at man’s mysterious relations to other worlds than his own—to *other creatures*, who were not merely interested spectators of his actions, but might

possibly be swayed and strengthened by his example, of which things we have sundry adumbrations in Holy Scripture; but I will not dwell on them now, lest I should be thought to be more solicitous to air a theory than to illustrate the truth. Such, then, is Moses' man, not worse than than he is now, but better than than he is now—closer and nearer to God; not just removed a step or two from one or other of the beasts, but many degrees, and in a marked manner, in advance of them all. Even in his sexual relations he is not as one of them; the female is a 'help' meet for him—she is not one of many, but one to the exclusion of many; the union is perfect, is indissoluble. It was only after the Fall that the Cainites lapsed into bigamy, and before the Flood into plurality, perhaps, and promiscuousness. Who now will say that, if we had not had the second chapter, we should have had anything like a correct and adequate idea of the Divine part (so to speak) of the archical man? Wanting this chapter, which some would make out to be a clumsy piece of joinery, we

should miss a fine natural branch of a grand old tree.

Having, then, these facts clearly laid down for us by Moses, substantiated and supported by the chosen champions of the New Testament, who were no mere *doctrinaires*, but highly-gifted and enlightened men, who spoke, and wrote, and worked, and toiled, and suffered, and endured, and changed the face of the world, when the world was by no means easy to change, we need not trouble ourselves overmuch about certain fanciful conceits, bearing the name of a distinguished naturalist, who, whatever other claims he may have on our respectful attention, we must do him the justice to say, never claimed to have, as Moses claims to have had, a special Divine revelation. When we consider that his account of the descent of man has obtained the assent, the approval, and even the applause of no inconsiderable portion¹ of the learned world, we might

¹ A portion, however, which seems now rapidly diminishing according to the *Edinburgh Review*, April 1888, on 'Life and Letters of Charles Darwin.'

naturally suppose that, however improbable it may seem to us, it is founded on the firm basis of fact. What, then, must be our surprise to find that the only thing, which can be said to be quite certain about it, is, that it has never yet been, and, what is more, that it is of such a nature that it is never likely to admit of being, certainly and conclusively proved.

The *facts* of science may be allowed to correct our mistaken notions derived from a fallacious interpretation of Holy Scripture; but the *fancies* of science must not be permitted to shake, much less to overthrow, the well-attested facts of Divine revelation.

I may remark in conclusion that in the second chapter we are told of *the giving of the first law*. To adopt the style of Leviticus, 'This is the law of food'—a law simple in its provisions, but far-reaching in its consequences; conceived in a large and liberal spirit, and restrictive only for the happiness of mankind. So early was a distinction drawn between what might be eaten and what might not be eaten, on the observance or

non-observance of which hung the tremendous issues of cleanness and uncleanness, health and sickness, life and death. Strange as all this may sound to modern ears, the Israelite of Moses' day would have no difficulty whatever in apprehending the force and fitness of that first short easy commandment, and, while scrupulously attending to a multitude of minute distinctions which were laid down for his observance in the book of Leviticus, he might recall that verse of Genesis with a sigh, and reflect on it with envy.

CHAPTER V.

SOME DIFFICULTIES STATED.

NOTHING can be more simple and easy than Moses' account of the creation, if we only cursorily peruse it ; nothing can be more complicated and difficult, when we come to leisurely examine it. Neither the theologian with his traditions, nor the geologist with his discoveries, is altogether to be depended upon by us ; the former is apt to be too one-sided and prejudiced, the latter to be too speculative and prone to jump too hastily to a conclusion. We want some one to guide us who can reverence the written word without being a slave of the letter, yet can accept demonstrated facts without indulging in flights of fancy or in gratuitous assumptions. One of the first steps which we must take, if we would hope to make satisfactory progress, is to ascertain

from Moses' own writing what it is that he really says. We have already glanced at some of the chief features of the two chapters in which he has given us an account of the creation of the heaven and the earth; we must now turn our eyes more particularly to those portions of them which refer to the *time* in which, according to him, the work was finished—a question which, though it has not the vast preponderance which some have assigned to it, is not devoid of moment, and, having been put into the scales, must be fairly balanced.

It is commonly supposed that Moses circumscribes the duration of the world's creation within the narrow compass of six natural days; but a more careful scrutiny will allow, or, I should rather say, oblige us to conclude, that he must have had in his mind at the time of writing a very much more extended period. For proof of this, I might rely on the first two verses of the first chapter—'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon

the face of the deep'—which seem to imply that the heaven and the earth existed before the first Mosaic day, in which case Moses would commence his chapter by giving us a picture as it were in miniature of the sort of world which had previously existed, a caliginous, chaotic, Neptunian world, of the creation of which we have no details, nor any date, save that it was 'in the beginning'; but, as those verses may be merely a preface or heading of what is afterwards described more fully in the chapter, I will base my assertion on a less ambiguous and debatable passage to be found in the beginning of the second chapter, to which I now solicit the reader's attention—

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

Here a person may quarrel with the translation as coming from the Septuagint; he may prefer

a version fetched directly from the original; but the gist of the passage will remain the same, nor can any other construction be put upon it, than that the earth, after it had been created, lay for some time fallow, without bush, tree, or herb. The period referred to must have been either before the six days or after they had begun; and, if after, somewhere about the middle of the third day, after the earth had been separated from the waters, and before it was invested with herbaceous and arboreous life. I shall not attempt in the present chapter to resolve this exceedingly knotty question; I merely wish to claim for it the attention which it deserves, and to protest against the unfairness of considering the first chapter without reference to the second, or of slurring over, or not giving due weight to, the second chapter, because it involves us in intricacies from which we find it difficult to disengage ourselves. The verses I have quoted are plain, positive, and precise; they must be explained somehow. To those who would account for the seeming inconsistency by supposing

that the two chapters contain two separate traditions I answer that I cannot believe that Moses, or whoever it was who put into its final shape his undoubted writings, would have made such a bungle as to have admitted into two chapters, directly following each other, two confused and contradictory accounts of an event so momentous as God's creation of the universe; neither elsewhere in the book of Genesis, nor generally in the Pentateuch, is there any lack either of historical arrangement or of historical accuracy. It is much more probable that Moses composed both chapters, that he meant what he says, and that what he says is capable of being explained, if only we have the wit to explain it. This, then, is the problem which we have to solve—either creation was a work of six days *and a longer period*, or the six days are Moses' cipher of notation for that longer period. And this, I would remind the reader with all the point and impressiveness of which my pen is capable, is not a difficulty which is forced upon us by geological discovery; the difficulty is a Mosaic

—a Biblical one; at the same time it is obvious that, if by any fair process of reasoning we can manage to make Moses agree with himself, the same process will be available, will be sufficient, to enable us to effect a decent compromise between the revelation of Moses and the record of the earth.

But, before we touch the thorny question of Moses' days, it will be advisable to set ourselves right with regard to certain words and phrases which meet us on the threshold, and which are not unlikely to cause us perplexity, being capable of two interpretations, either of which is admissible in itself, but only one of which can have place in whatever may be the right view to take of the Mosaic hexemerate. As sooner or later we shall have to deal with these doubtful pieces, we had better throw them into the crucible at once, that we may know what value we may put upon them.

When we are told that 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' what is meant by the Hebrew '*Bereshith*,' which is translated,

‘In the beginning’? On the one hand, it may refer to some undefinable time in the boundless past, far exceeding the power of man to cipher or conceive. So St. John seems to use the phrase when he says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.’ On the other hand, Jesus Christ uses it in a very different sense, when, in reply to certain doctors who would have made believe that Moses by legalizing had sanctioned the practice of divorce, He said, ‘In the beginning it was not so.’ And He quoted the last verse but one of the second chapter of Genesis. The beginning—ἀρχη—*reshith*—stands here for the dawn of man’s creation. Here, then, we have an expression which may refer to either one of two distinct and widely different periods. To which period shall we refer it? Whether to this or that, it will make a world of difference in the view which we take of the first chapter of Genesis.

Equally ambiguous is the signification of the word ‘*bara*,’ which has been translated ‘created.’

The sense commonly attached to it is that of bringing into being that which did not before exist; but it is also used for fashioning anew that which had already been. When the prophet said, 'The Lord that created thee, O Jacob,' he was not speaking of Israel's formation from the womb, but of the calling and election by which that people had been separated and distinguished from all the nations of the earth. In which sense is the word used in Genesis? The interpretation of the whole chapter will turn upon the choice.

Take now the phrase, 'The heaven (*shamaim*) and the earth.' What heaven is this, and what earth? The heaven and the earth in its largest and most comprehensive sense?—heights to which astronomy cannot soar?—depths into which geology cannot dive?—or merely the universe which we see above and around us, that heaven which Moses defines to be the firmament, and that earth which he tells us the dry land was called? Choose which you will (and you may choose either), according to your choice you must frame your hypothesis.

In what sense are we to understand the earth being ‘without form and void’? *Tohu va Bohu*, as the Hebrew has it; ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, as the Septuagint; ἀργὸν καὶ ἀδιάκριτον, Symmachus; κενὸν καὶ οὐθέν, Theodotion. Is it merely a poetical way of saying that the earth had neither form nor substance—was a blank—a void—in a word, was not? Or does it describe a certain rude condition of an earth, which had already been created, and was afterwards subjected to a process of rehabilitation?

Over and over again in the chapter the words recur, ‘And God said.’ To whom were the words said? To angels, desirous of looking into the mysteries of creation, as St. Peter intimates that they desired to look into the mysteries of redemption? Or is this merely Moses’ way of conveying to the dull ears of the natural man the inscrutable counsel and unexpressed purpose of God? In the account of the Deluge, and elsewhere, the same words are used with a notable addition, ‘God said *in his heart*.’ The heart may be intended, though not always expressed.

This, too, is a point well worthy of being weighed, and perhaps we shall have occasion to revert to it in the course of our inquiry.

In mentioning these diversities of interpretation, I have no wish to magnify the difficulties which lie before us, much less to throw dust in the eyes of any. But it is well to know something of the route by which we are to travel. Where the roads branch a choice must be made. Those who believe that Moses' day is a natural day will take one path, those who insist that it stands for an indefinite period of time will take another. I myself, who have my own peculiar notions of the line which had best be followed, reserve to myself the liberty of choosing whichever turning seems likely to lead in the direction in which my hypothesis would take me. Thus much, then, I shall have gained by the present chapter, that I shall have prevented the possibility of future misunderstandings between myself and the reader, and saved myself the necessity of having to make, by and by, for the sake of explanation, a tedious and untimely digression.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITERAL DAY THEORY.

ALTHOUGH we are quite sure that the article of the Creed which teaches us to believe in 'God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,' does not in the least depend for its truth upon the authenticity or the unauthenticity, the correctness or the incorrectness, of the Mosaic account of the creation, nor yet upon the days, or the years, or the cycles of years, which this person or that person may imagine must have been necessary for the formation and completion of the visible universe, yet, considering the high estimation in which Moses has long been held by all thoughtful men as a generally truthful and careful historian, we will address ourselves more particularly in the present chapter

to the question of the *time*, in which, according to him, the work was finished. Does he, then, really mean us to understand that about six thousand years ago—for somewhere about that time ago, according to the received chronology, man first appeared upon the earth—the heaven and the earth were created in six of our calendar days? Certainly that would be our first impression after reading his narrative; and it is the simplest and most natural interpretation to put upon it; moreover, it strikingly coincides with—some would say it is conclusively proved by—the same positive assurance being repeated in the very same terms in the twentieth chapter of Exodus; nor can we doubt that such would be the sense in which the Israelites would understand his words. 'Day' to them would have but one meaning. The modern geologist, however, with the great volume of the earth wide open before him, smiles at the petty reckoning, and without a moment's hesitation exclaims, 'Impossible.' Even the theologian, who may have little more than a scanty, superficial, second-hand

acquaintance with geological science, is perplexed when he reads in the second chapter of Genesis matter which seems to conflict with what he finds in the first. There are some good and estimable men who would stop all doubt and silence all disputation by reminding us that ‘with God all things are possible.’ I do not for a moment doubt the omnipotence of God, but I submit with all due deference that the question is not one of God’s omnipotence, but of the right interpretation of Moses’ narrative, and we are not justified in putting forward the argument of God’s omnipotence in order to mask commentatorial ignorance, or to foster commentatorial indolence. The probability—perhaps I should say, the certainty—is, that all which Moses has recorded will be found to be absolutely true, when we have hit upon the right cipher to enable us to read and understand it.

After carefully weighing the whole matter, I have come to the conclusion that, if we are to hope to establish the literal, natural, and commonly received interpretation of the Mosaic days,

we must lay as our foundation the two following propositions—first, that Moses does not give us a summary of the whole history of the visible universe from the time when it was first called into some sort of being, to the time when it was formed, furnished, and finished, pretty much as we see it now, but only of that small but not unimportant portion of its history which immediately preceded the human era; and, secondly, that all which Moses tells us, whether with reference to the state of the world immediately before the six days' work, or with reference to what God said and did in the course of that work, is *capable* of being so explained, as to agree with what is written in the Scriptures of the earth, the characters of which are all the more trustworthy, because time has not been able to obliterate them, nor the hand of man to tamper with them.

Have we, then, any indications in the first chapter that what Moses relates therein was a creative change in an already created world rather than the earliest stage in that world's creation? I

cannot conceive how any one can read the second verse of the first chapter, 'The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,' without acknowledging that a tacit comparison is drawn between two distinct and widely different stages in the world's history; the one antecedent to the six days' work, the other subsequent to it. Before the six days' work, then, there must have been some sort of an earth existing, and, whatsoever sort of earth it was, it must have been created—for I do not believe the doctrine of the eternity of matter—created, therefore, by God—for any other account of the origin of such a world as ours is, is not to be entertained—but, when created, and out of what, God only knows. Nor is this the only vestige to be found in the chapter of what we are looking for. It can hardly be supposed that Moses meant to intimate that no such essence as Light had ever been anywhere existent until just a few days previous to man's appearing upon the earth; it would be difficult to say when Light *was not*, seeing that God is Light, and dwelleth in light

unapproachable. Moses treats of light in the first chapter of Genesis subjectively—in its relation merely to a world which was then about to be newly fashioned; with Light in its objective aspect he has in the first chapter no concern. Light, then, was not, strictly speaking, then for the first time created, when 'God said, Let there be Light.' Were the waters? If we look at the account of the second day's work, and the third day's work, and the fifth day's work, we shall find that the waters were divided, were confined, were populated; they were not created; they already existed; for 'darkness was upon the face of the deep,' and 'upon the face of the waters the Spirit of God moved.' The waters, then, had formed part of some older world. What Moses relates concerning them is, that they were adapted to the new era and the new order of things. I must not attempt to build up a theory of a previous creation on such a shallow foundation as a little bit of verbal criticism; but I may remark, by the way, that in the sentence, 'The earth was without form and void,' the verb used

—so Hebraists tell us—is not the copula, but implies existence ; I mention this lest any should say that I had overlooked it. I will now advance a step further, and invite the reader's attention to the following remarkable passage from the book of the prophet Jeremiah (chap. iv.)—

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void ; and the heavens, and they had no light.

I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of God, and by his fierce anger.

For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate ; yet will I not make a full end.

After reading this splendid outburst of prophetic eloquence, one might fancy that the clock of Time had gone back some thousands of years, and that Jeremiah was a veritable specimen of a prehistoric man, standing betwixt the old world and the new, just at that particular epoch to which Moses assigns the date of 'In the beginning.' But no ; Jeremiah's vision was of the

future, not of the past; and what does he see? He sees the earth—but in reality it was only that small strip of earth which Israel inhabited—in such a condition that he can describe it in exactly the same language as Moses describes the world at large before the six days of creation. Confusion, darkness, no herbage, animal, or man—such is Jeremiah's picture! Confusion, darkness, no herbage, animal, or man—such, too, seems to be Moses' outline! Now it is of the utmost importance that we should ascertain, if we can, the force and meaning of Jeremiah's words. Did he mean that Israel's world should be so utterly dissolved that it should absolutely cease to be?—that the heavens should be so black that the sun should be no more? It is certain that he meant no such thing. He is merely shadowing forth a terrible reverse which should befall the land and the people of Israel. A revolution was coming which should hurl them from national importance into national impotence; as compared with what they had been, they should be as nothing; this is the sum. Yet Israel's earth

should still remain, for all that it should be so formless and void; and Israel's sun should hold its place in the sky, for all that their heavens should be so dark. Now interpret Moses with the same laxity that you are compelled to interpret Jeremiah—both were God's historians, Moses of the past, Jeremiah of the future; allow for the 'pomp of oriental metaphor'; allow for the seer's clearness of vision and vividness of elocution; and I can well conceive that a Hebrew prophet, speaking to Hebrew hearers, might quite rightfully describe the earth before the six days as without form and void, and the deep as covered with darkness, and yet it would no more follow that the earth was non-existent, *or the sun non-existent*, than that, when Jeremiah used exactly the same phrases to depict Israel's supreme humiliation, he meant that Israel's earth and Israel's sun should be no more. The spirit of Moses' revelation, as seen by the flash of Jeremiah's inspiration, is that a stupendous change was wrought by God in the material universe just about the time that man was first created—

a change the very reverse of that which Jeremiah foresaw—a change to light, and beauty, and order, and life—the full nature and extent of which it is hardly to be expected that we should be able to gather from Moses' necessarily, purposely, and politicly succinct narrative; but this broad truth, which every geologist will subscribe to, is put before us in no ambiguous fashion, that, just before the appearance of man, there was a change in the condition of things both in the heaven and in the earth, which affected both the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, and was adapted to the constitution and conducive to the felicity of the human species. I think that I have now said enough to show that Moses does not *necessarily* in his first chapter open to us the first deep foundations of the earth, but that *possibly* he does no more than describe one only, and that the latest, though not the least momentous, of many revolutions, which, in the sunless series of past ages, science testifies that our globe has undergone.

Let me suppose now that the reader is ready

to admit that, what Moses relates in his first chapter may be rather the finishing of the world than the first founding of it; how in the next place do we explain, first, what he tells us concerning the world's condition immediately before the six days' work commenced; and, secondly, what he tells us that God said and did while the six days' work was proceeding? There are two passages which relate to the earth's appearance anterior to the human era. In the second verse of the first chapter we are told, that 'The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep'; in the fourth verse of the second chapter, that in the day 'when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, no plant of the field was yet in the earth, nor herb of the field grew.' Opinions differ as to whether the former passage refers to the period immediately preceding the six days, or to a much more remote antiquity; but there can be no question that the latter passage relates to the time when the changes recorded by Moses were being, or were about to be, made. Possibly the

one passage is a duplicate of the other; it will be observed that Moses *recapitulates* in the beginning of the second chapter what he had stated in the first. Both passages involve considerable difficulty; science will allow of an age of water, of ice, and, I believe, of fire, but not of darkness. How, then, are we account for the darkness? It is not a little significant that, when the waters of the Flood were upon the earth, the sun, moon, and stars were unquestionably in the heavens, yet Moses can represent the Lord God as saying in His heart, after the waters had subsided, 'while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and *day and night shall not cease*;' which implies that there had been a temporary interruption of all these—that the seasons had been undistinguishable, that *day and night* had been confounded. A Hebrew, briefly describing the state of the world at that time to Hebrews, would not have been misunderstood if he had said that 'darkness covered' it. We must remember that the Mosaic record comes filtered to us through the

doubtful medium of an English translation. A translation may be ever so literal, and yet fail to reproduce the exact meaning of the original; even those scholars who know something—in most cases how little is that something!—of Hebrew literature, cannot always be sure that they have caught the true spirit of a figurative expression or phrase. Our only safeguard is to compare scripture with scripture. By comparing Moses with Jeremiah, I have already ascertained that an earth without form and void does not necessarily mean a non-existent earth, *nor a darkened heaven an uncreated sun*. A distinction may have to be drawn between darkness as science defines it, and darkness as Moses in the first chapter of Genesis roughly and popularly uses it. In dealing with Biblical writings we have to weigh the Biblical use of words, and to frame our interpretations accordingly. Provided, then, that the rest of the narrative will admit of it, on which point I must beg the reader to suspend his judgment until he has heard my explanation in full, I shall hold that

darkness, of which there are various degrees and shades, may be used in the first chapter in a modified sense, and, so taken, it cannot be pronounced a meteorological impossibility.

The second passage, in which we are told that no plant of the field was yet in the earth, nor herb of the field grew, is not so easily disposed of. An absence of vegetation involves an absence of animal life; an absence of animals necessitates the assumption of their extinction; but science will not hear of any such break in the chain of animal existences; and it is certain that ages before the human era plants grew with rank luxuriance, and animals in the sea and on the land swarmed. Either, then, Moses must have made a mistake, or the theory which we are discussing must be untenable, or science cannot have rightly measured all the possibilities of the past. When we consider the largeness of the subject of which Moses treats, and the very little, comparatively speaking, which he has told us concerning it, we can hardly suppose that anything dropped from his pen which was not

in his opinion essential and well-established. In this instance he has emphasized his asseveration of the earth's bareness by appending the cause of it—'The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.' Now geologists will allow generally that, in the boundless annals of the past, there have been mighty revolutions both in the organic and in the inorganic worlds, both in the flora and in the fauna, one species becoming extinct, and another, differing from it in many important particulars, making its appearance according to some mysterious law of life the operation of which is as certain as the immediate cause of it is uncertain. It is more than probable that climatic changes have had much to do with this continual shifting of plant and animal life in the past history of our planet; it is *certain* that the plants and animals¹ of the human era differ considerably in size, and some

¹ The present mammalian fauna of the globe presents everywhere a striking contrast to the extraordinary variety and great size of the mammals of the Tertiary periods.—Geikie's *Text-Book of Geology*, p. 894.

of them also in species, from those which distinguished the era immediately preceding. What caused the difference? Is it not possible that God, willing to prepare a plant and animal world suitable to the requirements of the coming man-world, may have shut the windows of heaven, as Moses says He did, and with a cessation of rain have caused a temporary cessation of life upon the earth? The effect of such a withdrawal would be pretty much what we know it to be on a small scale and over a limited area in some parts of the world in the present day: soon vegetation disappears, cattle die. Such a contingency can hardly be pronounced a physical impossibility. But say that it is improbable, still there is a way of resolving the difficulty. The words of Moses may apply to the main portion of the earth's surface without embracing every part of it. A large generalization is as much as can be expected in a short compendium. Nor is this an unbalanced assumption. If it did not naturally occur to us, it is an opening which Moses has indicated to us. The garden

of Eden is excepted by him; there, he tells us, were irrigating rivers, there trees and plants flourished, there beasts and cattle lived; this, then, was a centre of life, until the time came when God, intending to make man, watered the whole face of the ground, and effected a general though gradual resurrection of the produce, and with the produce of the population of the earth.

Having done something to relieve the darkness and the desolation, which have not a little impeded our progress, our next step must be to show how all this is compatible with what Moses tells us that God said and did during the hexemerate. Now I think it quite possible for Moses to have written that God said, Let there be light, Let there be a firmament, Let earth and sea know their bounds, Let the earth be green, Let there be lights in the heaven, Let creatures multiply in the sea and multiply on the land, and yet all these laws (or let us say some of them), all these phænomena (or let us say some of them) may have already been in time past; nay, may at that very time have

been existent, though temporarily and to a certain extent obscured. For does any one suppose that, when Moses testifies that God said, 'I do set my bow in the cloud,' he meant us to understand that that beautiful arch had never before spanned the sky, and not rather that it had again and again appeared, but never till then had been consecrated as the splendid symbol of Divine forbearance and mercy?—or, when he declares in the book of Exodus, and again in the book of Leviticus, that God ordained that certain distinctions should be observed between beast and beast, so that this one should be accounted clean, and that one unclean, he meant us to suppose, as we certainly should have supposed had our Bibles wanted the book of Genesis, that no such distinctions had ever before been? Why, Moses himself is our authority for saying that they had been prescribed to Noah, and in all likelihood they were coeval with creation. Or again, because the Decalogue was first given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, would it be reasonable to suppose that no such

moral and religious obligations had ever before been in force?—that men had been free to covet, to slander, to steal, to commit adultery, to kill, to dishonour parents, to fall down before images, to worship any and every god or dæmon of man's fabling? I might pursue the same line of argument in reference also to the Sabbath. The true explanation seems to be that, at a great turning-point in the history of Israel, laws, many of which had long been in force, were solemnly renewed, ratified, and promulgated, and divers additions at the same time made, such as suited the time and suited the people. Well now, in the first chapter of Genesis we are told of a great turning-point in the history of the *earth*. May not God have willed, not in forty days and forty nights, but in six successive days, as Moses reckons them, to solemnly and formally renew, confirm, and publish, laws and phænomena which had been from of old, and may He not have inaugurated at the same time many momentous changes, such as the occasion required, without our being obliged to suppose that,

because Moses tells us that at such and such a time God proclaimed His counsel concerning them, at that time the laws were first instituted and the phænomena first came into being? We may find some justification for this view in the chapter itself. In the fourteenth verse we read that 'God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.' What! had the darkness never before been divided from the light? Was the day then for the first time ordained? Nay, in the very opening of the chapter, 'God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.' The time, when a code of laws is drafted and promulgated, is not necessarily the time when the principles embodied in it are first generated. The laws of nature were in operation long before the proclamation of them. Now Moses takes cognizance of the period of publication. And why? Because it was the

period of man's appearing, on whose behalf all these laws were proclaimed, and who, when great changes were wrought in the material world, was himself no metamorphosed creature, promoted from a lower grade to a higher, but a distinct addition to God's creation, having the precedency and command of all. And this may be one reason why a different formula is used in giving an account of his creation from that which is employed in describing the creation of God's other creatures; for of *them* it is said, 'Let this be,' and 'Let that be,' as of things which might have been already, and for which all that was necessary was a decree of confirmation for their continuance; but of man it is said, 'Let us make man,' as of one who was then for the first time to be made; and similarly in the history of the woman's formation we read that the Lord God said, 'I will make him a help meet for him.'

It would seem, then, that the usage of the Bible, and Moses' own style, will allow of our putting such a modified construction on the language used in the first chapter of Genesis,

that nothing of what we there read, that God said or did, needs of necessity clash with any of those facts of which science can afford good and conclusive proofs.

Whatever may be thought of the theory of a six literal days' creation, as, following the notion commonly entertained concerning it, I have presented it in this chapter, one thing is certain—every portion of Moses' narrative naturally and easily adjusts itself to it. The meaning of 'day' will accord with Moses' definition of it. 'In the beginning' will stand for the beginning of the human era, further back than which neither Moses' purpose nor Israel's curiosity extended. All the living things enumerated in the first chapter are described in pretty nearly the same terms as those which are mentioned in the history of the Flood, and also in the book of Leviticus, the reason being obvious, that they belonged to the same era, inhabited the same world, were of the same type and species, and withal were such as Israel was familiar with. Dare I add, that God's *calling* the light day,

and *calling* the darkness night, and *calling* the gathered waters sea, and *calling* the dry land earth, may *possibly* be regarded as small but not insignificant tokens, that the time had come in the long succession of ages, when things, which themselves had long been, required to be named for human discrimination and use?

Briefly and comprehensively, I may say that in the opening chapter of Genesis we have an account of the giving of *certain laws*—not, as in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, the moral and ceremonial laws, but those great laws of nature, by which God, who made the universe, willed that it should be governed, and which He empowered Moses to declare to the congregation of Israel, and through Israel to mankind, that all might have the assurance that, as the world was not made by chance, so neither was it governed by chance, nor was it at the mercy of any creature, nor of any nor of all of the fabulous gods of the heathen; but that it was upheld by ordinances which He had contrived, and which He had commanded should not be

broken. Such a view of the first chapter of the first book of the Old Testament is consonant with the whole drift and tenor of the Pentateuch, which is emphatically the book of the *law*—law, may we say, for the world of matter; law, we certainly may say, for the world of Israel. From this point of view the first chapter of Genesis assumes a new significance. It was Israel's charter touching the government of the material universe. But it is something more than this. It is figurative and prophetic; it carries us not merely backward to a remote past, but forward to a possibly yet more remote future; it spans the interval between the earth and the heavens that are, and the earth and the heavens that are to be; it opens with darkness and death, but it closes with glimmerings of evangelistic light and life; it compasses both the natural and the spiritual worlds, thus awakening hopes, but for which what were this world, and what were we? If such be the scope of the first chapter of Genesis, the pen of Moses may indeed have written it, but the brain of Moses never originated it.

I have now said all that I can conceive can fairly and advantageously be said in favour of the hypothesis, that the heaven and the earth were actually and visibly created in six calendar days, and all that I have said I have essayed to rampart with material fetched from Holy Scripture. My facts cannot be discredited; only the inferences which I have deduced from them may by some be disputed. What will the reader say? Will he tolerate this planing down of Moses' text in order that it may fit in with the hard facts of science? Perhaps he will reject it at once as a specious but spurious and fallacious novelty; perhaps, after he has severely examined it, he may admit that it does not exceed the bounds of credibility; that it is a fair compromise, a not unreasonable solution of an uncommonly stiff problem; perhaps, before pronouncing a final decision, he may prefer to hear what I have to say for one or two other solutions which have been or may be proposed. If he will follow me into my next chapter, I will endeavour to conduct him through the intricacies

of what has been called 'The Long Day Theory.' Although in this part of my work I shall be building upon a foundation which others have laid, I shall adopt my own style and method of treatment, and I think that I shall be able to add strength to an old structure by the use of some new and substantial material.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LONG DAY THEORY.

AFTER it had been established beyond a doubt by the consentient testimony of the most approved geologists, that the earth could not possibly have been founded, fashioned, and finished in six calendar days, but that it must have been ages a-making, that it must be of incalculable antiquity, and that it is still subject to oscillation and flux and change—after, too, it had come to be fully realized, that even Moses, though in his first chapter he seems to assign to the whole work of creation but a six days' limit, in his second chapter delineates a state of things which he could not have been ignorant necessitated a much more extended term, telling us of a time when the

earth indeed was created, but no plant of the field was yet in the earth, nor herb of the field grew, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground, not a few theologians, unable to resist this twofold testimony, pressed on them by men who well knew how to marshal their arguments and push them home to a logical conclusion, shifted their ground, and entrenched themselves in the position that the Mosaic days were not days at all in the common acceptance of the word, but large spans of time, stretching back into an immeasurable past. By what process of mental ratiocination could they have persuaded themselves, by what show of fair and well-founded argument did they hope to persuade others, to accept an interpretation apparently so far-fetched, so strained, so opposed to all which they themselves had previously promulgated? To say that the general law of God's working is by gradual development rather than by instantaneous completion is true enough; but such a truism could not be accepted as proof that, when

Moses says days, he meant a sunless series of years. Their chief reliance was placed on the occasional use of the word in a non-natural sense in the Bible itself, especially in the prophetic portions of it. 'The day of temptation in the wilderness' was a period of forty years' duration. 'To-day if ye will hear my voice,' in David's prophetic hymn, we have the highest authority for saying, denoted no one day in particular, but any and every day of the whole period intervening between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. In a book like Genesis, some passages of which are undoubtedly prophetic, a similar use of the term 'day' cannot be pronounced offhand an impossibility. Moreover, it will be observed that the account of each day's work is prefaced by the words, 'And God said'; but in the account of the third day's work, and again in the account of the sixth day's work, that formula occurs *twice*, as though there had been a subdivision of the *work*, and, if of the work, of the *time* also. Nor would it be unreasonable to suppose that between the emergence of the

dry land and its efflorescence, and between the creation of mammals and the formation of man, some time should have elapsed during which the creative processes were going on. Add to this that, whereas Moses concludes his account of the work of each of the six days with the remark that 'the evening and the morning were such and such a day,' he has not so terminated his account of the seventh day, whence it has been inferred that the seventh day has not come to an end, in which case it has been a long day indeed; and, if the seventh day has to be measured so, the other six will have to be regulated according to the same standard of measurement. I have already hinted that in the second chapter we are led to believe that ages elapsed, after the earth had been founded, before it was clothed with vegetation, or teemed with animal life. Nor is it of slight significance that the word used for 'day' by the Egyptians, as was discovered not so many years ago from old Egyptian papyri, was not confined to a cycle of twenty-four hours, but stood for an undefined period, a month, a

year, or what not, so that it would not be surprising if Moses, who was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,' should have used the word once and again with something like Egyptian latitude.

On reviewing these several arguments, we cannot say that any one of them comes home to us with the force of conviction; but, if we scale them all together, they present a body of evidence sufficiently weighty to induce us to suspend our judgment until we have heard what may be said for and against the proposed interpretation from the standpoint, first, of a geologist, and, secondly, of a meteorologist;¹ for, the subject of the chapter being the creation of 'the *heaven* and the *earth*,' these are the two main branches which naturally divide between them the hexemerate of Moses, a *triad* being apportioned to each. We will first consider that portion of the chapter which comes within the province of geology.

It is well known that geologists distinguish

¹ I use meteorology in its ancient and etymological sense.

three great rock-divisions in their treatises on the earth—the Primary, the Secondary, and the Tertiary, to which some would add a fourth, which they designate the Quaternary.

The earliest rocks of the Primary division exhibit no remains whatever either of organic or inorganic life; even the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone systems have nothing more remarkable to show than fucoids, fish, and reptiles. But the carboniferous system has not these only, but, far more conspicuous than these, an untold wealth of vegetable deposit, which fills the mind with astonishment—trees and plants of prodigious size and prodigal luxuriance—‘huge pines, stately araucarians, the reed-like calamite, the tall tree-fern, the sculptured sigillaria, and the hirsute lepidodendron.’ No such are found in either of the other two divisions; *they are the peculiar feature of the Primary division*; and it is on this account, they say, that Moses assigned to them a primary place in his narrative, *to the exclusion of everything else*, describing them in no ambiguous language, when he says that on the third day

‘God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.’ This, then, is the first striking parallel which they profess to find between the first chapter of Genesis and the fossil-chambers of the earth.

The most conspicuous feature of the Secondary period is unquestionably its fossil fauna—‘huge creeping things, enormous monsters of the deep, and gigantic birds. It was peculiarly an age of egg-bearing animals, winged and wingless.’ These, they say, are the animals to which Moses refers, when he says that on the fifth day ‘God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving (creeping) creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great *tanninim*, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after

their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind.' This, then, is the second great feature in which the writings of Moses are alleged to resemble the rocks of the earth.

Of the Tertiary period we are informed that 'its flora seems to have been no more conspicuous than those of the present time; its reptiles occupy a very subordinate place; but its beasts of the field are by far the most wonderfully developed, both in size and number, that ever appeared upon earth; its mammoths and mastodons, its rhinoceri and hippopotami, its enormous dinotherium and colossal megatherium, greatly more than equalled in bulk the hugest mammals of the present time, and vastly exceeded them in number.' It is argued that these are they of which Moses wrote, when he tells us, that on the sixth day 'God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creep-

eth upon the earth, after his kind.' This, they confidently assert, is the third great feature common to the book of Moses and the volume of the earth. Lastly (and here there is no discrepancy whatever between the two records), man appeared upon the earth.

Now it must be admitted that there is a striking general correspondence between a geological table thus presented to us, and the geological portion of the first chapter of Genesis; it is equally obvious that there are some marked incongruities. In the opinion of some, it would be a downright error for Moses to affirm that marine animals were created on the fifth day, when long before the *third* day—that is, according to the hypothesis, millions of years previously—the waters swarmed with animal life. But the upholders of the Long Day theory maintain that it is no error at all; it is simply an *omission*, which in a brief synopsis like that of Moses might be expected, and may be explained. The very nature and extent of the subject necessitated not one omission only, but several. There is

no specific mention of the insect world, an innumerable though infinitesimally small population; none of comets and some other heavenly bodies, which, though rarely visible, are regularly recurrent. If we had not had the second chapter, who would have guessed that but one man and one woman were originally made, and the woman after the man, and of the man, and a rib of the man?—or that to the large permission given to feed upon *every* tree there was an important exception, an important prohibition—a tree, the fruit of which was death to the taster, and another which was potent to preserve and perpetuate life? All this additional and most interesting information is reserved for a second chapter. What if we had had a supplementary chapter for each one of the other five days? Might not much which is now involved in darkness have come out clearly enough? Where all could not be told, a selection had to be made. The calamite and the tree-fern were surely better representatives of plant-life than fucoids, though the latter had the seniority in the world of crea-

tion. The great *tamnim*, the huge saurians, and the enormous birds, were more striking representatives of marine animals than the crustaceans and batrachians of the primary rocks. These last were of small size, of low type, *invertebrates* for the most part, not worthy of being mentioned side by side with the monstrous growths which came into being on the fifth day. Such, I believe, is a fair general representation of the arguments of those who hold that the Mosaic day stands for an indefinite period of time. It may be added that in the account of the Flood nothing is said of the *survival* of marine creatures, though survive we believe they did; similarly in the account of the creation nothing is said of the *existence* of the earliest aquatic animals, though exist we are assured that they did. But, though Moses does not expressly mention them, he leaves abundance of room for them; in the very beginning of his chapter he opens out to view a vast watery expanse, capable of harbouring any number of crustaceans, and other fish, and reptiles. But are we quite sure

that he has left us no trace of the existence of this original population of the deep? What, then, does he mean, when he says, 'The Spirit moved'—the word implies *incubation*—'upon the face of the waters'? Not surely that a wind of God, which in the Hebrew idiom *might* mean a mighty wind, tempested the deep, as though he would have us understand that in the beginning the earth was all confusion and the waters all uproar, but rather that there was an actual going forth of creative energy; so that Moses perhaps whispers, what the earth by its strata proclaims, that animal life was called into being from the very first. Dare I put it thus? The animals, which Moses tells us were created on the fifth day, were those which had their habitat in the *sea*; now the sea, *as sea*, had no distinct and recognized existence before the third day; before that day all was *waters*, unconfined, undivided waters; the fifth-day animals, then, may have been in a special sense those which the *sea* brought forth in contradistinction to those which at a very early period had inhabited the *waters*;

roughly speaking, and for shortness' sake, the later creatures we may call marine, the earlier by the more general designation of aquatic. If this is not a sophistical subtlety, those pregnant words, 'The Spirit moved upon the face of the waters,' may be a comprehensive mode of describing the general work of creation, the main portion of the chapter being devoted to some interesting particulars under the threefold division of plants, sea-animals, and land-animals. The object of Moses being to relate not so much the creation of the inferior animals as the creation of the human species, a superficial survey of the former was all that was necessary for the edification of the Israelites. Bearing this in mind, we may expect not a few omissions, and, in consequence of those omissions, some difficulties.

If we turn now from the geological to the meteorological portion of the first chapter of Genesis, we are constrained to cry out, Dark, dark, dark! The sun and the moon and the stars are not mentioned until the fourth day. Is

it possible that Moses meant to intimate that they had not been created before that day? Science may well be pardoned for refusing to accept such an order of creation as this. It has been contended that Moses' words do not necessarily imply that then for the first time God created those luminous bodies, but rather that then for the first time He ordained them to stand in a definite relation to the earth, viz. to mark the boundary of the day and the night, and to regulate times and seasons. This may be, but I hardly think that it is. There is another way of smoothing the difficulty, which I do not remember to have seen noticed, but which is perhaps deserving of a passing mention. In the second chapter we are told that 'the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul'; and in the very next verse we read that 'the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.' Here, if we were guided by the strict sequence of the narrative,

we might imagine that the planting of the garden was posterior in time to the formation of the man. Such, however, could not possibly have been the case; the garden with its mineral resources, its river-system, its well-matured trees, must have been prepared long before the man was made who was destined to be its lord. Moses informs us of its having been planted—he does not specify the *time* when it was planted. Strict sequence of narrative, then, cannot always be depended upon in Moses' writings as a sure basis for his chronology. The sun, moon, and stars, then, may be mentioned on the fourth day, not as having been then for the first time created—they may have been coeval with the manifestation of light on the first day, or even have been created at a very much earlier period—but because Moses, wishing to mark certain great climatic changes, which were brought into operation between the third day and the fifth—changes which had the closest possible connection with the mighty revolution which was to take place, and which actually did take

place, in vegetable and animal life—changes in which the sun and the moon were to have a predominating influence—found it convenient in that portion of his chapter to record the *fact* that God had created them, without ever intending to fix the *time* when He created them. A supplementary chapter would probably clear away this obscurity also. But this I may say: the subject of the first chapter of Genesis is stated to be the creation of the *heaven*, which Moses defines to be the firmament, and the earth, which is the dry land—not the heaven separately, nor the earth separately, but the heaven and the earth, the two in combination, and the heaven mainly (and this is the point which I would impress here) in so far as it ministered to the earth. It is not the waters, then, it is not even the heaven, it is the earth which is Moses' principal theme. And of this there is a slight indication in the opening verses of the first chapter; for, after he had mentioned 'the heaven and the earth,' of the earth he proceeds to say that it was without form and

void, but of the heaven he says nothing—not, I take it, because there was nothing to say of it, but because it did not come within his scope to tell us everything of every part of the visible universe, but only just so much as was necessary to illustrate that portion of it which was destined to be the home of man. We can understand, then, why all that is said of the myriads of creatures, who from the very earliest times had populated the *waters*, should be comprehended in that short statement, ‘The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters’; we can understand, too, why even the phænomena of the *heavens* should have received what seems to us but scant and secondary attention, all mention of the sun, moon, and stars being postponed to the fourth day.

If it be urged that the fourth commandment positively states that ‘in six days God made the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is’—how, then, can ‘days’ bear the extended meaning which the hypothesis would assign to them?—it may be answered that if the *work* of

God differed beyond all conception from the work of Israel, and the *rest* of God from the rest of Israel, are we so sure that the *days* of God must have contained exactly the same number of hours, minutes, and seconds as the days of Israel? The work of God was the creation of a universe; the rest of God had nothing whatever in common with the weary frames and exhausted faculties of Israel. Who knows but that the days of God must be similarly allowed for? Certainly the spirit of the precept is that Israel was to do in his little day that little bit of work which fell to him, just as God in His incomparably greater day had done His incomparably greater work. We must be cautious that we do not confound the human and the Divine, the finite and the Infinite.

I have now exhausted every argument that I can think of, at least in so far as it can be drawn from the Mosaic narrative, in defence of the figurative, the prophetic, the Egyptian interpretation of the Mosaic day. Notwithstanding that

this mode of explanation has received the sanction and support of many able and learned men, I confess that I regard it with suspicion and distrust. I am not quite sure that Holy Scripture will allow of our holding that the seventh day has endured to, much less has extended beyond, the Christian era. I am not quite sure that language, which Moses uses in his account of the Flood, and again in the book of Leviticus, to describe the ordinary fauna of the human era, would have been employed by him in the first chapter of Genesis to designate the enormous growths of a very different world in a very different age. Nor am I satisfied, nor do I expect that the critic has been satisfied, with the only reason that I can assign for the postponement of all mention of the sun, moon, and stars until the fourth day. Now, then, is my opportunity to invite the reader to follow me into the next chapter, where I shall offer for his consideration a new method of explication, which shall neither shirk nor slur any portion of Moses' sublime and simple narrative; shall be in keeping with the

high character and lofty mission of the Hebrew prophet; shall be thoroughly Scriptural; and, lastly, if I mistake not, shall leave ample room for all that the scientist can reasonably demand, or the Biblicist desire.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EPOCH THEORY.

TRITE, but true, is the text, ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.’ As with God’s thoughts and ways, so also with His words and works. ‘We cannot by searching find out God.’ ‘We do but darken counsel by words without knowledge.’ Yet some knowledge we have, and it is sometimes possible from what we do know to ascend to what we do not know. Our knowledge is partly natural, partly acquired. Our acquired knowledge is derived from the visible universe, from experience and observation, from tradition written and unwritten, but most of all, and especially in things pertaining to God, from the Scriptures of God, and from the Spirit of God. Till the day-star

arise in our hearts, we are counselled to take the night-lamp of God in our hands. Let us see whether we cannot, with the help of its light, find our way through the dark places in the first two chapters of Genesis.

The chapters tell of a great work of God. Now can we discover in the Holy Scriptures traces of any general law, according to which the work of God proceeds? We can discern, I think, three distinct and well-defined stages. At first, it is a mystery hidden in Him; it is foreknown to Him, and to Him alone; it is determined by Him and prepared beforehand; it is what God is sometimes said to 'say' in His *heart*; in His heart it may remain for no one can tell how long, until, according to His dispensation, the time of the second stage has come—the time for making it known—God Himself declaring it either directly, or indirectly through one or other of the many ministers who are at His command. If it concern mankind, through one of mankind it is usually spoken—through a prophet or seer, who cries, 'Hear the *word* of

the Lord'; and sometimes the year, and the month, and the day of the month, are added, when it is important to particularize the time. Thus, what at first God had 'said' in His heart, He has now 'said' by word of mouth; His purpose is unbosomed, His secret is proclaimed; and here the matter may rest for generations and for ages, without any further outward effect ensuing, until the time of the third stage has come, and the word, which had first been spoken by God to Himself (if I dare so express it), and after that had been spoken by God to His servants, begins to take effect, being seen in the working of His mighty power—not always, perhaps not generally, instantaneously and with observation, but gradually and imperceptibly, extending through ages, so that to the ignorant and impatient it may seem to be making no progress whatever. 'All,' they say, 'is as it was in the beginning,' and 'Where is the sign, the promise of fulfilment?' Now, such being the three stages observable in the Divine operations, in which stage shall we say that that mighty

work, the creation of the heaven and the earth, is presented to us by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis? When he employs that very common, but, as used of God, most comprehensive and mysterious phrase, 'God said,' is it God's volition that he refers to?—or is it God's voice?—or is it God's work? Is it a purpose, a promise, or a performance? Agreeably to the usage of the Bible, it may be either of the first two, and perhaps also the last; one of the three it must certainly be. Which shall we decide that it is?

But, lest I should be suspected of trying to steal a march upon the reader, as though I flattered myself that I could surprise the citadel of his judgment, I will fortify myself by certain prominent pertinent examples, which shall witness for me that my operations are regular, and my position secure.

Now it happens conveniently to our purpose that the Holy Scriptures contain a record of another creation—a creation indeed very different from that of which Moses writes, but none the

less real for all that. I refer to that marvellous outburst of light and life which dates from the first appearing of Jesus Christ. A new spiritual world then began to emerge out of chaos and darkness; new creatures were called into being. It is true that the work has not yet been completed; but it has commenced; and, as it happens, it is its initial stage, about which, by the way, we have some very remarkable particulars, which chiefly concerns us now. How was it, then? Was the word spoken followed instantaneously by the work done? It does not appear so. Certain epochs are plainly enough marked out. There is an epoch of purpose, of counsel, of ordainment; there is an epoch of promise, of gift; and either of these epochs might be fitly designated by the words, 'Let it be'; and lastly, there is an epoch of operation, of manifestation, of effect, of going on to completion, or, in a word, an epoch of 'It was so.' Between these epochs innumerable years intervened. We imagine that we can count back correctly to such and such a figure; but we soon come to a stop;

the sum is lost in the infinity of the past. As a proof that what I affirm is no idle tale, I will quote the passages on which my statements are founded. St. Paul, the reality of whose existence no man can dispute, the weight of whose authority no man can set light by, says plainly that 'grace, which is now'—*i. e.* in his own lifetime—'made manifest by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, *was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*' (πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων), and in another place he speaks of that 'eternal' (*i. e.* spiritual) 'life, which God that cannot lie *promised before the world began*, but hath in due time manifested his word.' St. Peter also, fetching his knowledge from the same high source, and being privy, therefore, to the same high secret, speaks to the same purpose, and with the same positiveness of assurance—'the precious blood of Christ, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world' (πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου), 'but was manifest in these last times.' Such are some of the passages in which, con them over as much as you like, if you do not utterly reject

them, you must confess that certain epochs are distinctly set forth—epochs separated by long lengths of time, far exceeding all possibility of human notation or human conception. And let it be observed that we are not merely told of the epoch of God's purpose, but also of His promise. Now a promise implies some one else than the promiser. The promise, then, which must have been posterior to the purpose, must have been made to some one; to man it could not have been made, although man it concerned, for man had not then been created. From certain streaks of light, which are scattered throughout the sacred volume, we gather that it may have been signified to the high spiritual intelligences in the great Council-Chamber of God. Such, then, are some of the assurances which we have touching the dispensation of the *times*, in the account which has come down to us of that *second* great work, wherein God has been pleased to reveal Himself as a Creator.

And now a word on the *manner* in which, after God's purpose was first made known to

man (for the manifestation did not follow close upon the publication), that work is not unfrequently described. After the material world had been created, but long before the spiritual world was made to appear, that spiritual world was the theme of holy men, who spake of it not always, as one might have supposed, as a work which had yet to be, but not unfrequently as a work which had already been. Numbers of passages might be cited in proof of this assertion. Here is one capital example from the book of Psalms—

The Lord gave the word ; great was the company of the preachers.

Kings with their armies did flee and were discomfited, and they of the household divided the spoil.

A person not aware of the extraordinary powers with which the prophets were gifted, and the free use which they were wont to make of the perfect tense, would naturally suppose that the verses quoted formed part of a triumphal ode, commemorative of great national glories which had been achieved in the past, and had

been instantaneously effected. Nothing could be further from the truth. The glories celebrated were glories to come, and, if the march of the Church militant, and not rather of the Church triumphant, is portrayed, the rapidity of the successes fell far short of what might have been expected from the prophet's description, the fact being that he passed over all the tedious advances, operations, oppositions, struggles, casualties, reverses, and caught with his eye the signal victories and triumphs, and these he hailed with delight and heralded to mankind.

Here is another striking passage from the book of the prophet Isaiah—

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the valley of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

There may be some who will not believe that there ever was such a person as Isaiah, or, if there were, that the prophecies which are attributed to him were actually uttered by him, or that the particular passage which I have quoted refers to the future, and not rather to the past; but those

who are willing to weigh evidence and to accept facts will not doubt that Isaiah lived; that Isaiah prophesied; that, what Isaiah here expresses as if it had already been, only had its fulfilment centuries afterwards in Jesus Christ, who was, and is, the true Light of the world.

So frequently, so clearly, and in so many divers ways, is this fore-announcement by God of His purpose set forth in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that it may almost be pronounced part of the regular policy of the Divine government. The following passages will supply corroborative evidence—

(a) I am God, and there is none beside me,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.—Isaiah xlvii. 10.

(b) I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them.

I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee.

I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them; they are created now, and not from the beginning: even before the day that thou heardest them not, lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.—Isaiah xlvi. 3, 5, 6, 7.

(c) Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Now may not the creation of the *heaven and the earth* have been declared by God from the beginning, before ever they were as yet, and, as the Apostles were empowered to tell of the fore-announcement of the spiritual world, so may not Moses have been of that of the material, and by Divine direction and under Divine guidance have recorded it? Certainly, whoever it was who drew that most lively sketch of creation, he had a full, thorough, and commanding view of the great original. There is not that multiplicity of petty details which too often confuses the eye, and betrays the imperfect knowledge of the artist; but a few bold strokes, and the whole scene stands out clearly before us—Light, the firmament of Heaven, Ocean, Earth with its vegetable fulness; and then (perhaps because the precious things of the earth depend so much on the precious things of the heaven) the quickening, regulating Lights of heaven; and then the

world of Animals—those in the ocean and of the air first, those on the earth next; the whole concluding with Man, the chief of all God's works in the terrestrial sphere. Nothing can be more complete, nothing more compendious, nothing more comprehensive. If it be said that the work is described as not merely purposed, planned, and published by God, but finished, I reply that this should no more appear strange or incredible than that David should chant the victories of the Christian armies though their Captain had not appeared nor the conflict begun, or that the Lamb should be represented as '*slain from the foundation of the world*,' or the saints and faithful as '*chosen in Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world*.' We need not, however, push this principle of interpretation to its utmost limit. I draw a distinction between what Moses tells us that 'God said' and what Moses tells us that God did, or, in other words, between *God's counsel*, or, I should rather say, *God's expression of His counsel*, and *Moses' comment* on it. These, though they follow each other closely

in the order of the narration, did not necessarily follow each other closely in the order of time. Millions of years may have intervened between God's 'Let it be' and Moses' 'It was so,' the vast interval with all its processes and progresses being left a blank, as not falling within the scope of the prophet's vision, two leading epochs only being particularized, in one of which the work was—let us say—published, in the other completed. I will put it thus: in the forty-second chapter of Isaiah it is written—

Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

Now if I, knowing that all this has already either wholly or partly come to pass, choose to add,

And the wilderness and the cities lifted up their voice, and the inhabitants of the rock sang, and they gave glory to the Lord, and declared his praise in the islands,

what difference is there, except as to length, between Isaiah's words with my addition, and Moses' words, 'And *God said, Let there be light, and there was light*'? In neither is there so much as a hint that there was any interval of time between the speaking of the word and its taking effect; yet in the one case we know, and in the other we can well believe, that a vast chasm intervened, to be measured in the one case by centuries, in the other by ages.

But, when Moses attributes speech to God, does he mean something that was inwardly decreed by Him, or something which outwardly proceeded from Him—in other words, the speech of the heart, or the speech of the tongue? It has been assumed that it *must* have been the former; but the assumption is arbitrary, unsustainable, hardly consistent with the fact, that the speech is represented as having been continued during six successive 'days,' which it surely

would not have been, had God's counsel only and purpose been signified. Let it not be supposed, because the world was not then founded, nor man made, that God could lack either a place for the publication of His purpose, or intelligent beings to listen to it. If, when the Lord shined forth from Mount Paran, 'he came with ten thousands of saints'; if, in the reign of Ahab, Micaiah the prophet 'saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left'; if, in the year that King Uzziah died, that startling contrast was seen of the 'Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple'; if, when the Lord shall come to create the new heaven and the new earth, He will come, as we are assured, 'with ten thousands of his saints'—no ideal pictures these of a highly-wrought fancy, but sober and awful realities of an invisible, unknown world—it would not be unreasonable to assume that, when God announced His great conception of this world's creation, He would be environed by multitudes

of the heavenly hosts, even though we had not been expressly told in the book of Job, that, when the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Six days, according to Moses, the session lasted, nor need we scruple to accept this account of the time, during which the laws of the universe were promulgated, any more than we shrink from believing that by God's command Moses remained forty days and forty nights on the mount, when a law was given for Israel. Without presuming to pry too curiously into the mysteries of the Divine calendar, or into the nature of the Divine rest, I may venture to suggest that it is quite possible that God, having regard to the future necessities, spiritual and secular, of the human family, may have willed, when making His purpose known, to extend His revelations over six divisions of time, called by Moses days, and terminating with a seventh day of rest, to be a pattern in after ages of that hebdomadal cycle, which was to be to mankind in the same proportion a time to

work, and a time to rest. We need not suppose that Moses tells us all that God said, but only as much as it fell within his purpose, as much as in a brief epitome he could be expected, to tell. There may be some question as to the exact meaning of the words, 'And God *saw* everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.' God works not as man works; God rests not as man rests; God sees not as man sees. To Him the past is as the present, the future as the past. It is not necessary that the clay should have received the impress of the seal for God to see it. We cannot be sure, then, whether the reference is to the work of creation, as it was first conceived and patterned by the Divine mind; or as it was afterwards fashioned for human purposes by the Divine hand; or as it is to be, when it shall be once more remoulded, and set by the same great Builder and Maker on a firm and everlasting foundation.

I have been speaking of the great cosmos of the universe; let us turn our eyes for a moment

to a creation on a much smaller scale. In the verse which follows it is the human microcosm which is presented to us. 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect: and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was nothing of them.' What an extraordinary avouchment! And yet it is no mere flourish, no poet's fiction or prophet's phrenzy—nothing of the sort. In the Book of God David is written as being, though no David is yet in existence. Change the object; magnify the embryo; substitute for David the heaven and the earth; and may it not be true that in God's Book—in Moses' record of it—the light, the firmament, the sea, the plant and the herb, the sun and the moon and the stars, animals marine and animals terrene—*all may have been written*, albeit light, firmament, sea, earth, plant, herb, sun, moon, and all the living swarms of sea and land, were neither visible, nor had any embodied existence? Incomprehensible, no doubt, to human reason! But it is the same mysterious character,

the same language hard to be understood, which pervades more or less the whole of the sacred volume. Hear what Bacon saith—‘The Scriptures, being given by inspiration, and not by human reason, do differ from all other books in the author, which, by consequence, doth draw on some difference to be used by the expositor. For the inditer of them did know four things, which no man attains to know, which are, the mystery of the kingdom of glory, the perfection of the law of nature, the secrets of the heart of man, and the future succession of all ages.’ Weighty words these of a very wise man!

I have endeavoured to show that, when Moses tells us that ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,’ he does not mean, and the law of Biblical interpretation does not compel us to believe that he means, that God did at that very time actually and visibly complete His work, but rather that He announced His purpose and exhibited His plan, which purpose and plan Moses assures us were in after times effectually and fully accomplished; but, because Moses links

together in his narrative the epoch of announcement and the epoch of accomplishment, a person, not acquainted with his style, nor mindful of his object, nor observant of the brevity of his description, nor familiar with the real facts of the case, might, not to say, would, naturally suppose that the one followed the other in the order of time as well, although an incalculable number of years may have revolved, before the work was so much as begun, much more, after it was begun, before it was absolutely finished. Of the *progress* of the work, of the manifold and marvelous operations by which it was brought to its present order and beauty, Moses is all but silent; partly, because those who need such information have within their reach the fuller and larger volume of the earth, wherein every the minutest particular is set down in God's own handwriting; but principally, because the main scope of Moses' revelation was the rise and progress of the human, as distinguished from the material, universe. Nevertheless the second chapter contains a cursory reference to one of the earth's inchoate and

transitional stages. 'These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field not yet was in the earth, and every herb of the field not yet grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.' We are not required to fix the particular stage in the history of the earth's formation when this state of things prevailed; all that we can certify is that, if there was at that time no herbage, neither could there have been any herbivorous animal. This short and incidental allusion to what must have been a phase of the earth at a very remote period in the past, was probably intended to be a means of introducing us by an easy and natural transition to the mention of man, whose formation, name, place of habitation, and rule of life, are next more particularly related.

Before I conclude, I must notice certain objec-

tions which may be raised to the view which I have taken.

It may be said that the order in which Moses has arranged his matter tells against the soundness of my exegesis—that the mention of the day, on which God announced in each instance His creative purpose, should have come immediately after Moses had mentioned the declaration of that purpose, and not have been deferred until he had inserted his own comment of how it all came to pass, seeing that it came to pass ages after the day on which the purpose was announced. But it must be remembered, that the days of Moses have a prospective as well as a retrospective reference; they are the steps by which he advances to the mention of the Sabbathical rest; and, if one object of his revelation was to root in the hearts of the Israelites a reverential regard for that fundamental article of the Jewish religion, he could not have introduced it more solemnly, or impressed it more effectually, than by giving the days the somewhat exceptional and certainly most emphatic position in

his narrative which he has done. But, independently of this, such interruptions and interlocutions are quite in keeping with the general style of Moses. So far from invariably observing the order of time in the arrangement of his matter, he abounds with parentheses, which introduce digressions, explanations, annotations, thoughts by the way, anything germane to his subject, whether it be of earlier date, or whether it be of later. Thus in the second chapter the seventh and the fifteenth verses would very naturally have followed each other thus—

7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Instead of which what have we? Between the two verses is intercalated a description of the garden of Eden, its situation, its river-system, its vegetable and mineral products, all which must have been silently prepared long before; and it is only then that the thread of the narrative is

resumed, and we are told what was done with the newly-formed man.

Again, in the third chapter there is a long digression about the progeny of Cain, their place of settlement, their social history, their industrial pursuits, and just at the lag end of the chapter mention is made of Adam's third son Seth, who, if sequence of time had been studied, should have had precedence. The reader will recall many such chronistic irregularities in other parts of the Pentateuch.

It may be further objected that Moses makes God speak to the man, as if he were a corporeal being, and standing by a present listener—'Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed,' &c. Would this have been his style if he had been telling of a conceived, and not rather of a completed, creation? It may be answered, that a license of this sort is not without example in Holy Scripture. In the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah God is represented as addressing Cyrus by name, though years were to elapse before Cyrus was cradled, much less crowned.

Or we may adopt the simpler explanation, that the words quoted are not part of what 'God said' on the sixth day, when the word first went forth that the earth should be framed, but part of Moses' comment of what took place ages afterwards, when the time arrived for man to be made.

Lastly, it may be objected that, in naming the Deity, a different style is noticeable in the second chapter from what we find in the first; and on this difference has been founded a theory, that the book of Genesis could not have been the production of a single author. But, so far from seeing in this duality of names the slightest reason to question the authorship of Moses, I rather derive from it a strong presumptive proof of his Divine inspiration, because he seems to have anticipated a mystery, a knowledge of which it would have been impossible for him to acquire by meditation, or to derive from human sources. To make my meaning clear, I must have recourse once more to the Holy Scriptures, and where else can we hope to find any certain and authentic

information concerning God's nature and God's ways? In that portion of the New Testament, then, where the Apostles (whose inspiration, by the way, rests on the strongest internal and external evidence) disclose to the Christian Churches the secrets of the new spiritual creation, two persons, and two persons only, have a distinct and decided pre-eminence. The full force of this statement can only be apprehended by those who have carefully studied the Epistles; it will be sufficient to say, that almost every Epistle begins with the salutation, only occasionally slightly varied—'Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ'; that throughout every Epistle the same two names repeatedly recur in intimate and exclusive association; and that, when St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, carries us forward to the time when the struggle of ages shall have terminated, because sin and death shall be no more, it is the Son, who, having subdued all, delivers all to the Father, that God may be all in all. Nor is it only when the *new* creation is the theme, that we

observe this marked duality of persons. Where (as is not unfrequently the case) the *old* creation is referred to in the New Testament, we discern the same two persons, we derive the same dualistic doctrine—‘God created all things by Jesus Christ.’ ‘By the Word all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made.’ ‘Thou, Lord’—the Son is being compared with angels—‘in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.’ Now if, as has been suggested, and as is not improbable, the difference of names in the first two chapters of Genesis are signs and symbols of a difference of persons, if Elohim and Jehovah Elohim of the Old Testament represent respectively the Father and the Son of the New, whence did Moses get this sublime mystery? Who initiated him into it? Who assured him? Who but that great Being who alone had the power to impart it, and who afterwards did impart it, to the Apostles? Will this in any degree invalidate the explanation which I have given? Nay,

it will rather confirm it. In the first chapter I see the Divine Architect, who purposes, who originates, who patterns, who proclaims; in the second chapter I behold the Divine Artificer, who founds, who operates, who executes, who finishes. Thus does Moses, led by the Holy Spirit, without pains or effort, with seeming inconsistency, but with splendid consistency, anticipate, if I should not say, foreshadow, the evangelistic tidings of the joint workmanship of two Divine persons—'of one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.'

CHAPTER IX.

EPILEGOMENA.

JUST as men of science have sometimes been able, by a careful application of well-established laws, to account for natural phænomena which had long lain beyond the reach of their apprehension, so I, by relying on certain Scriptural assurances which have proceeded from God-inspired men concerning the ways of God in connection with the creation of the *spiritual* world, have sought to elucidate what Moses has recorded concerning the ways of God in connection with the creation of the *material* universe. If it is impossible that the mode of God's procedure could have been the same, when He made the world of matter, as it unquestionably is represented as having been when He called into

being the new creation, the whole of my argument in the foregoing chapter, being void of foundation, collapses; but once let it be granted, as I think it must be, that the law of the Divine operation in the two cases *may have* been the same, and I have shown a way of explaining the first chapter of Genesis, which may fairly claim to take its place among possible solutions of that mysterious and hitherto unexplained chapter. And it is surely something to have hit upon a method, which on the one hand cannot conflict with the well-ascertained facts of science, and on the other does not transgress the recognized limits of interpretation of Holy Scripture. That the law of interpretation, which applies to the sacred writings, is not always identical with the law of interpretation, which applies to secular literature, is explicitly declared in the Scriptures themselves, and those who will not accept the testimony of the Scriptures must not take it amiss, if we, who do accept it, base our arguments on the faith of it. In other words, we claim to interpret the Scriptures according to the

Scriptural law of interpretation, which we hold to be good and true. We insist on a distinction between things secular and things spiritual. We refuse to confine the operation of God to those laws only, which are called the laws of nature, and which are the only laws which some profess to know, or think they know. We believe that God Himself has revealed what unassisted reason could never have guessed. If I am asked, whether I have any warrant, other than I have mentioned, for interpreting the simple narrative of Moses in this high spiritual fashion, I answer that the writers of the New Testament have interpreted *parts* of the Pentateuch in a somewhat similar fashion, when, to illustrate the mysteries of the Christian religion, they quote passages from it, which we should never have thought capable of such an application, had we not been authoritatively told so; a type, an allegory, a prophecy, are made to appear, where neither type, allegory, nor prophecy would seem to be possible; nay, verses of the first two chapters of Genesis have been cited to show the certainty of the rest that

remaineth for the people of God, and the intimate union which subsists between Christ and His Church. I may not, of course, conclude, because *parts* of the Pentateuch are thus spiritualized, that therefore *all* of it must bear a similar complexion; but I may fairly argue, if portions, where human actors mainly figure, can be made to glow with Divine light, what may we not expect in a chapter which carries us back to a time when neither man nor matter existed, but God was the sole operator, and God's work the theme? Unless the first Christian writers were strangely mistaken in their interpretations, which we cannot for a moment allow, it is impossible to escape from the conclusion, that, when Moses penned the particular passages which are so expounded by them, he was, so far as those passages are concerned, whether consciously or unconsciously, moved by a Divine impulse. Shall we say that God dictated to Moses the far-off things of the *latter* days, yet, when Israel had need to be instructed in the far-off things of the *former* days, God left him to tell his

story as best he could? The style and substance of Moses' narrative forbid us to think so. If we compare the Mosaic cosmogony with the various others which in various times and countries have been disseminated, we shall find that theirs are at the best a monstrous compound of wisdom and folly, of morality and immorality, of divinity and dæmonry, prolix, confused, contradictory, a famous theme for comic poets to parody and ridicule; whereas his is a masterpiece of simple writing, full of good sense and substance, succinct, comprehensive, Catholic, presenting such a vivid, intelligible, impressive picture of a great work of God, that it has won the assent and approbation not only of the simple-minded and inerudite, but of those also who have been justly ranked among the wise men of the earth. How do we account for this remarkable difference? I can imagine but one probable explanation—that Moses wrote not of himself, but received a revelation from God. The question of Moses' inspiration is so intimately bound up with the history of the Jews, that, as long as

that remarkable people are scattered over the face of the globe, mingled with the nations, but not of them, so long will Moses not lack witnesses to prove that he was indeed a man of God. If I were asked to single out some one portion of his writings rather than another, as affording convincing evidence that he partook, at any rate at times, of a celestial illumination, I should select his Song in the latter part of Deuteronomy, where with unerring accuracy he forecasts the future of the Jewish nation—a future so extraordinary, that no man could of himself have divined it; so tragic, that no Jew, certainly no patriot Jew, would have credited, much less clearly and unreservedly proclaimed it, unless he had been moved to do so by the Spirit of God—a future, where rebellion was followed by chastisement, apostasy by rejection, after which came dispersion to the uttermost parts of the earth, fierce persecutions, wholesale massacres, yet a remnant always to be found. If I were asked to point out a portion of Moses' writings, which, next after his Song, would seem almost to have

necessitated the interposition of the Deity, I should quote the chapter where he professes to relate what God said and did before ever the world of man or matter was. And here I may enumerate certain points of agreement which are observable between the revelation of Moses and the record of the earth. From both we learn that water existed at a very early period, and exercised a potent influence in the formation of the globe; in both certain epochs are traced out, marking the progress of the work; both tell of a time when not a blade of grass, nor an animal, was living; in both animals of the water are represented as created before animals of the land, beasts before man; both agree that man was made last, and was endowed with a superior nature and commanding powers. A capital elementary lesson surely of the great work of creation to be compressed into a chapter of some thirty verses! But the Hebrew prophet would have counted that he had laboured in vain if he had not again and again, in every part of his chapter, given the foremost place to the

Name of Him of whom it is written, that He is 'wonderful in *counsel*, and excellent in *working*.' Divinity of this sort was not to be learnt in the schools of Egypt.

In conclusion, I shall state it as my firm conviction and irreversible belief, that Moses tells us nothing more or less than the truth, when with majestic simplicity and marked emphasis he announces that *God* said, Let there be light; and *God* said, Let there be a firmament; and *God* said, Let the dry land appear; and *God* said, Let the earth bring forth grass and herb and tree; and *God* said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven; and *God* said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature and the fowl; and *God* said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind; and *God* said, Let us make man: innumerable ages may have intervened; innumerable agencies may have operated; many may have been the steps in the progress of creation; but this one essential, eternal truth neither philosophy nor science, neither secularist nor ecclesiastic, no, nor yet an

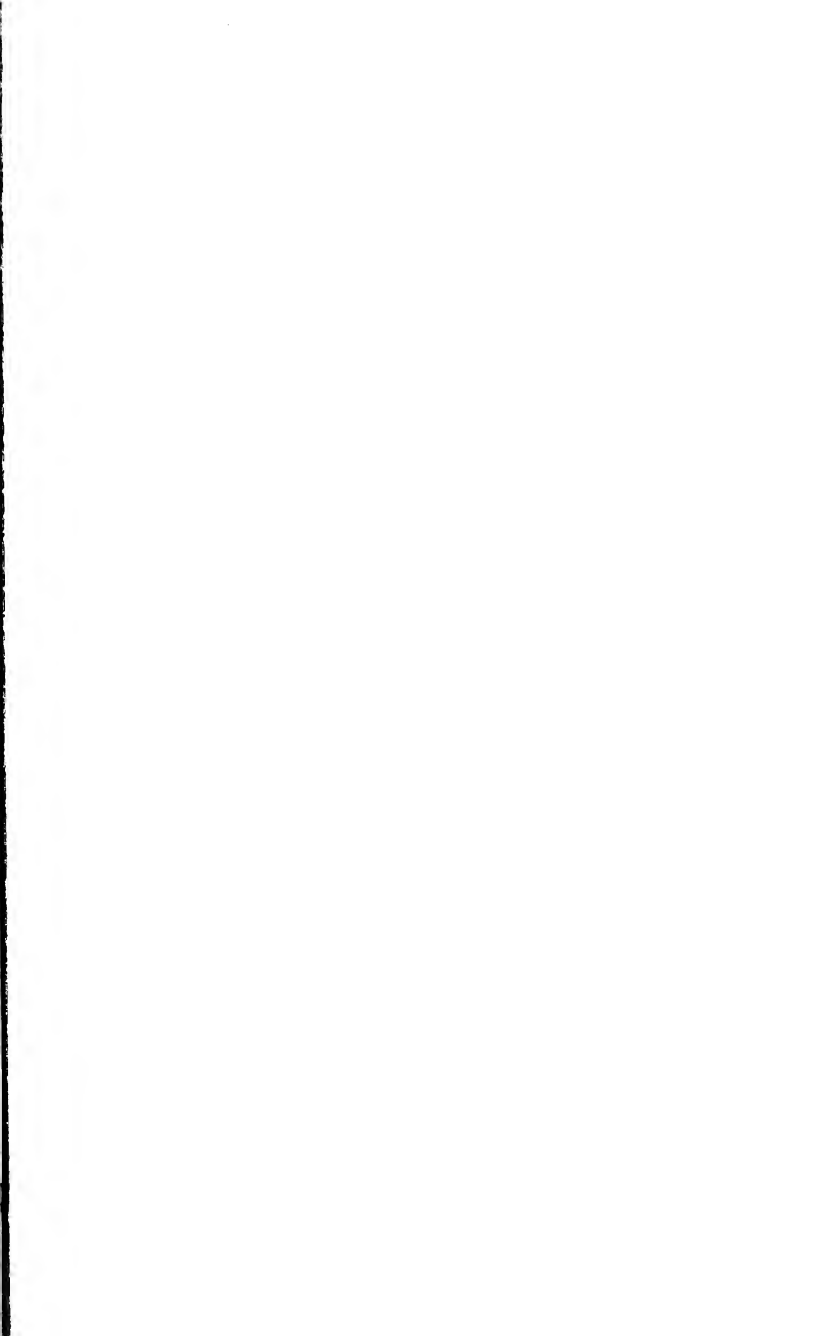
angel from heaven, can shake, any more than they can disrobe the sun of light, or start the minutest star one-millionth of an inch from its appointed course—that ‘in the beginning *God* created the heaven and the earth.’ And this high doctrine will stand, whether there be any truth in the evolutionary theory or not. If evolution have any foundation in fact, it will still have been *God* who planned it, *God* who brought it to pass; nor will a believing mind have any more difficulty in apprehending, that man was evolved from a molecule or a monkey, than that he was formed—than which descent what can be lower?—from ‘the dust of the ground.’ Moses’ formula, ‘*God* said,’ covers it all. When, however, we are asked to abandon well-attested, long-cherished truths for new and fanciful conceits—to bid a long farewell to the garden of Eden, and to search for our first progenitor in the shaggy wilds of some primæval forest, we are constrained to ask, What is the proof? Granted that there is a graduation of form from the lowest to the highest; granted that there are striking

structural resemblances between all animals, and that the monkey is a mocking counterpart of the man, is there, then, nothing to be said on the other side? Are there no disparities, no dissimilarities? If there is continuity of form, there is discontinuity of substance. 'All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of fishes, another flesh of birds.' And then, far more than all this, there is man's inner life, man's marvellous continuous history, man's high revealed destiny. What is there in the whole range of the brute creation to parallel these? Here we have a yawning gulf, which no scientific engineering has been able to bridge. The missing link, more valuable than all the rest of the links put together, cannot be found; nor would it, could the waters of the Indian Ocean be dried up, beneath whose depths a profound German professor fondly divines—does he believe it himself? does he dream that he will be able to induce a single rational being to believe it?—that it might be found imbedded. One thing, however, is certain—the law of evolution

is not universally true; the higher has not in every case been evolved from that which is below it—*God was not evolved*. More reasonable, more trustworthy, the express declaration of the Mosaic Scriptures, that ‘God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.’ ‘And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.’ It is on the faith of this simple representation, that St. Luke traces up man’s pedigree not to any one of the brute creation, but directly to God—‘which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.’ If, then, we are to borrow terms from the dictionary of the evolutionist, let us say that man was evolved from God, and from no other but God. This is the teaching of true science; this is the wisdom which cometh down from above.

THE END.

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