

Bradlaugh Charles

# The Bible: What It Is!



**Charles Bradlaugh**  
**The Bible: What It Is!**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=23150539](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23150539)*

*The Bible: What It Is!:*

# Содержание

BOOK I. GENESIS

4

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

73

# **Bradlaugh Charles**

## **The Bible: What It Is!**

### **BOOK I. GENESIS**

The Bible is the name by which the collection of Books beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelations is commonly known. It is derived from the Greek word [ – ] (Books), and this name is supposed to have been first applied in the fifth century by Chrysostom, before which time those books were known as [ – ] holy writings, sacred writings, writings of God.

The Bible is divided into three parts: the Old Testament, containing thirty-nine books, the New Testament, containing twenty-seven books, and the Apocrypha, containing fourteen books; making in the whole eighty books. It is only the first portion, known as the Old Testament, upon which I intend to treat at present. It professes to be translated from the Hebrew, in which Language (according to the learned Parkhurst) God communicated with Adam; or, perhaps to quote the learned divine more correctly, I ought to say that 'Hebrew was the language in which God taught Adam to speak.' It has been suggested by other saintly writers that Hebrew will be the language spoken in Paradise by the Saints. It is perhaps to be

regretted that God did not choose a language more copious, and less capable of being misconstrued; but I will not at present stop to question whether the fact be as above stated – it is sufficient for us to know that the original of the Old Testament is (with some slight exception) written in the Hebrew.

The Old Testament is divided by the Jews into three parts, called 1st, (the law) – this division includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; 2nd, (the Prophecies) – this portion contains the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which are known as the former prophets, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi – of these, the three first are called 'the greater Prophets,' and the remaining twelve 'the lesser'; 3rd, (holy writings), comprising the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemian, and first and second Chronicles. I have given the books in their Jewish order, which differs from our own, Chronicles being the last book of the Hebrew Bible.

The earliest complete translation into English of the whole of the Bible was made in the fourteenth century by the famous John Wickliffe, who was born in 1324 and died in 1384. This translation was reprinted in 1731, and again in 1810. Wickliffe's version of the Old Testament, I believe, still remains in manuscript. Portions of the Bible had been previously translated into Saxon, and it is alleged that one John de Trevisa

had completed a translation prior to Wickliffe.

The next translation appears to have been made by William Tyndale (a native of Gloucestershire, born about 1477, and cruelly murdered in September, 1536) who, in 1526, printed two editions of the New Testament, which were issued from Wittemberg; both of these were, however, bought up by the Church authorities, and committed to the flames. Tyndale, however, nothing daunted by this, continued his work of translation, in which he is said to have been assisted by Martin Luther; Tyndale at this time residing at Antwerp, to which place he had been compelled to fly in 1523, to avoid the persecution of the priests.

It is worthy of notice that the Bible, which is alleged by the priests to be God's word revealed to the people, was never revealed to the people of England in their own tongue until the fourteenth century; that it was not until fifty-two years after printing had been introduced into England that any attempt was made to print an English edition: and that the first man who was sufficiently religiously disposed to print an edition, had his work burnt by the very men who, if their doctrines are true, should have zealously guarded each copy. Not only were the Bibles burnt, but every person in whose possession they were found was subjected to severe punishment. Despite all this, the editions issued by Tyndale were eagerly bought; and efforts were then made by King Henry VIII., Cardinal Wolsey, and Sir Thomas More, to lure poor Tyndale back to England, but he was too

cautious to return. His friend, John Frith, who had assisted him in translating, was more credulous; and, returning to London upon the king's promise of safety, was arrested and burnt. Tyndale was ultimately entrapped, and strangled and burnt at Vilvoord, near Antwerp.

One would now be inclined to think that the priests well knew that to place the Bible in the hands of the people would be to tear down the veil from the temple, would expose their trickeries, and would place in the hands of the mass the means of detecting their false pretence. Under the guise of preachers of a revelation from God, they had ruled the minds of the people; and they were fully aware of the danger which would accrue to themselves should the people ever examine too closely into the merits of that revelation. Sir Thomas More wrote against Tyndale in language which will startle the readers of the present day, especially when we remember that Tyndale's crime was the presenting us with a translation of the Bible admirable for its style and general accuracy. More says, 'Our Saviour will say to Tyndale, Thou art accursed, Tyndale, the son of the Devil, for neither flesh nor blood hath taught thee these heresies, but thine own Father, the devil, that is in Hell. Ah, blasphemous beast, to whose roaring and lowing no good Christian man can, without heaviness of heart, give ear.' The next published translation was by Miles Coverdale (born 1535), who partially used Tyndale's text. Coverdale appears only to have translated from the Dutch and Latin into English. It does not seem at all clear that Tyndale

translated from the Greek and Hebrew direct. It is quite certain that prior to this time the monks placed great difficulties in the way of acquiring either of those languages, in fact, Erasmus tells us that to know Greek was to be suspected, and to know Hebrew would prove you heretic outright.

The next is known as Mathewe's Bible, which is supposed to have been issued in the early part of the sixteenth century, by Richard Grafton. It is merely a collation of the texts of Tyndale and Coverdale.

About the same time were issued Cranmer's and Taverner's editions of the Bible.

The Geneva edition, issued in 1560, is that which is commonly known as the 'Breeches Bible,' on account of the translation of Genesis, c. 3, v. 7. I have a copy of this in reference.

Bishop Parker's Bible was issued in 1568. This edition was completed by the aid of several learned men, and differs considerably from its predecessors.

In 1582, the Douay edition of the New Testament was issued; and, in 1609, the Old Testament also. The former was printed at Rheims, the latter at Douay; and both were issued under the superintendence of Cardinal Allen. This brings us to the period at which what is commonly known as the authorised version was issued. This being the version I have to examine, I shall quote the history of it as given in an able article which appeared in the *Penny Cyclopædia*: – 'Early in the reign of King James I., there was a conference of divines of different opinions, at

Hampton Court, for the settling of the peace of the Church. In this conference much was said concerning the imperfection of the existing translations of the Scriptures. The king himself, who was often present at these meetings, expressed a strong opinion on that point of the debate. "I wish," said he, "some special pains were taken for an uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned in both Universities, then reviewed by the bishops, presented to the Privy Council, and, lastly, ratified by royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and no other." Out of this speech of the king's arose the present English Bible; for the suggestion soon ripened into a resolution. As this is the Bible which has for more than two centuries been the only Bible allowed to be read in the English Church, and as it is also the Bible universally used in dissenting communities, we may be expected to give a more extended notice of it than of the former editions. Fifty-four of the persons in that age most distinguished for that particular species of learning which such a duty required, were selected for the work, according to the king's suggestion; finally, forty-seven of them undertook it. They divided themselves into six independent classes, to each of which a certain portion of the work was assigned. Each person in the class was to produce his own translation of the whole committed to them, and these several translations were to be revised at a general meeting of the class. When the class had agreed upon their version, it was to be transmitted to each of the other classes; so that no part was to come out without the sanction of the whole

body.

"Two of the classes sat at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. The instructions which they received from the king were, that they should adhere to the Bishops' Bible, which was then ordinarily read in the Churches, making as few deviations from it as possible. They were, however, to use the other versions, and to consult the translations which had been made into other modern languages; and they were to keep in the old ecclesiastical words, such as Church, etc. When a word had divers significations, "that should be kept which had been most commonly used by the ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith." No marginal notes were to be used, except for the further explication of some Greek or Hebrew word. References to parallel passages might be given. They were to call in the assistance of any learned man who was known to have made this subject his study.

"They were employed upon the work for three years, namely from 1607 to 1610; proceeding with that deliberation and care which so weighty an undertaking required. The names of the divines engaged in it, and the portions known which were committed to each class, are reserved. If we say that there are few names among them which have acquired a lasting celebrity, we are only saying of them what is the usual fete of divines. The name of Bishop Andrews is first in place and the first in celebrity. It is believed that Bancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury, though not one of the professed translators, had much to do in

the superintendence of the work. It came forth from the press of Robert Barker in 1611.'

I have a copy printed by Robert Barker before me which contains the whole eighty books. It begins with these words, 'The first book of Moses, called Genesis.' Not one word of this title is to be found in the Hebrew. The word Genesis is a Greek word, signifying production, generation, birth, origin, or formation. It seems curious that the translators should have given a Hebrew book a Greek title. In the Hebrew there is no title to the book; the first word [ – ] (in the beginning) is merely written in larger characters. The headings to each page and chapter are also additions made by the translators; and this is sometimes very important, as they are made to improperly govern the meaning of the text. As to Genesis being called 'the first book of Moses,' I think that grave censure should be cast on those who prefixed those words; they are entirely omitted in the Douay edition. Long since, our churchmen have been acquainted with the fact that these words, fixing the authorship on Moses, form no part of the original text, yet they allow edition after edition to be printed bearing the same title as that of 1611. Why is this? It is not that they are afraid of tampering with the authorised version, for they have actually, in the later editions, omitted the whole fourteen books of the Apocrypha, which were included in the original edition. In an edition of King James's authorised version, printed in 1630, the page containing Ezekiel, chapter 7, is headed by mistake with the word 'Apocrypha.'

This mistake has been corrected in the later editions; why not also have corrected those five false statements which allege Moses as the author of the Pentateuch? There have been, also, several printers' errors corrected in the later editions, yet the words in question are allowed to stand; why is this? again I ask. The persistence in an error of so important a character would justify suspicion, and even the allegation of fraudulent intent on the part of those who issue the book. It is an attempt to give an anonymous work an undue claim on our attention. Moses himself, in no part of the five books, claims to be the author of them; and in no part of the Bible is he alleged to be the writer of the Pentateuch. It is certainly alleged that Moses wrote 'the law,' 'the book of the law,' but there is nothing whatever to show that that work outlived the destruction of Jerusalem, and there are several express declarations to the contrary (*vide* Letter on the Pentateuch by Thomas Cooper, M.D., and Esdras, chap, xiv., v. 21). I am aware of the texts quoted by those who allege that Moses was the author of the whole Pentateuch; viz., Exodus, chap, xvii., v. 14, chap, xxiv., v. 4 and 7, chap, xxxiv., v. 27, Numbers, chap, xxxiii., v. 1 and 2, Deuteronomy, chap, i., v. 5, chap, xxxi., v. 9, 13, 22, 24, 26; but do not think that they will, even in the hands of the most partial supporter of the Mosaic hypothesis, bear on the question sufficiently to decide it in the affirmative, or even to create a presumption in its favour. That Moses was the author of the Pentateuch as it now stands is a proposition which no intelligent man in the present day will

venture to support, especially after the elaborate criticisms of Aben Ezra, Spinoza, Hobbes, Peyrerius, Astruc, Pere Simon, Volney, Voltaire, Gesenius, Vater, Paine, and others. The whole of the five books abound with passages which could not have been written by Moses, or during his life time. See – Genesis, chap, xii., v. 6, also chap, xiii., v. 7; these verses must have been written at a period when the Canaanites had been expelled from the land of which they were in quiet possession during the lifetime of Moses: —

Genesis, chap, xiv., v. 14. The city of Lais, Laish, or Leshem, was not called Dan until long after the death of Moses, when the Danites possessed themselves of it and called it after Dan, their father (vide Joshua, chap, xix., v. 47, and Judges, chap, xviii., v. 29): – Genesis, chap, xiii., v. 18, chap, xxiii., v. 2 and 19, chap, xxv., v. 27, &c. These verses and several others, in which Hebron is named, cannot be from the pen of Moses, for there was no such place as Hebron in his day. Kirjath Arba was not called Hebron until given to Caleb, son of Jephunneh, long after the death of Moses (vide Joshua, chap, xiv., v. 14 and 15): —

Genesis, chap, xx., v. 16, and chap, xxiii., v. 15 and 16. Of these verses, Voltaire writes as follows; 'Learned and ingenious men, full of their own talents and acquirements, have maintained that it is impossible Moses could have written the book of Genesis. One of their principal reasons is, that in the history of Abraham that patriarch is stated to have paid for a cave he purchased for the interment of his wife, in silver coin; and

the King of Gerar to have given Sarah a thousand pieces of silver, when he restored her, after having carried her off for her beauty at the age of seventy-five. They inform us that they have consulted all the ancient authors, and that it appears very certain that, at the period mentioned, silver money was not in existence.

---

Genesis, chap. xxii. v. 14. It is asserted that Mount Moriah was not called the Mount of the Lord until after the Temple was erected thereon, centuries after the death of Moses: —

Genesis, chap, xxxvi., v. 31. This could not have been written until kings had ruled over the Children of Israel, which would bring the authorship to the time of Saul, even conceding the earliest date. Voltaire says, 'this is the celebrated passage which has proved one of the great stumbling-stones; this it was which decided the great Newton, the proud and acute Samuel Clarke, the profound and philosophic Bolingbroke, the learned Le Clerc, the ingenious Freret, and a host of other enlightened men, to maintain that it was impossible Moses could have been the author of Genesis': —

Exodus, chap, xvi., v. 35. This could not have been written by Moses, as manna did not cease until after his death (vide Joshua, chap, v., v. 12): —

Numbers, chap, xii., v. 3. No man will for one moment suppose that a meek man would write his own character, to be handed down to posterity in this fashion. Paine, quoting the verse, says, 'If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the

meekest of men, he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs, and the advocates for these books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them; if Moses was not the author, the book is without authority, and if he was the author, is without credit, because to boast of meekness is the reverse of meekness, and is a lie in sentiment': —

Deuteronomy, chap, i., v. 1 and 5, and chap iv., v. 41 to 49. 'These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on the other side of Jordan.' Our version gives it, 'this side Jordan,' but the Hebrew word in each verse is [ – ] which even the orthodox Park-hurst translates as meaning over, beyond, on the other side (*vide* Parkhurst's Lexicon, p. 509, article [ – ] and Dr. Cooper's Letter, p. 41 to 44). In fact, the translators of the Bible have themselves translated this very word differently in Deuteronomy, chap, iv., v. 49. It of course follows that, as Moses never crossed the river Jordan, he could not have been the author of the verses in which the expression occurs: —

Deuteronomy, chap, ii., v. 12. This could not have been written by Moses, as in his day the Children of Israel had not even reached, much less entered into possession of the promised land: —

Deuteronomy, chap, xxxiii. It is scarcely probable that Moses wrote a chapter containing phrases such as 'the man of God, Moses, blessed the Children of Israel before his death,' 'Moses commanded us a law,' &c: – Deuteronomy, chap, xxxiv. I do not consider it necessary to reason upon the proposition that a

man cannot write an account of his own death and burial, or to endeavour to prove that he cannot relate that his grave remains undiscovered to the present day. Beside which, the names used in this chapter are those which were given to the places after the Israelites had obtained possession of the land, and which could not have been known in the time of Moses. The same remark applies to Deuteronomy, chap, iv., v. 43, in which the reader will at once discover a glaring anachronism, as it is impossible Bezer, Gilead, and Golan, could have been called Bezer of the Reubenites, Gilead of the Gadites, and Golan of the Mannassites, until after those tribes had conquered and taken possession of Bezer, Gilead, and Golan respectively, which they did not do until after the death of Moses.

In Dr. Cooper's able letter to Professor Silliman, Spinoza's 'Tractates Theologico-Politicus,' Pere Simon's critical history of the Old Testament, Voltaire's 'Philosophical Dictionary,' Volney upon Ancient History, as also in the notes to Volney's 'Ruins,' and in Thomas Paine's 'Age of Reason,' part 2, the reader will find the arguments I have used more fully elaborated.

In Professor Newman's 'Phases of Faith,' pp. 83 and 84, there is an eloquent repudiation of the attempts at argument of those theologians who contend for the Mosaic Pentateuch. (The word Pentateuch is a compound Greek word, meaning five books.)

Why should we acknowledge Moses as the author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy? We have positive evidence that he was not the writer of very many

portions, and we have no evidence at all to support the assertion that he wrote a single line of either of the five books.

In Voltaire's dialogue between the monk and the honest man, the following remarks occur: —

'1. — It seems difficult that Moses could have written the Pentateuch which we attribute to him, in the desert. If his people came from Egypt, where they had lived, says the author, 400 years (although he is mistaken in 200 years), the book would, probably, have been written in Egyptian, and we are told it was in Hebrew. It must have been graven upon stone or wood, because, in the time of Moses, they had no other mode of writing. This was a very difficult art, and one which required long preparations, since it was necessary to polish the wood or the stone. It does not appear that this art would have been exercised in a desert, where, according to the book itself, the Jewish horde were not able to make their own clothes and shoes, and where God was obliged to work a continual miracle during forty years to preserve their vestments without decaying, and the coverings of their legs and feet. It is so true that they were only able to write upon stone, that the author of the book of Joshua says that Deuteronomy was written upon an altar of rough stones, plastered with mortar. It appears Joshua did not even imagine this book was durable. '2. — Those men who are most versed in antiquity think these books were written more than 700 years after Moses. They found this opinion upon that which is spoken of the Kings of Edom and Israel, when there were no kings till

a long time after Moses; upon the position of the cities, which is false if the books were written in the desert, and true if they were written at Jerusalem; upon the names of the cities and small towns of which these books speak, which were neither built nor called by the names there given them till many ages afterwards, &c.'

Previous to my analysis of the first chapter of Genesis, I shall quote from an able letter which appeared in a provincial paper a short time since, and in which I fully concur.

'Before entering into a detailed examination of the Mosaic narrative, I will glance at the order and operation of its incidents. This is the more necessary, as the sequence of those operations becomes a leading and important feature in the final deductions.

'Genesis, read in its literal sense, teaches that, on the first day God directed light to be, and divided light from darkness, calling the light day and darkness night, 'On the second day He placed a firmament to divide the waters, gathering the waters together and forming dry land, which He commanded to bring forth grass and herbs yielding seed, and trees yielding fruit.

'On the fourth day He placed lights in the firmament to give light upon the earth; and, on the same day, He made two great lights, the greater to rule the day, the lesser the night; and he also made the stars, and placed them in the firmament to give light upon the earth.

On the fifth day the sea was commanded to bring forth the living creature that had life, and the fowl that might fly above the

earth in the open firmament.

"The great whales were also created on that day, and every living thing that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind.

"The first part of the sixth day opens with the creation of the beasts of the earth, and cattle, and everything that creepeth on the earth; consummating the mighty work with the creation of man.

"My task is to prove that, so far as geology and the sister sciences have examined into the results of this creation, neither the order, the mode, nor the period of operations can, on physical evidences, be sustained.

"God said, let there be light, and there was light." We have here a fiat originating light; but from what physical source was that luminous effect evolved? Neither sun nor moon was yet made; not a single star had twinkled in the heavens; nor was a firmament or atmosphere placed, as a vehicle for the rays. By what natural law could there be light? The common rudiments of Physics teach us that air diffuses the solar beams, thereby causing the brightness of that portion of light called, from the earliest recorded period, "day." Without that diffusive medium, the heavenly bodies would be sharply defined balls of apparent fire, in the profoundly black vault of heaven. Science has never, hitherto, found a substitute for the sun; nor research discovered a period since the earth existed, having evening and morning, without one.

"The terms "evening and morning" of a day have, from

all recorded time, conveyed to the mind distinct impressions; evening, that portion of sun light immediately preceding and succeeding its apparent departure or disappearance below our horizon; morning, that portion of light that immediately precedes and succeeds its apparent rising above. They also imply two other divisions of time, night and mid-day. Now, we have the direct conclusive evidence daily exhibited, that the sun, or its luminous atmosphere, by recognised laws and combinations, lights the world; and that darkness, as a necessary consequence, follows its absence.

'If the earth had existed independently of the sun, it would have been a wanderer in space, under circumstances which are decidedly inconceivable. Yet Genesis relates that there was light, without a sun to give it forth, or medium to diffuse its rays. We have also involved in this order of creation the phenomena of a diurnal rotation, indicated without any central source of light to make the period or time of revolution, and a planet revolving in an orbit without a centre round which to revolve. Scientific observations and deductions, every day evidences of the physical laws that govern our solar system, lead clearly to the conclusion that the sun, 140,000 times larger than the earth, was the first born. Genesis asserts that our pigmy earth was its precursor.

'Whence, without sun or moon or stars, did this light, in accordance with any known natural law, proceed; and how was the division of evening and morning of the first day indicated?

'The second day's creation again gives us an evening and

morning without any arrangement to measure those divisions of time, and still without any source from which light could proceed. What the waters were above the firmament or atmosphere, I cannot discover; certainly clouds are not *above* the firmament or atmosphere, but *floating in it*; and of any other aqueous aggregations *above the firmament* we know nothing.

'In the third day's creation we have dry land appearing, and grass and herb yielding seed, and fruit trees yielding fruit brought forth.

'We have, as yet, had no sun to shine on the earth created, to give colour to the leaves or to the flowers; to ripen the seeds of herbs yielding seed, or the fruit of trees yielding fruit. Neither does Genesis mention any other creation of plants; we must therefore infer this creation originated all the vegetable world.

'The present number of named species of plants is about 280,000, spread in provinces over the known world. The greater part of this large number are peculiar in their habits, and arbitrary in their provinces of growth. The palms of the tropics would die in the ungenial atmosphere of the northern hemisphere; and the plants that flourish under the chilling blasts of the Arctic Regions would wither under the scorching suns of the Torrid Zone. It is, therefore, a preliminary question – was this a multitudinous creation, assorted to their several localities, or a creation of one or two plants of a class from whence all the rest proceeded? If the former is alleged, I ask, as the ordered world was then only two days old, what provision was there, by known laws,

to meet numerous physical wants of this immense creation? Were they created perfect plants, as we are informed they were, yielding seed, or only the germs for future growth? If perfect plants, I apprehend the periodical rings, the distinctive mark of the exogens, would, by natural laws, be wanting; but, I suppose, added in the plants proceeding from the parent stem. We have, then, a *development* process at once admitted; a process, I conceive, manifestly opposed to the Mosaic narrative.

'Of the oneness of vegetable "creation," "making," or "formation," Genesis leaves no doubt. Now Geology, or rather palaeontology, adduces many proofs which, to unbiassed minds, I apprehend, will be conclusive, that such was not the case; but, on the contrary, the vegetable world progressed with the altered structural and climatic conditions of the earth. This is evidenced by the presence of special fossil vegetable productions in certain strata, and the absence of others. Negative evidence may, in some cases, be inconclusive; but it must be borne in mind that there are certain conditions or collateral circumstances which impart to *negative* the force and conclusiveness of *positive* and direct affirmative testimony. Thus, in considering the value of that evidence in favour of the existence of a certain class of vegetable life at any given period, if we find (says the Rev. B. Powell) that some vegetable forms existed, and a fitness at the same period for the existence of others, the non-appearance of the latter in such cases is tantamount to "non-existence." On evidence thus valued we will inquire into the simultaneous creation and existence of

the vegetable world as related in the 11th and 12th verses.

"Through nearly the entire range of the immense Silurian deposits we find only traces of algae, the lowest form of plants of the Thallogens. Sir R. J. Murchison says, "there are *no traces of land plants* in the great mass of the Silurian rocks."

"The first evidence we have in the Devonian of terrestrial vegetation is a doubtful specimen of the fern tribe; yet, through these immense periods, a large surface of dry land is evidenced by the extent of the sedimentary deposits of the earlier stratified formations; for, as Professor Nicoll observes, "any sedimentary deposition implies not only the existence of a sea in which its materials were deposited, but of lands from which they were derived."

"When we enter on the Carboniferous, we "are surrounded by the spoils of the first great woody era." Now, during the Carboniferous period, it cannot be denied that we have every requisite for supporting vegetable life, and the most undeniable evidence of its existence by the fossiliferous preservation of near 500 species. These were peculiar to the Carboniferous period. They died away and have not left one species specifically the same with our present vegetation. 'Further, there is scarcely any evidence of a true exogen up to and through the vast and immeasurable periods of the coal measures; and he who dreams that, in the woods of the primeval world there flourished the oak, the elm, and the hundreds of our other forest productions, introduces in the landscape a feature equally imaginative

to the wildest Eastern allegory. Of the great family of the leguminosae we have no trace until we come to the London clay, forming a part of the eocene series. In the same formation (deposited in the geological calculation tens of thousands of years past, and hundreds of thousands of years subsequent to the Carboniferous era) we have abundance of fossil fruits – palm nuts, custard apples, and the gourd and melon family. That the most delicate and perishable parts of vegetable structure can be preserved through immense periods of time, is shown by the state of these, and also of the fossil ligneous coverings of nuciferous fruits, cones of firs, and even the indication of flowers. This preservation of parts of fructification, and the pollen of coniferae, displays the art with which nature embalms her relics. Who, having examined the fossils of the Carboniferous beds, can fail being struck with amazement at the clear and distinct tracing of leaves and forms of the most delicate articulation and structure? We have, also, in our coal measures, found trees of species long extinct, thirty to forty feet high, with roots attached as they grew *in situ*.

'These were of a structure far more liable to perish than the hard, close grained exogens of our days. But palaeontology discloses that nature has been guided in her formations by certain laws pre-eminently evidenced by her vegetable productions.

'A large portion of the earth's surface, we may infer from analogy, in the Carboniferous ages had the appearance of an immense Polynesia of equable temperature, where her peculiar

vegetable productions grew in immense profusion, and, for their species, attained gigantic size.

'Immediately after this period, land vegetation almost disappears; and not until the deposition of the tertiaries do we find the dawning of new species of varied structures. After entering thereon, an entirely different view opens to us. Birch, pines, and evergreen shrubs, species of the orange and gourd families, of the leguminosae and mallows, abound. We have here wherewith to make a forest, a garden, a feast. Now all these floras depart in type more or less from their predecessors; each in its turn died out, as Buffon emphatically states, because "time fought against them." They are peculiar to the days of their existence; but the past and the present unite in proclaiming, trumpet-tongued, that these multitudinous species had neither one centre nor one period of creation. The remarkable statement of the much-regretted Professor Edward Forbes, in his presidential address to the Geological Society in 1854, of the fauna or animal life of the creation, applies more strongly, if possible, to the flora. "More evident does it become every day," said that eminent naturalist, "that the old notion of an *universal primaeval* fauna is *untenable*, and that at all epochs, from the earliest preserved to us to the latest, there were natural history provinces in geographical space."

'Now we find that, although seeds, herbs, and flowers and plants were stated to have been "created," "made," or "formed," on the third day, we find no evidence of their existence during

periods incalculable subsequent to the appearance of animal life. Any short period of *non-appearance* might not satisfy the requirements for the proof of "non-existence;" but the astounding fact or the absence of the vegetation specifically the same as the present, through all the intervening series from the earliest dawn of life to the tertiary, can leave no doubt on any unbiassed or candid mind of their "non-existence" in the early ages of the created world, and of their subsequent altered structure. May we not fairly argue and expect that in such multitudinous species some evidence of their existence during enormous periods (especially when we find remains of other vegetable forms and animal life abound) would appear. And if this one day's work does not disclose the whole vegetable creation, when or at what period did the subsequent one take place?

I apprehend I have shown circumstances surrounding the negative evidence, to give to the non-appearance of land vegetation through the periods of the Silurian and Devonian the force of proof of nonexistence.

I also submit that I have shown, by direct evidence, that there was no oneness of creation of vegetable life, but that altered forms and structure were peculiar to periods in which they flourished; and that there never did exist any immense primaeval flora as narrated in Genesis.

I have thus far had the task of showing how negative evidence, in the non-appearance and the subsequent varied

forms, contradict the order of oneness in the creation or "formation" of vegetable life.

I will now produce positive evidence bearing upon the same discrepancies. We have in the third day the creation of vegetable life, but *no animal life* until the fifth day – then we have (we must be excused reiteration) fish and fowl and the whales, whilst on the sixth and last day were brought forth creeping things. The first sign of animal life yet discovered is of the radiate class, in the lowest zone of the lower Silurian. We have another class of animal life, the *articulata*, in the same zone; and we have some three hundred species of molluscs through the silurian. Nay, so large is the last named class at this early period, that it is denominated by American geologists "the age of molluscs." I must remind our readers that during the whole of this immeasurable age, we have not a single authenticated *land plant*; nay, further, we have *fish*, the creation of the *fifth day*, before aught of the *third day's* creation appears.

'We have, also, a reptilian vertebrate land animal in the Devonian ages incalculably before the appearance of any seed bearing herbs or fruit bearing plants. Here, then, is positive and direct evidence of the appearance of types of the four great groups of animal life – the *radiate*, the *articulate*, the *mollusca*, and the *vertebrata* – not a few hours or days or months, or a few years, but thousands upon thousands of years before a single evidence of the seed-bearing and fruit-bearing plants of the first day's creation existed. It must not be said they might have existed

yet are not preserved, for this is opposed to the facts previously stated of the preservation of the algae and fucoids during these periods, and of the immense flora during the subsequent coal formation, and the pollen, flowers, fruits, leaves, and trees in still younger formations. Nor can it be met by an argument against the fitness of the condition of the earth at this time.

'If, on the other hand, it is urged, Where are the evidences of the existence of these several forms of life at the periods stated? I answer, the facts bearing out my assertions will be found recorded in Lyell, Murchison, Phillips, and Morris (the collectors from the several strata named), all geological writers of repute; and the fossil forms themselves can be examined in the museums of the country.'

Amongst the many works which have been issued for the purpose of explaining away the discrepancies between Geology and Genesis, is one by Dommick McCausland, entitled 'Sermons in Stones,' and the following is a portion of the mode of harmonising pursued by the author. While admitting that the transactions mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis could not be brought within the compass of six days, it is urged by Mr. McCausland that the scene of the creation was presented to Moses 'In a series of visions, each separate one occupying an evening and a morning, that is to say, an intermediate night, *the season of visions or dreams*. So that, in commencing our task of making revelation reasonable, we are to imagine that Moses dreamed the whole of the history of the creation.

But even this hypothesis is open to objection. What 'scene' could 'present to the vision of Moses' (if we admit Moses to be the dreamer) an earth without form and void, especially with darkness upon the face of it? It is true that, if you suppose the writer dreamed the whole story of the creation, it will account for much that is otherwise most improbable; for we all know what strange images are conjured before us in our dreaming moments, sometimes they are compounds, sometimes reversals, of our waking experience.

McCausland proceeds, 'It is well known that the transactions of years are often compressed, in a dream, into the space of a few minutes; on the same principle, the operations of the divine author of creation, which *may* have occupied a long series of years, may have been presented to Moses as the events of a single day.' What may have been or may not have been, is hardly sufficient to base an argument upon. It is most extraordinary that, in discussions upon this subject, the reverend advocates arrogate to themselves the right of conjecturing 'What God meant to do,' 'What God's intentions were,' 'What might have happened before this occurred or that was prevented,' 'That this is literal,' 'That that is allegorical,' etc., etc.; and yet, while they are conjecturing and supposing outside the text to an unlimited extent, it becomes rank blasphemy to advance an opinion to the plain English meaning of the text itself. I am afraid that Moses is not the only dreamer; for a few pages further I find this remarkable sentence, 'We know from Geology, in confirmation of Scripture,

that there was a beginning, when the universe was formed out of nothing'!! In which strata or in what rock was this knowledge found? Are we to be told in the present day that in the universe we find evidence which convinces us that there was a period when the substance of that universe did not exist – when there was nothing? Why, the very form of words conveys an absurd and contradictory meaning. It is impossible for man, in his boldest flights of imagination or doubting, to annihilate existence; he may, in his fancy, vary its modes, but he cannot, even in his wildest moods, ignore its substance.

Of the fiat, 'let there be light.' the harmonizer says, 'This divine command and the result of it does not negative the previous existence of light. It only conveys the information that light was commanded to shine. The sun had sent forth his rays from the date of the creation, but the black misty envelope of the deep could not be penetrated until the divine fiat went forth for the advent of light to its surface.' Quoting Genesis, chap, i, v. 14 to 19, he says, 'With respect to this language, all philologists agree that it does not mean that the sun, moon, and stars were for the first time called into existence at this period of the creation.' This is not true; if the verses mean anything, they positively do mean that the sun, moon, and stars were, for the first time, created on the fourth day, and it is only the evident falsity of this statement which has compelled religious philologists to twist 'the language' into a spiritual meaning.

We learn from such works as the 'Sermons in Stones,' that

the warmest advocates of scriptural history find so glaring a discordance as to immediately compel them to relinquish the literal version; with the strongest faith they cannot believe in light before the sun – they cannot reverse the order of the different strata as revealed by the science of geology, and they therefore tell you that you must call in your fancy (or rather *their* fancy) to the aid of your revelation, and, by subtracting from, or liberally adding to, the words of the text, they will melt the strongest contradiction. You must read prayerfully, that is, you must be prepared to cast away your senses every time they are opposed to your Bible.

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' The word here translated God is [ – ] (Alehim or Elohim) which is a plural noun (*vide* Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, article [ – ], and although translated by the singular word God, it is often associated with plural adjectives, pronouns, and verbs, see Genesis, chap, i, v. 26, chap, iii, y. 22, chap, xi, v. 7; nay more, on the same orthodox authority we learn, that in many other passages the translators have ignored the plural accompaniments for the purpose of supporting the orthodox theory, and yet we are told in the present day that the Bible does not want retranslation. It has been before pointed out that there is a double creation narrated, one from Genesis, chap, i, v. 1 to chap. ii, v. 3; in this the only word used is the plural word Alehim, or the Gods (that is, if Alehim be either God or Gods as it has been differently translated; elsewhere we find the expression

'God' applied to Moses – this would lead us to doubt as to the precise meaning of the word. I am told by some of my reverend friends that the meaning of the word God is varied according to the mode of printing; if with a capital letter 'God,' it means an incomprehensible anything they like, if with a small initial, 'god,' it means an inferior anything you like). Volney, in the notes to his 'Ruins of Empires,' says, 'If we further observe that the root of the word *Elohim* signifies strong or powerful, and that the Egyptians called their decans strong and powerful leaders, attributing to them the creation of the world, we shall presently perceive that the Book of Genesis affirms neither more nor less than that the world was created by the *decans*, by those very genii whom, according to Sanconiathon, Mercury excited against Saturn, and who were called *Elohim*. It may be further asked why the plural substantive *Elohim* is made to agree with the singular verb *bara* (the *Elohim* creates). The reason is, that after the Babylonish captivity, the unity of the Supreme Being was the prevailing opinion of the Jews; it was therefore thought proper to introduce a pious solecism in language, which it is evident had no existence before Moses. Thus, in the names of the children of Jacob, many of them are compounded of a plural verb, to which *Elohim* is the nominative case understood; as *Raouben* (Reuben), *they have looted upon me*, and *Samaonm* (Simeon), *they have granted me my prayer*, to wit, the *Elohim*. The reason of this etymology is to be found in the religious creeds of the wives of Jacob, whose Gods were the taraphim of Laban, that is,

the angels of the Persians, and the Egyptian decans.' The other account commences with the fourth verse of the second chapter, and in this the words translated 'Lord God' are [ – ]; what these really mean it is impossible to say, unless they mean Chief of the Gods. Parkhurst translates it into a trinity. The word [ – ] (rendered in our version Jehovah) simply represents time past, present, and future. The two accounts differ considerably; in the first we find water forming an important feature, and ultimately drained off so that the dry land appears; in the second we have the land dry without water, and it becomes necessary to send a mist to water the face of the earth.

Genesis, chap, i, v. 1 to 27. Whoever wrote these verses must either have been an inspired man, a dupe, or a knave – that is, he could not have gathered from tradition, because here tradition is outstepped; it could not have been known by man, as he was not yet made; he must either have received it from God, or have been deceived by man, or must have intended to deceive man himself. If inspired, it is a pity God did not explain the creation of light before the sun ( verse 3), the creation of herbs and fruit trees bearing seed and fruit before there was a sun to ripen the fruit and bring the seed to maturity (verse 11), the creation of 'female-man' in his own image (verse 27), etc. By verse 29 it appears that God intended man to be a vegetarian; by Genesis, chap, ix, v. 3, he gave them all kinds of cattle for food; and by Leviticus, chap, xi, v. 12, he forbade man to eat certain kinds there specified; one of God's attributes notwithstanding all this

is immutability. Chap. ii. v. 2 and 3, he rested on the seventh day and blessed it and sanctified it, because in it he had rested: – see Deuteronomy, chap, v, v. 12 to 15; which is the correct reason for the sanctifying the sabbath day?

**Chapter** ii, v. 4. This, as it is translated, seems ridiculous: 'the generations of the heavens and the earth.' What is the meaning of this phrase? What are the generations? From a careful reading of verses? 5, 6, and 7, it would appear that God did not make man out of the dry dust; and that it was not until a mist had watered the whole face of the earth that he formed man. This may account for the creed of the negro, who believed that God made Adam from mud, and who assigned as a reason that dry dust would not stick together. In verse 9 are mentioned the 'tree of life' and the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil.' If these expressions occurred in the 'Arabian Nights' tales, we might not regard them as inappropriate, for in such books, which make no pretensions to truth, we expect to find tales of ghosts, witches, men carried off in fiery chariots, devils walking about bodily, donkeys speaking, and men passing through furnaces unhurt; but when we are told that a book is inspired by the God of truth, and in its early pages find mention made of a tree, by eating the fruit of which a man might live for ever, and that by eating of the fruit of another tree, a man would get knowledge of good and evil, with other fabulous expressions of a like nature, we cannot help a feeling of astonishment.

Of verses 10 to 14 Voltaire speaks as follows: – 'According to

this version, the earthly paradise would have contained nearly a third part of Asia and of Africa. The sources of the Euphrates and the Tigris are sixty leagues distant from each other, in frightful mountains bearing no possible resemblance to a garden. The river which borders Ethiopia, and which can be no other than the Nile, commences its course at the distance of more than a thousand leagues from the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates; and if the Pison means the Phasis, it is not a little surprising that the source of a Scythian river and that of an African one should be situated on the same spot. We must therefore look for some other explanation, and for other rivers. Every commentator has got up a Paradise of his own.'

Dr. John Pye Smith suggests that the description is antediluvian, and that the deluge changed the courses of many streams; that hence we must not expect to find any spot conforming to the exact geographical description. If antediluvian, Moses did not write it.

'Verse 15. "The Lord then took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden that he might cultivate it."

Voltaire continues: —

'It is very respectable and pleasant for a man to "cultivate his garden," but it must have been somewhat difficult for Adam to have dressed and kept in order a garden of a thousand leagues in length, even although he had been supplied with some assistants. Commentators on this subject, therefore, we again observe, are completely at a loss, and must be content to exercise their

ingenuity in conjecture. Accordingly, these four rivers have been described as flowing through numberless different territories.'

Verses 16 and 17. It is a matter of great difficulty to refrain from ridiculing the statement that there exist trees bearing such fruit, and after overcoming this difficulty, it is still less comprehensible why God should forbid man to acquire a knowledge of good and evil. Would not man's free access to this knowledge appear more in accordance with the character of a just and merciful God? and is not knowledge necessary to man, especially when we find the serpent 'more subtle than other animals,' plotting man's destruction?

Verses 18 and 19. It is somewhat remarkable that immediately after the Lord God had declared his intention of making a helpmeet for Adam, that he formed all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. This is open to many objections; first, see chap, i, v. 21, but as we must admit there are two distinct accounts of the creation, I will not further burden my work with the contradictions between them; second, the strong improbability of the story of the Lord God bringing the beasts and fowl to see what Adam would call them; either the Lord God had fore-ordained the names to be applied by Adam, or the theologians are wrong – either the Lord God foreknew what names Adam would give each bird and beast, in which case Genesis is incorrect, or prescience, one of the attributes applied to Deity, is deficient; third, the immense time which this naming of every bird and

beast must have taken, especially when we remember that Adam was waiting for his wife – it almost appears as if verse 18 should come after verse 20 to make sense of the story. Lawrence says that the account of all the animals being brought before Adam is zoologically impossible ('Lectures on Man,' p. 169). Voltaire says that if Adam had named the animals according to their various natures, he must have either previously eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or it would apparently have answered no end for God to have interdicted him from it. He must have already known more than the Royal Society or the Academy of Sciences of Paris. The mode of manufacturing the woman from the rib of the man has been the subject of much controversy, but is only noticed here as another illustration of the fabulous character of the book we are dealing with.

Having passed through the two accounts of the creation contained in the anonymous book I am examining, I shall strive to ascertain the source from whence some of the doctrines and traditions contained in this book were derived. Aware of the magnitude of my task, I will now only deal with authorities to whom no exception should be taken by the religious reader. One is the pious and erudite Sir William Jones, the other the Reverend Thomas Maurice. Of the claims of the first to our attention I will say nothing, for every man ought to be more or less acquainted with the character of the great linguist; of the second I can only say that I find his work issued under the countenance of the heads of the Church, and supported by some of the first men of his day.

When, at the present day, you point out to a Christian the striking coincidence in many points between the Bible and the Hindoo and other sacred writings, he will tell you that the latter have been stolen from the former. Is this the fact? I think not. Maurice, in his preface to his 'Indian Antiquities,' says, 'The stupendous system of the Brahmin Chronology, *extending back through millions of years; the obstinate denial of a general deluge by those Brahmins; the perplexing doctrine of a trinity in the divine nature constantly recurring in the operations of Brahma, Vishnu, and Seeva, a doctrine not to be traced to any immediate connexion with the Jewish nation;* these were among the *delicate* topics which neither the clerical nor historical functions in which I had engaged would allow of being passed over in silence. As I advanced in my inquiries, I found that the primeval histories of all the ancient empires of the earth amount to little more than the romantic dreams of astronomical mythology.'

Weigh well this last sentence, read your Bibles attentively, and ask yourselves in what particular feature is Genesis superior to the Shastra or Bhagavat.

The following is from the Manava Sastra, the words of Menu, Son of Brahma, as quoted in vol. i of the 'Asiatic Researches,' page 244: —

"This world (says he) was all darkness, undiscernible, undistinguishable, altogether as in profound sleep; till the self-existent invisible God, making it manifest with five elements and other glorious forms, perfectly expelled the gloom. He, desiring

to raise up various creatures by an emanation from his own glory, first created the *waters*, and impressed them with a power of motion: by that power was produced a golden egg, blazing like a thousand suns, in which was born Brahma, self-existing, the great parent of all rational beings. The waters are called *nára*, since they are the offspring of *Nara or Iswara*; and thence was *Náryána* named, because his first *ayana*, or *moving*, was on them.

"That which is, the invisible cause, eternal, self-existing, but un-perceived, becoming masculine *from neuter*, is celebrated among all creatures by the name of Brahmá. That God, having dwelled in the egg through revolving years, Himself meditating on himself, divided it into two equal parts; and from those halves formed the heavens and the earth, placing in the midst the subtle ether, the eight points of the world, and the permanent receptacle of waters."

Sir William Jones admits that the Vedas are 'very ancient, and far older than any other Sanscrit works,' but assigns to the Manava Sastra, and the Bhagavat a later date than 'the Scriptures of Moses,' on the ground that 'the nakedness of the Hebrew dialect, metre, and style must convince every man of their superior antiquity.' On the same page Sir W. Jones, however, states that the Brahmans affirm that the Vedas, the Manava Sástra, and the Bhagavat, were all written in the first age of the world. Is it honest to reject the testimony of the Priests of Brahma while we are content to place our reason in the hands of the

Priests of our own Church?

My reasons for not believing the Manava Sastra and Bhagavat were stolen from the Jews are as follows: first, the Bhagavat, admitted to be much more ancient than our alleged Christian era, contains the history of Chrishna, which is, in very many particulars, identical with that of Christ, and as it is absolutely impossible that the Hindoos could have stolen the history of Christ one thousand years prior to his existence, I am inclined to conceive it more probable that in our Bible we have throughout appropriated from the Hindoos; second, I deny that it has ever been shown that the Jewish nation is nearly so ancient as the Hindoo, and I am, therefore, puzzled in attempting to charge the more ancient nation with stealing the traditions of the modern one. It would be nearly as reasonable if a Frenchman were to charge the English with stealing the history of William the Conqueror from the Americans.

Sir William Jones further says, 'I am persuaded that a connexion subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, long before they emigrated to their several settlements, and consequently before the birth of Moses;' and what do we find? Why this, that the religions of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, have a wonderful similarity to one another, and yet we are told that the religion of the Jewish nation (which contains something common to them all) was not stolen from them, but they, the ancient religions, were stolen from the more modern nation. It would be as probable were I to tell you that

the Royal Society in London was founded and originated in consequence of something which fell last year from the lips of Louis Napoleon.

The third chapter of Genesis contains, according to its heading, an account of man's 'most shameful fall.' It will be in vain to attempt to treat the contents of this chapter as a relation of actual occurrences. The following is a summary: a serpent, walking erect on its tail instead of crawling on its belly, tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, urging that Adam has been deceived by God; the woman (not at all surprised at being addressed by one 'in such a questionable shape') saw that the tree was good for food (how she saw this does not appear) and ate and gave to her husband. Upon eating, their eyes are opened, and they are ashamed of their nakedness, and sew fig leaves together to make breeches. This sewing was before the invention of needles. The species of this fruit has formed the subject of much conjecture; one kind only has since been known to confer on man and woman a knowledge of their nakedness after mutually partaking thereof, and it has therefore been suggested that this chapter is an allegorical representation of the union of the sexes. After eating, Adam and Eve hear the 'voice of the Lord God walking,' and they hide themselves. It is not easy to understand how either God or his voice could walk in the garden, nor why he should walk in the cool of the day, as we cannot suppose heat to affect him. The reason Adam gives for hiding himself is not a correct one; he was not naked unless his fig-leaf

garment had fallen to pieces. God having ascertained that Adam had disobeyed his command, cursed the serpent and commanded it to eat dust and go upon its belly all the days of its life; God also cursed the ground. It does not appear, however, that he carried out the threat contained in chap. ii, v. 17; in fact, the serpent appears to have been more correct in saying to Adam and Eve, 'Ye shall not surely die.' Some divines would have us believe that by the sin of Adam death was introduced into the world, and the Rev. Dr. John Pye Smith tells us, 'It is probable, had not man fallen, that, after a continuance in the earthly state for a period of probation, each individual would have been translated to a higher condition of existence.' Unfortunately, this hypothesis will not bear investigation. Professor Newman says, in relation to this subject, 'A fresh strain fell on the Scriptural infallibility, in contemplating the origin of death. Geologists assured us that death went on in the animal creation many ages before the existence of man. The rocks formed of the shells of animals testify that death is a phenomenon thousands and thousands of years old; to refer the death of animals to the sin of Adam and Eve is evidently impossible. Yet, if not, the analogies of the human to the brute form make it scarcely credible that man's body can ever have been intended for immortality. Nay, when we consider the conditions of birth and growth to which it is subject, the wear and tear essential to life, the new generations intended to succeed and supplant the old – so soon as the question is proposed as one of physiology, the reply is inevitable that death is

no accident, introduced by the perverse will of our first parents, nor any way connected with man's sinfulness, but is purely a result of the conditions of animal life. On the contrary, St. Paul rests most important conclusions on the fact, that one man, Adam, by personal death, brought death upon all his posterity. If this was a fundamental error, religious doctrine also is shaken.'

Verse 20. 'And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.' This can hardly be the reason, as Eve was not the mother of anybody at that time. The word [ – ] (Adam) means red or ruby, and [ – ] (Eve) to show, discover, or declare.

Verse 21. I suppose the most enthusiastic advocate for the literal reading of the Bible would hardly wish us to picture God as a tailor. One of the Jewish Rabbis asserts that God clothed Adam and Eve with the skin of the serpent who had tempted them.

Verse 22. (And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us.' One of whom? To whom are these words addressed? It is evident that the writer of this book believed in a plurality of Gods, and had not any very elevated ideas in relation to those Gods, for, in the very same verse, he makes God express fear lest Adam should take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever. Does it mean that man's soul was not then immortal? it cannot mean that man's body could become immortal. If man's soul was not then capable of living for ever, when did its nature become changed? Verse 24. 'Cherubim!' This word is ridiculous; cherubim is the plural of cherub; the is merely a specimen of

Bible orthography. In Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary I find the following severe remark on the word 'Cherubim:' – Those who understand no language but their own are apt to commit an unpardonable fault with critics, by mistaking this word for a singular, and writing the plural "Cherubims." It is evident, therefore, that if God inspired the Bible, he did not inspire the grammar. But what is a cherub? the word [ – ] (kereb) is of very doubtful meaning, and seems to have been used to express an inferior kind of deity. In the seventh edition of Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, the correspondence between the description of the cherubim in Ezekiel and the inferior deities in other mythologies is fully and ably pointed out under this head. Were it not for the length of Parkhurst's article, I would quote the whole, it constituting an elaborate essay in which the astronomical origin of every religious system is clearly proved. An interesting astronomical explanation of the allegory or the fall is given in pp. 294-5 of 'Volney's Ruins.' Some of the cherubic figures are a compound of ox, eagle, lion, and man. Are we to imagine several of these with a flaming sword, guarding the way to the tree of life?

Having read the third chapter carefully, we are irresistibly driven to the conclusion that Adam's primitive nature was extremely frail, for he fell with the first temptation, and no greater evidence of frailty can be given; yet Adam is the choice work of God, made in his own image.

**Chapter** iv contains the history of Cain and Abel, which

presents several remarkable features for our consideration. Cain and Abel both make sacrifices to the Lord. Why they should so sacrifice does not appear; they do not seem to have followed the example of Adam, as we cannot find any history of his sacrificing to the Lord at all. By verses 4 and 5 we find that the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offerings he had not respect. Why is this? Cain's offerings consist of flowers and fruits, sending up sweet fragrance to heaven; Abel's offerings are the bleeding carcasses of slaughtered lambs; yet God, 'with whom there is no respect of persons' (2 Chronicles, chap, xix, v. 7 – Romans, chap, ii, v. 11), respects Abel more than Cain. How was this respect shown? God, by showing favour to Abel without assigning the least reason for the

Preference, created animosity between the two brothers. God must have foreknown that this religious strife would end in bloodshed. Religious strife always has led to war, and it is only because people are growing larger than their creeds that they now do not fight quite so recklessly about them.

Verse 7. It is somewhat perplexing to find that, although God is displeased with Cain, yet he tells him he shall rule over his brother Abel.

Verse 13. This verse is translated in a very different manner to the Douay. In our version Cain complains of the severity of his punishment; in the other, Cain says that his sin is too great for pardon. Which is right? Verse 14. What does Cain mean when he says 'Every one that findeth me shall slay me.' 'Every one 'can

only be used when there is a likelihood of meeting with many persons, yet Cain must have been well aware that no persons were then in existence beside his father and mother.

Verse 16. How is it possible that Cain could go out of the presence of the Lord? (*vide* Psalm cxxxix, v. 7 to 12).

Verse 17. Who was Cain's wife? According to Genesis, there was only his mother, Eve, living. 'And he builded a city.' It must have been rather a remarkable city, built by one man, and inhabited by one man, his wife, and one child.

Verse 18. Who was Enoch's wife? Perhaps these were what the Mormonites call 'Spiritual Wives.'

**Chapter** v, v. 1. 'This is the *book* of the generations of Adam.\* Books were not known at the date alleged for the existence of Moses.

Verses 1 and 2 contradict the previous chapters.

The fifth chapter appears to fit on after verse 3 of the second chapter; and it is rather curious that in the list of Adam's children, Cain and Abel are not mentioned. Neither are Cain's descendants in any way referred to. Cain not only went out of the presence of the Lord, but both he and his wife and family seem entirely to have gone out of sight of everybody.

Verse 24. 'And Enoch walked with God, and he was not.' The Breeches Bible, in a marginal note, says that 'to inquire what became of Enoch is mere curiosity.'

Verse 27. Methusalem must have just died in time to save himself from drowning.

**Chapter vi, v. 2.** 'The Sons of God.' Who are the Sons of God?; How could God have Sons? Is not Jesus said to be the only Son of God? Voltaire says of this verse, 'No nation has ever existed, unless perhaps we may except China, in which some God is not described as having had offspring upon women. These corporeal Gods frequently descended to visit their dominions upon earth; they saw the daughters of our race, and attached themselves to those who were most interesting and beautiful; the issue of this connexion between Gods and mortals must, of course, have been superior to other men, thus giants were produced.' But there is a further objection to our authorised version; the original is not 'Sons of God,' but [ – ] (Beni Alehim, Sons of the Gods). In the mythologies of Greece, Italy, and India, we find the same idea of Gods having intercourse with women; and it is also remarkable that, although in many cases the woman bears a child, yet all true believers devoutly contend for her virginity. Verse 3 seems out of place, it should come in after 5 or 6; but in any place it is not correct. One hundred and twenty years is neither the average nor the limit of man's life. What does God mean when he says 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man?' What was the striving about? Does the verse mean that God's spirit strove in vain? What does 'that he also is flesh' mean? Does it mean that the Lord's spirit and man are both flesh? Verses 5 and 6. God made mankind and the circumstances which surrounded them, and must have foreknown what would have been the effect produced upon man; why not have made

better circumstances? Shall we presume either that God had not the power to have created things differently, or that he is careless of man's welfare? In what manner did God make known his repentance? In Numbers, chap, xxiii, v. 19, we are led to believe that God never repents. Why should God destroy the beasts, creeping things, and fowls? they surely could not have been parties to man's wickedness. Why should God repent that he made 'the beasts, the creeping things, and the fowls of the air?' What does the phrase mean in relation to God, 'it grieved him at his heart?' The expressions 'repent,' 'grieve,' etc., could scarcely have been used if the book had been a revelation from a God who intended to convey to us an idea of his omnipotence and immutability. The following quotation is from Robert Taylor: —

'What blasphemy! thus to represent the Creator of the world. Omnipotence repenting that he had made man, sitting upon a stone, and crying like a child, wringing his hands, tearing his hair, calling himself all the fools and idiots he could think of, stamping his foot, cursing, swearing, and vowing vengeance, that he would not leave a dog nor a rat alive. We should yet have but a faint idea of the' exceeding sinfulness of sin, and how poor and impotent language of any kind must be, to convey to us the emotions of that infinite wisdom and inconceivable benevolence which repented that he had made man, and grieved that man was no better than he had made him.

'There can be no doubt at all that such language as this, when used in relation to the Supreme Being, is used only in gracious

condescension to our ignorance, and in accommodation to the dulness and stupidity of our powers of conception, which require to be stimulated and excited by strong and impassioned figures of speech, ere they can be led to form an idea at all on sacred subjects.'

Verses 11 and 12. All flesh could not be corrupt; in the previous verse we are told that Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations. All flesh being corrupt, flesh and fowl were condemned; but the fish were allowed to escape. Were the birds more corrupt than the fish? or were the fish allowed to escape because the concocter of this tale did not conceive the possibility of their being killed by a flood? By verse 17 it is clear that God intended to destroy every living thing; perhaps he forgot the fishes.

Verse 14 to chap, viii, v. 19. Of this account Professor Newman says 'It had become notorious to the public that geologists rejected the idea of an universal deluge, as physically impossible. Whence could the water come to cover the highest mountains? Two replies were attempted: 1 – The flood of Noah is not described as universal; 2 – The flood was indeed universal, but the water was added and removed by miracle. Neither reply, however, seemed to be valid. First, the language respecting the universality of the flood is as strong as any that could be written; moreover, it is stated that the tops of the high hills *were all covered*, and after the water subsides the ark settles on the mountains of Armenia. Now, in Armenia, of necessity,

numerous peaks would be seen unless the water covered them, and especially Ararat. But a flood that covered Ararat would overspread all the continents, and leave only a few summits above. If, then, the account in Genesis is to be received, the flood was "universal. Secondly, the narrator represents the surplus water to have come from the clouds, and perhaps from the sea, and again to drain back into the sea. Of a miraculous *creation and destruction* of water, he evidently does not dream.

'Other impossibilities come forward: the insufficient dimensions of the ark to take in all the creatures; the unsuitability of the same climate to arctic and tropical animals for a full year; the impossibility of feeding them, and avoiding pestilence; and especially, the total disagreement of the modern facts of the dispersion of animals, with the idea that they spread anew from Armenia as their centre. We have no right to call in a series of miracles to solve difficulties of which the writer was unconscious. The ark itself was expressly devised to economise miracle, by making a fresh creation of animals needless.'

Voltaire says of the deluge: —

'We consider it as a miracle; first, because all the facts by which God condescends to interfere in the sacred books are so many miracles.

'Secondly, because the sea could not rise fifteen cubits, or one and twenty standard feet and a half above the highest mountains without leaving its bed dry, and, at the same time violating all the laws of gravity and the equilibrium of fluids, which would

evidently require a miracle.

'Thirdly, because, even although it might rise to the height mentioned, the ark could not have contained, according to known physical laws, all the living things of the earth, together with their food, for so long a time; considering that lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, ounces, rhinoceroses, bears, wolves, hyenas, eagles, hawks, kites, vultures, falcons, and all carnivorous animals, which feed on flesh alone, would have died of hunger, even after having devoured all the other species.

'Fourthly, because the physical impossibilities of an universal deluge, by natural means, can be strictly demonstrated. The demonstration is as follows: —

'All the seas cover half the globe. A common measure of their depths near the shores and in the open ocean, is assumed to be five hundred feet.

'In order to their covering both hemispheres to the depth of five hundred feet, not only would an ocean of that depth be necessary over all the land, but a new sea would, in addition, be required to envelope the ocean at present existing, without which the laws of hydrostatics would occasion the dispersion of that other new mass of water five hundred feet deep, which should remain covering the land. 'Thus, then, two new oceans are requisite to cover the terraqueous globe nearly to the depth of five hundred feet.

'Supposing the mountains to be only twenty thousand feet high, forty oceans each five hundred feet in height would be

required to accumulate on each other, merely in order to equal the height of the mountains. Every successive ocean would contain all the others, and the last of them all would have a circumference containing forty times that of the first.

'In order to form this mass of water, it would be necessary to create it out of nothing. In order to withdraw it, it would be necessary to annihilate it.

'What was that abyss which was broken up, or what were the cataracts of heaven which were opened? Isaac Vossius denies the universality of the deluge; "*Hoc est piè nugari.*" Calmet maintains it, informing us that bodies have no weight in air, but in consequence of their being compressed by air. Calmet was not much of a natural philosopher, and the weight of the air has nothing to do with the deluge. Let us content ourselves with reading and respecting everything in the Bible, without comprehending a single word of it.

'I do not comprehend how God created a race of men in order to drown them, and then substituted in their room a race still viler than the first.

'How seven pairs of all kinds of clean animals should come from the four quarters of the globe, together with two pairs of unclean ones, without the wolves devouring the sheep on the way, or the kites the pigeons, etc., etc.

'How eight persons could keep in order, feed, and water such an immense number of inmates, shut up in an ark-for nearly two years, for, after the cessation of the deluge, it would be

necessary to have food for all these passengers for another year, in consequence of the herbage being so scanty.'

The dimensions of the ark, which are slightly varied according to the different lengths assigned to the cubit, were between 450 and 574 feet in length, between 75 and 91 feet in breadth, and 45 and 55 feet in height. An ark that size must have been a tremendous undertaking for a man nearly six hundred years old, even with his three sons to help him. The ark was divided into three stories and many rooms, but only had one window and one door. The situation of this door is curious, 'in the side;' if it gave access to all the floors it must have extended from top to bottom. It is hardly possible to imagine a large number of animals, civet cats, musk rats, etc., existing in an ark in which ventilation was so badly provided for; when the door was shut and the window shut to keep out the rain and water, it must have been absolutely stifling. But it is impossible to imagine seven of each of the clean beasts and two of each of the unclean, and seven of each of the birds, crammed into so small a space. Even if there were room for it, we hear nothing of any food being collected for the sustenance of all these birds and beasts. Did they fast? How did Noah know which were clean and which unclean? Thomas Paine treats the account of the flood as follows: —

'We have all heard of Noah's flood; and it is impossible to think of the whole human race, men, women, children, and infants, (except one family) deliberately drowning, without feeling a painful sensation; that must be a heart of flint that can

contemplate such a scene with tranquillity. There is nothing in the ancient mythology, nor in the religion of any people we know of on the globe, that records a sentence of their God, or of their Gods, so tremendously severe and merciless. If the story be not true, we blasphemously dishonour God by believing it, and still more so in forcing, by laws and penalties, that belief upon others. I go now to show, from the face of the story, that it carries the evidence of not being true.

'There were no such people as Jews or Israelites in the time that Noah is said to have lived, and consequently there was no such law as that which is called the Jewish or Mosaic Law. It is, according to the Bible, more than six hundred years from the time the flood is said to have happened to the time of Moses, and, consequently, the time the flood is said to have happened was more than six hundred years prior to the law called the law of Moses, even admitting Moses to be the giver of that law, of which there is great cause to doubt.

'We have here two different epochs, or points of time; that of the flood, and that of the law of Moses; the former more than six hundred years prior to the latter. But the maker of the story of the flood, whoever he was, has betrayed himself by blundering, for he has reversed the order of the times. He has told the story as if the law of Moses was prior to the flood; for he has made God to say to Noah, Genesis, chap, vii, v. 2, "Of every clean beast, thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of beasts that are *not clean* by two, the male and his female." This is

the Mosaic law, and could only be said after that law was given, not before. There were no such things as beasts clean and unclean in the time of Noah – it is nowhere said they were created so. They were only *declared* to be so *as meats*, by the Mosaic law, and that to the Jews only; and there were no such people as Jews in the time of Noah. This is the blundering condition in which this strange story stands.

'When we reflect on a sentence so tremendously severe as that of consigning the whole human race, eight persons excepted, to deliberate drowning, a sentence which represents the Creator in a more merciless character than any of those whom we call Pagans ever represented the Creator to be, under the figure of any of their deities, we ought at least to suspend our belief of it, on a comparison of the beneficent character of the Creator with the tremendous severity of the sentence; but when we see the story told with such an evident contradiction of circumstances, we ought to set it down for nothing better than a Jewish fable, told by nobody knows whom, and nobody knows when.

'It is a relief to the genuine and sensible soul of man to find the story unfounded. It frees us from two painful sensations at once; that of having hard thoughts of the Creator, on account of the severity of the sentence; and that of sympathising in the horrid tragedy of a drowning world. He who cannot feel the force of what I mean is not, in my estimation of character, worthy the name of a human being.'

The account of the deluge is rather complicated; according to

chap, vii., v. 2 and 5, Noah took in seven pairs of all clean beasts, and one pair of all unclean, as [ – ] (Alehim) had commanded him; while, by v. 8 and 9, it would appear that Noah only took in two of every kind, as [ – ] (Jeue or Jehovah) had commanded. This is another specimen of the confusion in the use of different originals in the manufacture of the book of Genesis.

Dr. John Pye Smith, in his 'Relation between Geology and the Holy Scriptures,' admits that he is compelled to the conclusion that the flood of Noah was not absolutely universal; and with respect to the ark grounding on Mount Ararat, he says that the state of the summit of that mount is such that the four men, and four women, and many of the quadrupeds would have found it utterly impossible to descend. The summit of Mount Ararat is continually covered with snow and ice.

The olive leaf mentioned in chap, viii., v. 11, is remarkable, as one would be inclined to imagine it decomposed after remaining under water for about twelve months.

**Chapter viii.**, v. 21. 'The Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart.' This is, of course, only a figurative expression; but it is much to be regretted that, in a book issued from God, an expression should be found so liable to misconstruction; a literal reader might imagine that God had a nose and heart.

**Chapter ix.**, v. 9 and 10. These verses have been much commented on. Voltaire says: —

'God made a covenant with beasts! What sort of a covenant?'

Such is the outcry of infidels. But if he makes a covenant with man, why not with the beast? It has feeling; and there is something as divine in feeling, as in the most metaphysical meditation. Besides, beasts feel more correctly than the greater part of men think. It is clearly by virtue of this treaty that Francis d'Assise, the founder of the Seraphic order, said to the grasshoppers and the hares, "Pray sing, my dear sister grasshopper; pray browse, my dear brother hare." But what were the conditions of the treaty? That all animals should devour one another; that they should feed upon our flesh, and we upon theirs; that, after having eaten them, we should proceed with wrath and fury to the extermination of our own race; nothing being, then, wanting to crown the horrid series of butchery and cruelty, but devouring our fellow men, after having thus remorselessly destroyed them. Had there been actually such a treaty as this, it could have been entered into only with the devil.'

The token of this covenant is to be the rainbow – v. 13. The Geneva translation has it, 'I *have* set my bow;' the authorised version, 'I *do* set my bow;' the Douay, 'I *will* set my bow. Of this latter, Voltaire remarks – 'Observe, that the author does not say, I *have* put my bow in the clouds; he says, I *will* put; this clearly implies it to have been the prevailing opinion that there had not always been a rainbow. This phenomenon is necessarily produced by rain; yet, in this place, it is represented as something supernatural, exhibited in order to announce and prove that the earth should no more be inundated. It is singular to choose the

certain sign of rain, in order to assure men against their being drowned.'

It is quite evident by the context, whichever translation be right, that the meaning intended to be conveyed is, that the rainbow is to be the sign to remind God and the people and beasts of his covenant with them. This covenant, like many treaties made with high powers, is open to misconstruction. God only covenants not again to destroy *all* flesh by a flood, but it is quite within the terms of his covenant to overflow a few rivers, and sweep flocks, herds, villages, and villagers off a large tract of country; this is occasionally done, and the rainbow cheers the survivors with the thought that, as everybody is not to be drowned at once, they are safe till another time.

Verse 16. It is implied that, but for the rainbow, God might forget his covenant; surely this cannot be a revelation from an unchangeable God, who could never forget.

Verse 21. Noah, if he was a just and perfect man before the flood, seems to have soon degenerated, although he had just had cognizance of so fearful an example of God's vengeance. 'His tent.' The word [ – ] does not mean his tent; the final [ – ] is a feminine termination, and the word should be translated 'her tent;' but to save revelation from seeming ridiculous, the translators have taken a slight liberty with the text.

Verse 25. It is hard to understand why Canaan should be cursed because his father, Ham, accidentally walked into a tent and saw Noah naked. If Ham even deserved a curse, it is no

reason for cursing his son, who was no party to his father's offence.

**Chapter x.** There are scarcely any of the names contained in this or the preceding or following chapter, until we come to Abraham, which are now used amongst the Jews. Paine says, 'If they (the Jews) affix the same idea of reality to those names as they do to those that follow after, the names of Adam, Abel, Seth, etc., would be as common among the Jews of the present day, as are those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron.

'In the superstition they have been in, scarcely a Jew family would be without an *Enoch*, as a presage of his going to heaven as ambassador for the whole family. Every mother who wished that the *days* of her son *might be long in the land*, would call him *Methuselah*; and all the Jews that might have to traverse the ocean would be named Noah, as a charm against shipwreck and drowning.'

**Chapter xi., v. 1.** If the whole earth was of one tongue, what do verses 5, 20, and 31 of the preceding chapter mean?

Voltaire says, 'People have wished to know how the children of Noah, after having divided among themselves the islands of the nations, and established themselves in divers lands, with each one his particular language, family, and people, should all find themselves in the plain of Shinaar to build there a tower, saying, "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

'The book of Genesis speaks of the states which the sons of

Noah founded. It has related how the people of Europe, Africa, and Asia all came to Shinaar, speaking one language only, and purposing the same thing.

'The Vulgate places the deluge in the year of the world 1656, and the construction of the Tower of Babel, 1771; that is to say, one hundred and fifteen years after the destruction of mankind, and even during the life of Noah.

'Men then must have multiplied with prodigious celerity; all the arts revived in a very little time. When we reflect on the great number of trades which must have been employed to raise a tower so high, we are amazed at so stupendous a work.

'It is a pity that there remains not on the earth, among the profane authors, one vestige of the famous Tower of Babel; nothing of this story of the confusion of tongues is found in any book. This memorable adventure was as unknown to the whole universe, as the names of Noah, Methusalem, Cain, and Adam and Eve.'

It seems scarcely probable that a multitude of people, forming so many nations, could be got together in one plain; and if they were, why should they fear being scattered?

Verse 5. 'The Lord came down.' This idea pervades the book – that is, that God resides in heaven, above the earth, and that he leaves heaven occasionally and comes down to earth, and after having finished his business, goes up again to heaven. The writer appears to have had no conception that God could see from heaven to earth, but makes God come down to ascertain whether

the tale which had reached him in heaven be true. Unfortunately, even after ignoring the attribute of omnipresence in relation to God, the idea is not a correct one. That which is above me when I look up and pray is not above the New Zealander, if he looks up and prays at the same instant. The powers above to him would be the powers below to me. The verse implies that God could not see the tower until he came down.

Verses 6 and 7. Who did God speak to? 'Let us go down;' who are 'us?' Did the Almighty actually fear lest his creatures should build a tower so high that they might scramble into heaven without his assistance? The whole of this account is absurd in the extreme. Dr. John Pye Smith says that 'the confusion of language was probably only to a certain point, not destroying cognation.' I do not the better understand the story with the aid of this comment. The only thing proved by the elaborate commentaries of many divines is, that they gave God the credit of inspiring an inexplicable revelation, and that, instead of endeavouring to make it explicable, they burden the margin of the book with suppositions which only increase the difficulties of the text. Verse 26. 'And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram.'

Verse 32. 'And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.'

**Chapter** xii., v. 1. And the Lord said to Abram, 'Get thee out,' etc. So that Abram must have been one hundred and thirty-five years old when he left Haran; but, according to verse 4 it appears that Abram was only seventy-five years of age. This has

been regarded as an inexplicable difficulty by St. Jerome and St. Augustine; and I, who am not a saint, must confess with Voltaire that I cannot understand how a man can be seventy-five and one hundred and thirty-five years of age at the same time.

**Chapter** xii., v. 1, 2, 3, and 7; chap, xiii., v. 14, 15, 16, and 17; chap, xv., v. 5, 6, 7, and 18; chap, xvii., v. 7 and 8; chap, xviii., v. 18; chap, xxii., v. 17 and 18; chap, xxvi., v. 3 and 4.; chap, xxviii., v. 14.

These verses contain the solemn promise, the more solemn covenant, and the most solemn oath of God; this promise, covenant, and oath all being to one effect – namely, that Abraham's children should be as numerous as the dust of the earth, or the stars of heaven, and that this numerous progeny should possess certain specified land for ever. There is a difficulty in comprehending why God, who is no respecter of persons, should have selected Abraham and his descendants for such great reward; but waiving this, we find several questions requiring answer. Who are Abraham's descendants? Not the Jews; their number is very limited. Where are Abraham's descendants? Not in the promised land, most certainly.

If Abraham's descendants are the Jews, then I say that they have never been as numerous as God promised, covenanted, and swore they should be. I say that they have not held the promised land for ever. It may be that this promise is yet to be fulfilled; it is quite certain that it is unfulfilled up to the present time.

**Chapter** xii., v. 11 to 20. The account of the chosen of God

having recourse to a lie to pass off his wife for his sister, deserves notice. When this happens twice (chap. 20), it excites suspicion; and when it occurs a third time in the same country to the son of Abraham, it creates doubt as to the truth of the whole. Voltaire writes thus of Abraham: —

'The Scripture says that the God of the Jews, who intended to give them the land of Canaan, commanded Abraham to leave the fertile country of Chaldea, and go towards Palestine, promising that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. It is for theologians to explain, by allegory and *mystical sense*, how all the nations of the earth were to be blessed in a seed from which they did not descend, since this much-to-be-venerated *mystical sense* cannot be made the object of a work purely critical. A short time after these promises, Abraham's family was afflicted by famine, and went into Egypt for corn. It is singular that the Hebrews never went into Egypt but when pressed by hunger; for Jacob afterwards sent his children on the same errand.

'Abraham, who was then very old, went this way with his wife Sarah, aged sixty-five; she was very handsome, and Abraham feared that the Egyptians, smitten by her charms, would kill him in order to enjoy her transcendent beauties; he proposed to her that she should pass for his sister, etc. Human nature must at that time have possessed a vigour which time and luxury have since very much weakened. That which Abraham had foreseen came to pass; the Egyptian youth found his wife charming, notwithstanding her sixty-five years; the king himself fell in love

with her, and placed her in his seraglio, though, probably, he had younger females there; but the Lord plagued the king and his seraglio with very great sores. The text does not tell us how the king came to know that this dangerous beauty was Abraham's wife; but it seems that he did come to know it, and restored her.

'Sarah's beauty must have been unalterable; for, twenty-five years afterwards, when she was ninety years old, pregnant, and travelling with her husband through the dominions of a King of Phoenicia, named Abimelech, Abraham, who had not yet corrected himself, made her a second time pass for his sister. The Phoenician King was as sensible to her attractions as the King of Egypt had been; but God appeared to this Abimelech in a dream, and threatened him with death if he touched his new mistress. It must be confessed that Sarah's conduct was as extraordinary as the lasting nature of her charms.

'The singularity of these adventures was probably the reason why the Jews had not the same sort of faith in their histories which they had in their Leviticus. There was not a single iota of their *law* in which they did not believe; but the historical part of their Scriptures did not command the same respect. Their conduct in regard to their ancient books may be compared to that of the English, who received the laws of St. Edward without absolutely believing that St. Edward cured the scrofula; or that of the Romans, who, while they obeyed their primitive laws, were not obliged to believe in the miracles of the sieve filled with water, the ship drawn to the shore by a vestal's girdle, the stone

cut with a razor, and so forth.'

**Chapter** xiii., v. 7 and 18, as before observed, could not have been written by Moses, (see p. 5.)

**Chapter** xiv., v. 1 to 16. This victory of Abraham over four mighty kings is, if true, a very wonderful one. It is quite clear that Chedorlaomer was a very powerful monarch, having other monarchs for his vassals. Amraphel was the king of the mighty empire of Babylon, doubtless not so grand as it afterwards became, but still one of the most powerful of the then monarchies of the world. These are assisted by two other kings; one of whom is described as the king of nations. The four allies make war upon certain kings, five in number; and, according to verse 10, they fight, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fall in the vale of Siddim.

Abraham, hearing that Lot, his relative, was taken prisoner, took three hundred and eighteen men, and, by night, pursued and smote the four allied kings, and recaptured his brother. As he went near to Damascus in pursuit, he must have travelled more than one hundred miles, beside crossing some very mountainous country; this, of course, enhances the character of the victory. One of the fruits of this triumph seems to have been, that the King of Sodom, who is killed in verse 10, comes to meet Abraham, alive and well, in verse 17. Verse 18. 'Melchizedek;' who was he? Before answering this question, read Psalm ex., v. 4, Hebrews, chap, v., v. 6, 10, and 11, chap, vii., and chap, viii., v. 1. In the verse we are examining, he is described as [ – ]

(melekitzedek) – [ – ] (melek) [ – ] (shelem).

What does this mean? Melekitzedek or Melchizedek; 'first by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that the King of Salem, which is, the King of Peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life' —*vide* Hebrews, chap, vii., v. 3.

This description does not answer to any man who ever lived on the face of the earth; nearly everybody claims to have had a father and a grandfather; everybody has had a mother. Everybody was one hour old before he grew older; and after existing some few score years, more or less, every man has, sooner or later, died. So Melchizedek could not have been a man. In Malachi, chap iv., v. 2, we find [ – ] (Chemesh zedek); this is translated *Sun* of Righteousness, and it is only to the sun that the description of Melchizedek will apply. The ancients looked upon the sun as the everlasting source of all existence, and personified it in various names; Melchizedek, king of the zodiac, appears to be one of the Bible personifications. But supposing Melchizedek to be not a real person, what becomes of the story of Abraham giving him tithes of his spoils? If this story be not fact, how much is allegory?

Is any portion of the history of Abraham a fact? In chap, xvi., we find part of the history of Hagar and Sarai; while, in Galatians, chap, iv., v. 24 and 25, we are told that whole history is an allegory, and that Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia, and Sarai the City of Jerusalem, which is 'above.'

If it be taken as a relation of fact, we find Sarah, the chosen

of God, ill-treating a woman of her household, causing her to fly into the desert when in a state of health requiring great care; and we further find that God prophecies for the yet unborn child, 'That his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.' If all things are in the order and disposition of God, he did not order and dispose them very well for poor Ishmael. But perhaps the God of the Jews, like the slaveowner, had not the same consideration for those born in bondage as for their masters.

**Chapter xv., v. 13.** If this four hundred years refers to the Egyptian captivity, it is four hundred and thirty years according to Exodus, chap, xii., v. 40 and 41 (also see Galatians, chap, iii., v. 17); but, according to the Bible chronology, it is only about two hundred years. It is impossible to give credit to one more than the other; for Genesis, Exodus, and Chronology, while they contradict one another, are not supported by any other evidence themselves. Verse 18 to end. Ten nations are specified here; in Joshua, chap, iii., v. 10, seven only are mentioned; in Deuteronomy, chap. xxii v. 17, six; in Exodus, chap, iii., v. 17, and chap, xxiii., v. 23, six; 2 Chronicles, chap, viii., v. 7, five only. The land from the Nile to the Euphrates has never yet been in the undisturbed possession of the Jews; large portions have never been in their possession for a single moment, so that this promise has never been performed.

**Chapter xvi., v. 13.** In the Douay this is translated, 'And she called the name of the Lord that spoke unto her, thou the

God who hast seen me; for she said, verily here have I seen the hinder parts of him that seeth me.' The reader will perceive a strange difference in the two texts. If the Douay be the correct translation, where are the hinder parts of a God who is without parts? (*vide* thirty-nine articles).

**Chapter xvii.**, v. 1. 'And the Lord appeared to Abraham.' Verse 3. 'And Abraham fell on his face.' Verse 17. 'Then Abraham fell on his face.' Verse 23. 'And he left off talking with him; and God went up from Abraham.'

The intent of this chapter is to induce a belief that the Lord appeared in person to Abraham; and that, after he had talked with him for some time, he left and went *up*. It is also intended to convey that Abraham showed his respect to the Lord by falling down before him; and, according to the Douay, 'flat on his face.' I have before remarked on this going up and coming down, which is utterly inconsistent with any idea of an infinite and omnipotent God. I do not wish to fill my pages with mere repetitions, and shall, therefore, at once deal with Genesis, chap, xvii., v. 1 and 22, chap, xviii., v. 1, 2, 7, and 8, chap, xxii., v. 11 and 15, chap, xxvi., v. 2 and 24, chap. xxviii., v. 13, chap, xxxii., v. 30, and chap, xxxv., v. 7, 9, and 13. It is quite clear that the author of these verses in Genesis considered not only God was material, and could be seen, but also considered God in the light of a superior or more powerful being than man, yet of somewhat the same form and passions. Man is represented as made in the image of God. Men, Gods, and Angels are strangely

confused together; angels are spoken of in three characters — viz., as intermediary messengers, as inferior Gods, and as God. This would be sufficient of itself to cause great confusion. God is spoken of in this book as eating, talking, walking, going up and down, grieving, repenting, and swearing, making impossible covenants and never keeping them, fearing lest man should eat of the tree of life and live for ever, or that he should build a tower which should reach to heaven. In the eighteenth chapter, the terms 'Angels,' 'Men,' and 'Lord,' are indiscriminately used in reference to the same persons.

In the twenty-second chapter, the angel of the Lord calls from heaven to Abraham. What are angels? Voltaire says —

'Angel, in Greek, *envoy*. The reader will hardly be the wiser for being told that the Persians had their *peris*, the Hebrews their *melakim*, and the Greeks their *demonoi*.

'But it is, perhaps, better worth knowing that one of the first of man's ideas has always been, to place intermediate beings between the Divinity and himself; such were those demons, those genii, invented in the ages of antiquity. Man always made the Gods after his own image; princes were seen to communicate their orders by messengers; therefore, the Divinity had also his couriers. Mercury and Iris were couriers or messengers. The Jews, the only people under the conduct of the Divinity himself, did not, at first, give names to the angels whom God vouchsafed to send them; they borrowed the names given them by the Chaldeans, when the Jewish nation was captive in Babylon;

Michael and Gabriel are named for the first time by Daniel, a slave among those people. The Jew Tobit, who lived at Nineveh, knew the angel Raphael, who travelled with his son to assist him in recovering the money due to him from the Jew Gabael.

'In the laws of the Jews, that is, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, not the least mention is made of the existence of the angels, much less of the worship of them; neither did the Sadducees believe in the angels.

'But, in the histories of the Jews, they are much spoken of. The angels were corporeal; they had wings at their backs, as the Gentiles feigned that Mercury had at his heels; sometimes they concealed their wings under their clothing. How could they be without bodies, since they all ate and drank?

'The ancient Jewish tradition, according to Ben Maimon, admits ten degrees, ten orders of angels.

'The Christian religion is founded on the fall of the angels. Those who revolted were precipitated from the spheres which they inhabited into hell, in the centre of the earth, and became devils. A devil, in the form of a serpent, tempted Eve, and damned mankind. Jesus came to redeem mankind, and to triumph over the devil, who tempts us still. Yet this fundamental tradition is to be found nowhere but in the apochryphal book of Enoch; and there it is in a form quite different from that of the received tradition.

'It is not known precisely where the angels dwell – whether in the air, in the void, or in the planets. It has not been God's

pleasure that we should be informed of their abode.'

**Chapter xvii.**, v. 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. According to the latter verse, no uncircumcised man will be admitted into heaven; so the Mahomedans would get in and Christians be excluded. The following will be found in the Philosophical Dictionary under the head 'Circumcision.' "'It appears," says Herodotus, in his book Euterpe, 'that the inhabitants of Colchis sprang from Egypt. I judge so from my own observations, rather than from hearsay; for I found that, at Colchis, the ancient Egyptians were more frequently recalled to my mind than the ancient customs of Colchis were, when I was in Egypt.

"These inhabitants of the shores of the Euxine sea stated themselves to be a colony founded by Sesostris. As for myself, I should think this probable, not merely because they are dark and wooly-haired, but because the inhabitants of Colchis, Egypt, and Ethiopia, are the only people in the world who, from time immemorial, have practised circumcision; for the Phoenicians and the people of Palestine confess that they adopted the practice from the Egyptians. The Syrians, who at present inhabit the banks of Thermodon, acknowledge that it is, comparatively, but recently that they have conformed to it. It is principally from this usage that they are considered of Egyptian origin.

"With respect to Ethiopia and Egypt, as this ceremony is of great antiquity in both nations, I cannot by any means ascertain which has derived it from the other. It is, however, probable that the Ethiopians received it from the Egyptians; while, on

the contrary, the Phoenicians have abolished the practice of circumcising new-born children since the enlargement of their commerce with the Greeks."

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.