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THE

# CHURCHMAN

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## ART. I.—THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF CREATION.

THE Mosaic account of creation is not a matter of mere archæological interest, nor one of curious inquiry to see how so old a writer would express himself upon a subject which has grown into a science in our own days. We cannot dismiss it with the commonplace remark that the Bible was not intended to teach geology; nor, on the other hand, does its main value to the believer consist in its verbal, or even its substantial, agreement with the last arrangement of the geologic record. On this point we may agree with Professor Huxley in his sneer at the "reconcilers," as he calls them, just so far as to own that too much importance has been attached to the establishment of an exact concordance between the first chapter of Genesis and the last text-book of geology. But it is a wonderful testimony to the inspiration of Holy Scripture that such an attempt is possible, and that its difficulties arise from the fact that geology is an imperfect record of creation, in which vast periods, such as that represented by the Laurentian rocks, tell us scarcely a single word as to their history, while as to others, the information is vague and fragmentary, and only gradually attaining to a moderate degree of exactness. My own feeling is, that the harmony already established between the Mosaic account and the proved facts of geology is wonderful; and that as our knowledge of the geologic record increases the reconcilement will become complete.

But I am anxious to point out that the real value of the Mosaic account of creation consists in what it teaches us about God. It is the preface, if I may so speak, to a Book intended to reveal to us His nature and His relation to us. We have in the Bible a library of short treatises, written under ever-varying forms of outward condition and mental development. During a period of more than a thousand years, from

Moses to Malachi, this Book was given, "by divers portions and in divers manners" (Heb. i. 1), with the one great object of preparing for the fulness of Revelation in Jesus Christ. We grant that the light was a growing one; that it was as the rising of the sun, beginning with a dawn and attaining its meridian splendour only in Him in Whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And how does this archaic record of creation, this dawning of spiritual light, set the Deity before us? Not merely as Almighty and All-wise, and All-good, but as preparing the earth for man. All is for man's sake. And when man is reached there is a pause, and a consultation among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity; and man is made in the likeness of God, and has dominion given to him. If our spirits ever sink, almost oppressed by the greatness of redeeming love, and we ask, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. viii. 4), we need but turn to this first chapter of Genesis to be assured that a being for whom such vast preparation was made, and who was so ushered into existence, can never be neglected in the counsels of the Most High.

In the Commentary on Genesis, which I contributed to the Bishop of Gloucester's "Commentary on the Old Testament," I have pointed out that the whole scheme of human redemption is present in the Book of Genesis—in outline, of course, and germ; and that without it the unity of the Bible would be gone. I repeat, therefore, that its interest does not consist in its archæology, or its geology, or its table of peoples, or its description of Oriental life. All these matters are there, and are most precious. But the Book is an integral portion of Revelation, and belongs to our faith. It lays for us the foundation, explains to us the problem of man's condition, shows us what is God's nature and His purpose towards us, and gives us the outlines of the Divine plan for man's restoration in all its chief constituent parts.

But I must proceed to the Mosaic account of creation itself. And first, I grant the word "Mosaic" without affirming that Moses actually wrote the first chapter of Genesis, and the first three verses of chapter ii., which form part of it. My belief is that, certainly in the rest of Genesis, Moses has preserved for us the remains of a literature far more ancient than his own times. This belief is confirmed by finding a large number of points of similitude, and even of exact agreement, between the Mosaic account of creation, of the deluge, of the Tower of Babel, etc.; and the inscriptions recently discovered in the Chaldean clay cylinders. All the difficulties, too, that used to be paraded about the non-existence of writing and writing-materials are now exploded. The Accadians, who preceded

the Chaldees at Ur, Abraham's birthplace, had not only a very plastic clay, far more cheap and manageable than the wooden tablets smeared over with wax which the Romans used, and practically indestructible, but other materials, though the clay, made into little tiles, was so convenient as to be chiefly employed. And writing was in such common use, that several cylinders of the age of Abraham, now in our museums, record business matters of very trivial importance. The possession of religious documents in the family of Shem, of which Terah naturally would be the depositary, would explain the stout opposition made by him and Abraham to the polytheism prevalent all around. And I can quite believe that the narratives on the Cuneiform cylinders were legends which had their origin in the records which were the heritage of the descendants of Shem. Such records would be carefully preserved; and what more probable than that Moses, moved by the Spirit of God, and under His guidance, selected and arranged such portions as were of eternal value?

But one very important argument for this belief does not apply to the first chapter of Genesis. The rest of Genesis consists of ten *tôldôth*, as they are called in the Hebrew—literally, *generations*, but answering to our word *histories*. The word does not occur again until Matt. i. 1, where we find "The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ;" that is, His history, for the word does not belong simply to His genealogy. It is thus a link binding the Old Testament and the New in close union. Now the second account of creation, beginning at Gen. ii. 4, is expressly called a *tôldôth*. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth;" *i.e.*, in our language, "This is their history." Now I regard it as clearly proved, both by internal and external evidence, that the ten *tôldôth* are pre-Mosaic, and taken from records brought, probably by Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees, and carried by Jacob into Egypt. But this first account of the creation is not a *tôldôth*. It is remarkable, too, for its simplicity, its grandeur, its nobleness of conception, its majesty. It is of God, and for God. In the second account of creation man is a prominent actor, and the representation of the Creator's doings belongs to a much less developed state of thought. It is more picturesque, more human; represents the Deity as more on a level with His creatures, as their kind friend even, and companion; and while its lessons are of infinite value and importance, its mode of teaching is such as suited men at a very early stage. The first account of creation is grand and divine.

If, then, we were to conclude that this was revealed first to Moses, and was by him prefixed to the older histories, I can see nothing either in the outer form of the document or in its

contents to render such a conclusion untenable. The one argument on the other side is the agreement in so many particulars between the first chapter of Genesis and the account of creation in the Cuneiform records.

In turning to the document itself, even those scientific men who love to dwell upon a supposed opposition between science and revelation, cannot surely help being struck at the majesty of its opening words. It enters upon no philosophic speculation, like Eastern cosmogonies, as to the manner in which the Deity passed from a state of quiescence into a state of activity, from a state of repose to that of willing that worlds should exist. It loses itself in no difficulties about the pre-existence of matter, and the relation of matter to mind. Grandly and clearly it sets before us one Will pervading all space, and calling into being things visible and invisible, the heaven and the earth. In the heathen world there were gods many and lords many. To the man who believes in the opening words of the Book of Genesis, there is, there can be, but one God omnipotent, omnipresent.

And mark, it is not the faint, far-away God of the Agnostic. It is a God who wills and works, and who manifests Himself in His works. Still less is it the God of the Pantheist, who is but the sum-total of natural forces, without will or personality. It is the Being Who created those natural forces, Whose they are, and Whom they serve. This first chapter of the Bible sets before us a Personal Being, willing creation, carrying His will into effect, watching over it, and passing judgment upon it when complete; and not a blind power, unknowable, and working unconsciously. And clearly it distinguishes Him from all things that are made. If "the beginning" here spoken of be, as some argue, the beginning simply of our solar system, it makes no difference to the conception of the Divine nature. It simply narrows our field of view. And besides what God was in one beginning, that He was in all beginnings. "He made the stars also;" and the worship of the heavenly bodies is not only made impossible to one who believes that they are things created, but no room is left for supposing that the one God, Who willed the existence of our world, did not in like manner will the existence of every star, with the system to which it belongs, throughout the whole realms of space. We have then, in these first words of revelation, no unworthy idea of God, but one of noble majesty and grandeur; and subsequent revelation does not, and cannot, raise the idea to a greater height of sublimity, or to a more philosophic clearness of conception. Its office rather is to bring Him nearer and closer to us, to teach us that not only is He infinite in power, but infinite also in love, our Father in heaven.

The next words are very important as regards the duration of the process of creation. In the Authorized Version it will be noticed that in the sentence, "The earth was without form," the verb "was" is printed in Roman letters; while in the next sentence, "darkness *was* upon the face of the deep," "*was*" is printed in italics. The Revised Version has obliterated this distinction. Rightly, according to grammar, for the word *was* exists in the original; but it also obliterates a distinction made in the Hebrew. In Hebrew and other Semitic languages the mere agreement between the subject and predicate is expressed, if emphatic, by a pronoun; if not emphatic, by the mere collocation of the words. We insert some part of the verb "*to be;*" but the Hebrew verb "*to be*" means existence, or the coming into existence. It is the Greek word γίγνομαι, as contrasted with εἰμί. In this verse the Septuagint translates carelessly, giving "The earth was invisible and unfurnished;" but in the next verse it gives the force of the Hebrew word more correctly, rendering, "And God said, Let light become" (or, "come into existence"); "and light became."

The words, then, may mean, either that "the earth existed in a state of wasteness and emptiness," or that "it came into existence," or even "became waste and void." The first would imply a long duration of time; the second might signify the destruction of a previous earth, or of the whole solar system. The former is, perhaps, the more probable interpretation; but I cannot say that the other interpretation is impossible. In what follows the verb expresses, not a sudden, but a gradual formation. "Let light come into existence;" "Let an expanse come into existence." But I pass on, because this question about the duration of the creative period is best considered with reference to the meaning of the word "*day.*"

Now, if Moses was the actual writer of this chapter, the use of the word may be explained by the manner of the Revelation to him. He may have had displayed before his gaze, in a trance, successive pictures of our orb in its onward stages, and we should thus have a very literal meaning of the words, "And there existed" (or "came into being") "an evening, and there existed a morning; day one." Between each manifestation there would be a gathering of gloom, and then the dawning of light, displaying God's creative work in its next stage of progress. How glorious, too, would be the spectacle of the fourth day, the earth clothed in verdure, the sun and moon shining in the clear atmosphere, and the stars lighting up the evening sky!

But except upon this picture theory, as it has been called, the idea that a day must mean twenty-four hours, which those who represent Scripture as opposed to science wish to force

upon this first chapter of Genesis, and which many believers cling to, cannot be maintained. If we lived in the Arctic regions, our day would last six months, and our night an equal period. But the Bible itself contradicts this view. In Gen. ii. 4, creation occupies one day, not seven. In Ps. xcv. 8-10 we are told that the day of temptation for the Israelites lasted forty years. But the great proof of the large meaning of the word "day" is the fourth commandment. We are to rest on each seventh day of our days, because God rested on the seventh day of His days. His days are not natural days, but divine days; and no man surely would argue that God rested for twenty-four hours. If so, did God recommence the work of creation on the eighth day, or are we not now living in His seventh day of rest? Is not this seventh day of rest the day of spiritual working (John v. 17); the day of grace, the day which belongs to our souls, just as our seventh day is our day of spiritual refreshing? If we are now living in God's seventh day our Lord's argument is plain and intelligible. God on His Sabbath still carries on His work of grace and love; and therefore our Lord broke no Divine commandment in performing similar works on man's Sabbath; He was but following the example of His heavenly Father. But, if this present age be not God's seventh day, then I do not see the force of our Lord's appeal, nor do I understand in which of God's days our lot is cast. Moreover, if you will read the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, you will see that God's seventh day, His Sabbath, is to include the rest of the saints in heaven. If so, by what argument can we hold that the six days were each of twenty-four hours' duration, while the seventh is eternal? St. Paul tells us that God is "King of the ages," *βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων* (1 Tim. i. 17). Surely these ages are God's days, the days of His working, and the day of His rest. In Greek you may find many words to express a period of indefinite length; in Hebrew I know of no word but "day."

Now in the work of these six days Moses draws a very remarkable distinction. In the first verse he uses the word *bara*, "create," the strongest word in Hebrew of all those which signify *making* or *producing*. But immediately afterwards he uses terms of far less significance, "Let light come into being;" "Let an expanse come into being;" "Let the waters be gathered together;" "Let the earth put forth verdure." And then, as each day's work passes in review, he says that God *made* the expanse, and so on. But when we come to the work of the fifth day, we read that "God created the great reptiles, and every living creature." And on the sixth day, though higher kinds of life were introduced, it is only said that God made them, until he came to man. Then again

it is creation, "Let us make man . . . . so God created man." Surely this is remarkable. All the rest might be the result of the working of natural forces, for these forces are God's instruments. But the bringing of something into existence out of nothing; the bringing in of life out of dead matter; the bringing in of the reasonable soul responsible to God for its actions—these are reserved by God unto Himself, and can be wrought only by His personal act.

This leads to another important consideration. In the work of the third day we read, "Let the earth bring forth *deshé* (rendered *grass* in our versions), herb yielding seed, and tree bearing fruit." Grass really belongs to the second class, the seed-bearing herbs; while *deshé* is the name of the lowest forms of vegetation, such as those which clothe the surface of rocks with stripes of faint green and brown, and which, even in their highest development, are propagated without seed. Now, those geologists who oppose revelation have given themselves much trouble to prove that the lower forms of animal life came into existence before the higher forms of vegetable life. The Bible tells us more than this, for it says that trees bearing edible fruits were God's special gifts to Adam in the terrestrial paradise. But the whole discussion mistakes the meaning of the creative words of God. They are the eternal laws given to matter, not exhausted by one effort, but going on unto this very hour. When God said, "Let light come into being," He did not at once make sun and moon. The light of the first day was, as far as we can understand, elementary, such as one sees now in the zodiacal light, or in a nebula—a luminousness caused by the friction and attraction of the particles of matter. But God, when He spake those pregnant words, gave the whole law of light, and therefore of electricity, of those wonderful vibrations which bring the light with such vast rapidity to us, and even of the eye so constructed as to use and enjoy the light. The laws of the second day still govern the atmosphere and the water, while that of the third day is the law of vegetation. The pause of the fourth day leads to the thought that vegetation had a long development before animal life came into being; but it does not at all follow that it had advanced beyond those wonderful sigillarias and other endogens, with whose forms we are made conversant by the illustrations of books upon geology.

I have used the word development, and gladly draw attention to what both Mr. Gladstone and Principal Dawson have said on this point. They both complain of the jugglery and even wilful confusion of this with evolution. Development we grant. It is the procession from cause to effect, and a writer,

commonly called "St. Isaac of Antioch," calls God "the Cause of all Causes;" and development is simply the producing by each cause of its proper result. But this very verse shows that causation and development are limited, for God makes not merely each of the three classes of vegetation distinct, but the higher plants bear seed each after its kind. No amount of development will change a palm into an oak, or an ash into an elm. But evolution is used to suggest to us a world not made by God, but which grew of itself. If we accept it, then our solar system arose spontaneously out of some mist of nebulous matter, without any guiding intelligence or directing power. Until man was "evolved," there was no thought or reason present, and the wise laws which govern all things are self-generated out of senseless matter. It is in direct opposition to such a view that the Bible opens with the majestic words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

We readily, then, grant development, but simply as the orderly progress of each law given by God towards the result intended by Him. And the fourth day seems to have been a grand era of vegetation, when upon the silent surface of the earth, enlivened as yet by no joyous cry of bird or animal, nor by the humming even of insect life, wonderful forests of ferns and palms and calamites luxuriated in an atmosphere richer probably in carbon than our own. But in the account of this day we find the same reference to man, as yet uncreated, which is so strongly marked throughout. We have sun, moon, and stars, but absolutely no astronomy. Without the sun this earth would be a dark and frozen waste; and yet the writer's interest in the great luminaries goes no farther than as they perform a very humble function for man. They are his time-keepers, giving him change of seasons, the alternation of day and night, and guidance without which he could know neither when to sow his fields, nor how to regulate his daily work, nor whither to steer his bark. They give him light and warmth, but are mere machines, and the very word used in the Hebrew signifies a utensil only, a candelabrum, or light-stand, which the great Artificer has made. And the stars are treated in a similar way. There is no question as to how or when they were made; the words *He made* are not in the Hebrew: their very insertion shows how keenly we look for astronomical knowledge, and how gladly we should welcome it. To Moses the stars have no such interest; they only perform the very humble office of aiding the moon as time-keepers when her light is obscured, and are absolutely destitute of all influence upon human fortunes.

Compare with this all the astrological nonsense believed in by most Oriental nations, the place assigned to the planets in

most ancient systems of idolatry, the belief even now in astral influences, and in the ascendancy or occultation of some one's star, and we see that we have to do with a writer absolutely free from errors almost universally prevalent in bygone days, and not altogether exploded now.

The era of vegetable life is followed on the fifth day by a great outburst of animal life. But first, we are not to suppose that vegetation upon this new creative day did not go forward on its destined route of orderly progress, exactly as it did on day four. Animal life is added, but the laws of vegetation settled on day three continue to be its laws on days four and five, and will continue to be its laws as long as the world lasts. And, secondly, the animal life of the fifth day is of an inferior form, yet even so the significant word *created* is applied to it. A great gulf separates animate from inanimate life. The Bible notes this carefully, and teaches just the same grand truth as that which scientific men cautiously acknowledge in the present day, that life is a mystery, the origin of which lies outside the realm of science. But, as regards this fifth day's work, the Authorised Version speaks of whales: "God created great whales;" and the Revised Version makes bad into worse by rendering, "God created great sea-monsters." Now, the cetacea are mammals, none of which came into existence on the fifth day. What "sea-monsters" may be I do not know. But I know what the Hebrew says, namely, that "God created the great reptiles:" the word having especial reference to the crocodile, and being in fact the same as that translated *serpent* in the Authorised Version, but really signifying *crocodile* in the account of the miracle in Exod. vii. 9, 10, 12, which was to be the proof of the mission of Moses to Pharaoh. In the margin of the Revised Version in Exod. vii. 9, attention is called to the fact that the word signifies a large reptile; but the absurd translation here of "sea-monsters" not only obscures the sense, but deprives the English-reading student of something of special interest. For this reference to the crocodile suggests to us, and even makes it probable, that Moses was the writer.

And just as the mention of the stars was a warning against the worship of the planets, so the mention of the crocodile was a warning against the worship of that reptile as practised before the eyes of Moses in Egypt, and against the worship of animals generally. And surely this is remarkable. All sorts of geologic and astronomic and cosmogonic theories have been interpolated into this divine narrative of the preparation of the earth for man's abode; but no one has tried to read into it Agnosticism or Pantheism or astrology, or the worship of the heavenly bodies or of animals or plants. It is a clear and unmistakable protest against them all.

And so gradually the sixth day is reached, and again there is creation. The mammalia came into existence on this day, but no act of creation is recorded as regards them. The law of animate life as given on the fifth day included the higher as well as the lower fauna. Had there been any new creation I suppose that new types of life would have been introduced. I can speak upon such a subject with no authority, but I imagine that even man's body follows the old type, and that there was no creation there. At all events, I find in verse 26 the simple phrase: "And God said, Let us make man." It is spoken in a very solemn manner, but as far as the words go, man might have been nothing more than an improved monkey. Improved, must I say? No; rather a monkey that had retrograded in the scale of creation, and which, having once had four hands, has now got only two. What an advantage it would be to man if he had four hands! Cricket is a manly game now; but fancy cricket with bowlers who could throw the ball with the hind as well as the fore hand; and how magnificent the fielding would be with four-handed men! Physically we must grant that the monkey has the entire advantage.

But the Mosaic account goes on to speak of man as a creation: "So God created man in His image." The words tell us where the gulf is which required the creative power of God. Not in the body. There was no new departure there. The skeleton of a man and of a monkey may, for all I know, be similar, barring the obvious advantage of the latter in the matter of hands. His larynx may be as well fitted for talking as ours, and his brain may have as intricate convolutions as those of a professor. I have no idea whether he has a brain formed as ours, nor do I care. In such matters God's law of creation in animate life would work continuously, as does His law about light, or that about vegetation. What I notice is that Moses only uses the word *creation* when a wide gulf is crossed separating things different in kind, and not of the progress from the lower to the higher, when it is a difference only of degree. No special act of creation separates the oak from the moss, or the elephant from the beetle. But a special act of creation does separate man from the mammalia. What, then, was it which required this mighty energy? Where stands this barrier which God alone could enable man to cross? It consists in all that is signified by man being in the Divine image; in his being capable of holding relations to God; in his being a religious animal, and therefore a moral animal, with the power of distinguishing right and wrong; capable, therefore, of reasoning and choosing; capable of prayer, and therefore of speech; capable of serving God and of attaining

to a nearness unto Him, and with the earnest, therefore, of immortality.

We hear much silly talk about God being a mere force, and, therefore, of the non-existence of the supernatural; and about science having disproved miracles, and about the antecedent improbability of revelation, and of the Incarnation of the Godhead, and of the impossibility of the Resurrection. We ask these vain talkers to account for the existence of man with his distinctly supernatural qualities. The first chapter of Genesis solves for us the enigma. Scientific men deride it because they pass by unregarded its deep spiritual significance. But this wonderful history tells us that there were but four stages of creation, all leading up to and finding their crowning glory in man. The first was the creation of matter; the second the creation of vegetable life; the third the creation of animal life; the fourth the creation of man in God's image, of man's spiritual, and not of his physical nature. "So God created man in His image." In this relation to God thus clearly but simply stated, lies the rationale of miracle and revelation, of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Atonement. Scientific men themselves acknowledge that in creation all things have their use and all needs their supply. The first chapter of the Bible tells us of a religious animal, and calls his formation a creative act. We still find man a religious animal. The fact agrees with the old record, and we have only to think it over and understand its vast significance, and all the difficulties so ably marshalled by the students of material science pass away into a thin mist. For mark, these men who speak in the name of science are the exponents of material science. They have studied with singular success the laws of the universe, and there they can speak with authority, but only there. Each science has its day of special prominence, and then falls back into its proper place. Material science is the glory of our age, and is doing theologians a world of good; and happily theologians are not above being taught. But with all that noble sphere of thought and action and belief which belongs to man as a religious and spiritual being material science has nothing to do. Yet how strange that in this vilified and derided first chapter of Genesis there should be the remedy for Agnosticism, for Pantheism, for Materialism, as well as for the gross forms of Polytheism which existed in old time, and a firm foundation laid for all the marvels of God's redeeming love. Wonderful is this agreement of the Bible with itself. As it begins so it proceeds. It begins with God preparing a place for man, creating him in His image, and caring for him as the one being on this earth holding a definite relation to Himself. It next describes the entrance

of evil, and tells us of the great struggle of which man is the centre. The rest reveals to us a higher and more marvellous preparation for a nobler and more enduring sphere of existence, where man will be no longer a natural being, but one in whom the spiritual will be triumphant, and whose eternal home will be in the immediate nearness of God. And for all this we have the fitting introduction in those significant words: "And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness. . . So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him."

R. PAYNE SMITH.

## ART. II.—EURIPIDES.

(*The References are to Nauck's Edition, Leipzig*, 1866.)

THE enormous popularity of Euripides is sufficently attested by the large number of his extant plays—nineteen, besides a quantity of fragments equal in bulk to three or four more. The most salient and impressive feature of ancient genius, its prolific exuberance, is virtually lost upon us moderns by our unconsciously measuring the poet only by the scale of his extant remains. Æschylus is credited with seventy plays; Sophokles, when all the spurious or suspected ones have been deducted, with one hundred and thirteen, of each of which totals seven alone survive: and Euripides with eighty, of which nineteen survive; besides which, each of them was more or less conspicuous in lyric or elegiac effusions, even if they had not won the foremost place with the buskin and the mask. If, however, Euripides was so popular, it is because he was so human. He took tragedy off its stilts, and was the most ready, versatile and copious interpreter of our emotions, occupying thus the opposite pole to Æschylus, who, as we have seen,[1] dealt by preference with the superhuman, the sublime, and the unfathomable. Sophokles, alike in period and in genius, occupies a mean-point between the two, as in statuary the heroic scale between the colossal and the life-size. The three were in Greek anecdote severally connected with the immortal memory of the victory of Salamis, in which Æschylus was a combatant; Sophokles, then a stripling lad, chosen for his personal beauty to lead the youthful chorus of the celebrants; while Euripides was born on the day.[2] There are, of course, different accounts, some placing the birth of the

[1] THE CHURCHMAN, vol. xiii., p. 367, 371-2.

[2] The *Corp. Inscript.* 6,051 gives: Εὐριπίδης Μνησαρχίδου Σαλαμείνιος τραγικὸς ποιητής. Salamis is known to have been a deme of Attica. This description is no doubt therefore official and technical, and we may