Mr. Gladstone's Forthcoming Book on the Old Testament.

By a Scotch University Graduate.

At the present time, old-fashioned beliefs are more and more brought to the test of reason. From *genuine* criticism, however, true religion has nothing to fear. It is a false Christianity which dreads thorough investigation. But there is, on the one hand, a feverish impatience, which rushes to conclusions based on a very little knowledge or even a semblance of knowledge, and, on the other hand, a lazy toleration of a state of doubt without probing the subject doubted, to the bottom; and of both these tendencies we have to be on our guard. Some recent criticisms, as Mr. Gladstone says, have produced an atmosphere of uncertainty, which we habitually breathe; men begin to "*feel* towards the great foundation books of the Old Testament as if they believed that they were in the main untrustworthy," and are thus in danger of "losing their faith unawares." It is against this "vague, irrational, and unscientific" drifting from doubt to infidelity that Mr. Gladstone protests and pleads.

At the same time, while honouring Mr. Gladstone's motives, we are inclined to doubt his means or his leisure to deal satisfactorily with these matters. Mr. Gladstone does not lay claim to any knowledge of Hebrew; he fancies that this knowledge is rendered unnecessary by our translation. This appears to us a mistake. Mr. Gladstone is equally dependent for his scientific facts on those who have made science their special study; and in this province also he is, like the dumb driven cattle, at the mercy of those who are at home in it. We can scarcely wonder that in his late controversy with Mr. Huxley, the general belief was that Mr. Gladstone had the worst of it. In one respect (see *Good Words*, p. 306), Mr. Gladstone thinks he is in a better position than even the Hebraist and the scientist, to judge of the forms and modes of speech proper for Moses to adopt, being himself a man who, for scores of years, has studied "the means of making himself intelligible to the mass of men." Mr. Gladstone, however, is also a statesman; and it is sometimes the "labour" and possibly the "duty" of such men to envelop their meaning in mystery.

Mr. Gladstone begins his chapter on the Creation with a ready-made theory of the purpose of the narrative. But this reminds one of God's answer to Job. How was Mr. Gladstone initiated in the knowledge of this purpose; and if not, why darken counsel with words?

The account of Genesis, he says, was a creation story for "grown children" or untrained minds; it was the purpose of the Divine Teacher, knowing all the facts of science and all the terms of the Hebrew tongue, to make use of these to teach the most truth to such unlettered masses, and that in the most forcible way, scientific exactness being a matter of minor importance. The great lesson to be impressed upon them by this tale of creation was that men had reached their present level by steps or degrees. According to Mr. Gladstone, there was really no breakage, no want of continuity in these stages, but it was essential to the lesson that the rough outline of the account should be broken up into sections, so that the mind should contemplate the whole as a series of scenes, the attention not being fixed upon the joints which united them, but on the scenes themselves (p. 304). In short, the object of the Mosaic writer is to convey "moral and spiritual" training to childish men; it was a creation story, which might serve as "sound instruction" in the nursery of the world. He discards both the idea that the days of Genesis are literal days, and also the idea that they are definite geological periods or ages, and describes them as "Chapters in the History of Creation," chapters in a lesson book for childish men, intended not to teach truths scientifically, but to serve moral and spiritual ends. The question which he then proposes is whether the biblical story of creation and its doctrines "stand in such a relation to the ascertained facts of natural science as to warrant or require our concluding that, in a manner above the ordinary, the story proceeded from the Author of the visible creation" (*Good Words*, p. 303).

It appears to us that Mr. Gladstone makes some assumptions here in "the vague and unscientific way" which he himself deprecates. The impression made upon our childish mind, when we were young, and possibly also on Mr. Gladstone himself seventy years ago, was that the creation of all things taught in Genesis was not by slow stages as Mr. Gladstone seems to indicate, nor indeed by "a single effort," but, so to speak, by six single efforts on six natural days. Besides, we altogether demur to leaving the first chapter of Genesis as a story for children. On the contrary, some of the deep things of God seem to lie hidden in mystery in this chapter. Does not the writer to the Hebrews speak to mature Christians, when he declares that these days were ages jointed together (τοὺς αἰῶνας κατηρτίσθαι) by the Word of God? Does this mean that they were mere literary divisions in a child's book? Again, does not geology distinguish its periods with equal definiteness, and leave us equally to imagine how the evening of the one period merged into the morning of the next?

In regard to the work of the **First Day** or **Age,** Professor Huxley objects to the statements that the earth was "waste and void," and that "darkness was upon the face of the deep." "Waste is too indefinite," he says, "everything that exists must have a form; and how could that be void which is full of matter? And if there was darkness, where is the likeness to the celestial nebulæ, of which we should know nothing unless they shone through a light of their own?" (*Nineteenth Century*, pp. 202, 203). Now the word *bohu*, translated *void*, is found in Scripture only here and in two other passages (Isa. xxxiv. 11; Jer. iv. 23), joined paronomastically to *tohu;* and in the Septuagint, which Mr. Huxley and Mr. Gladstone would both admit to be free from modern prejudices, the two words are translated "unseen and unformed" (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος). The translation seems to be endorsed by the writer to the Hebrews, who says that created things did not spring from things *visible* (μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων, Heb. xi. 3). It is true, as Mr. Huxley says, that science knows nothing of a time when the earth was empty, or of a chaos where law did not prevail; but it is open for science to go back to that state which preceded even these luminous nebulæ, and to assert that even *they* were developed. Matter was, no doubt, more and more dispersed in space, as we go back in the boundless past. Visibility implies distinction as well as light. Possibly the genesis of light had something to do with the condensing process of collecting these nebulæ from boundless space; but, at least, the Mosaic account is quite scientific when it connects the evolution of light with motion. "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light." In the rapid revolutions of these flowing materials, and possibly in their condensation or collection, light was evolved; and, in so far as these luminous nebulæ were collected, it may be said that God separated the light from the surrounding darkness. The Hebrew word *t'hom*, translated "deep" (the Babylonian *hamat*), is, according to Gesenius, a sea in commotion, or a boundless quantity of "waters," as Moses also calls this "weltering," primitive matter. "No doubt," says Mr. Gladstone, "the idea conveyed by the word 'waters,' is an imperfect idea, though waters are still waters at times when they may be holding vast quantities of solid in solution;" and what better word had Moses at his disposal? Canon Driver describes the scene as "a surging chaos;" and another authority describes matter as being "in an uncompounded, homogeneous, gaseous condition." But Mr. Gladstone thinks that "the grown children," with whom Moses had to do, would have been rather bewildered than instructed by these phrases (*Good Words*, pp. 306, 307). The Greeks called the stuff out of which the universe was made *hylé* (wood); and the Egyptians called it *nu* (water). Possibly, Moses borrowed the word from the Egyptians. At all events, the first day's work was the formation of these nebulous luminosities, which, as we go back in boundless time, may be scientifically presumed to have been less and less distinguishable, and more and more dispersed in space.

In his account of the work of the **Second Day** or **Age,** Mr. Gladstone seems to fall into a serious error. After speaking of the subject of light, he says, "The gradual severance or disengagement of the earth from its vesture, the atmosphere, and of the solid land from the ocean, is continuously handled in vers. 6–10." Now this can only mean that the firmament of heaven, whereby the waters above it were divided from the waters below it, was the atmosphere. If he does not mean this, his explanation of these verses is not intelligible. But if this is his meaning, it would follow that it was in the atmosphere that God set the sun and the moon and the stars (Gen. i. 17). Now Mr. Huxley would object to this, as scarcely a fit lesson even for grown children. But the Hebrew word *rakiya*, translated "firmament," is exactly equivalent to our *expanse* (given in the margin of the Revised Version), both meaning primarily something "beaten out," and then "space;" just as the word "space" originally meant something "drawn out." It might be asked how fowl were to fly in the open expanse of heaven if this expanse were the immense space in which the sun and moon are placed (Gen. i. 20); but here the Hebrew and the margin of the Revised Version again help us, for they tell us that the fowl were not to fly in the open firmament (a mistranslation), but *on the face of* the expanse—that is, in the atmosphere which was on the margin of the expanse. The second day's work was, therefore, the separation made between the fluid materials of which our earth was formed and the fluid materials of the other members of the solar system, by means of the expanse of space intervening between the heavenly bodies.

In the **Third Day** or **Age** of Creation, the dry land or earth and the seas became gradually separated; and "the earth vegetated vegetation, herb bearing seed, tree bearing fruit after his kind" (Gen. i. 12). Mr. Huxley objects that the description in our translation corresponds rather with later than with earlier forms of plant life, while the enormous vegetation of the coal formation is cryptogamic—that is, not flowering. Now, in the first place, the Hebrew word *dasha*, here translated *vegetate*, means to sprout, to be green, and the word *deshé* derived from it is more general than *grass*—it means any sprouts or vegetation (Sept. *botané*). Mr. Gladstone gets over Mr. Huxley's objection by supposing that the writer makes no distinction of

plants, but merely indicates the beginning of all plant life. But in the second place, some writers on geology have observed that though the plants of the coal formation are cryptogamic, or non-flowering plants, yet we have in them only the plants growing and deposited in the low grounds; that, in all probability, there were at the same time flowering plants growing on the higher grounds, of which all vestiges would have been washed away. Mr. Huxley makes another objection, namely, that the records of marine sea-life are vastly older than the traces left in the rocks of seed and fruit bearing plants; but, as we have said, the records of such plants may have perished; and, besides this, Genesis does not give us such details of early marine sea-life, but merely the barest, broadest characteristics of each age. There is nothing, as we shall see in the account of the fifth day's work, to indicate that "marine molluscs and crustacea, echinoderms, corals, foraminifera," and other animals of the palæozoic age, were not in existence in the third and fourth days. What *characterized* the third day of Moses was the separation of land and sea and an enormous vegetation, which we identify with that of the coal formation.

Fourth Day.—According to Professor Dana, the first triad of days sets forth the events connected with the inorganic history of our earth, beginning with the first detachment of light (or luminous bodies) and going on to the consummation of plant life. The second triad of days begins by exhibiting the same light power concentrated for our present purposes, when our earth ceased to be luminous, when its atmosphere got somewhat cleared, when the sun, once spread over a great part of the heaven, became consolidated, and when the luminaries thus became efficient for dividing day from day and year from year. When it is said that God made two great lights, the making may have extended from the beginning; but there must have been an age when the sun came to serve its present purposes: and this great stage of progress is the **Fourth Day** or **Age** of Genesis. We have only a very few verses to sum up the characteristics of the age, and cannot expect other details of the plant and animal life then going on.

In his account of the **Fifth Day** or **Age**, Moses gives us the broad outline or characteristic features of a well-marked age, which geologists have called *mezozoic*—that is, the age having animals intermediate between those of remote antiquity (*palæozoic*) and those similar to our present animals (*cainozoic*). Two or perhaps three mistranslations have here occasioned a hot contention between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Huxley. To begin with, Mr. Gladstone seems to contradict himself as to the sense to be attributed to "the waters" of the Mosaic Genesis. He has interpreted the word "waters" as meaning primordial matter in a welter-ing or fluid state; and then he gives us some Hebraist's assurance that in the Scriptures water never means anything else than water (*Good Words*, p. 306). We beg to refer him and his Hebraist authority to Isa. xlviii. 1, "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which . . . are come out of the waters of Judah;" or, as it is expressed in Ps. lxviii. 26, "Ye that are of the fountain of Israel." The word "waters" may thus express what Ovid calls "the seed of things." When, therefore, we read of "the waters" of the fifth day teeming with animal life, we may remember that land and water were still a good deal mingled; and the slimy mixture may have been the waters that teemed with an amphibian life. "And God said, Let the waters creep (or swarm) with swarms of animal life." The Hebrew word here is *sharats*, to "creep" or "swarm with" (Ger. *wimmeln;* Scotch, *wammel*); and its derivative *sherets*, here also used, is translated by Gesenius "reptiles," or "smaller aquatic animals." Mr. Gladstone should have observed how the Septuagint renders this expression: "Let the waters bring forth reptiles (ἑρπετά)." The Revised Version, like the Authorized Version, mistranslates the word "moving creature."

The account goes on: "And God created great *tanninim*." The Authorized Version renders this word by "whales;" and the Revised Version represents the *tanninim* as "sea-monsters." What are the animals really meant by *tanninim?* The word is doubtfully derived by Gesenius from a Semitic root, which he connects with the Greek τείνω, Latin *tendo*, to extend. It occurs again in Job vii. 12 ("Am I a sea or a *tannin*, that thou settest a watch over me," indicating an animal that could sally forth on land); and in Isa. xxvii. 1 ("In that day shall Jehovah with his hard and great and strong sword . . . slay the *tannin* in the sea"). Now, the sea of this passage in Isaiah may mean the river Euphrates, as "the sea" certainly does mean this river in Jer. li. 36. But it is more probable that Isaiah here means the Nile, as in Ezek. xxxii. 2. The *tannin* in the "sea" would thus be the crocodile. Again, the *tannin* was the animal into which the rod of Moses was turned, and this animal is also called a serpent (Heb. *nahash*, Exod. iv. 3, 7, 15). The serpent, however, is a reptile rather than a sea-monster. Compare Ps. xci. 13, where a poisonous reptile is meant. Finally, there are six passages (Jer. li. 34; Ezek. xxix. 3; Isa. li. 9; Isa. xxxii. 2; Ps. lxxiv. 3 and 4) where the word *tannin* undoubtedly means the crocodile of Egypt. Any one who takes the trouble to examine these passages will have no doubt that the great *tanninim*, of which Moses spoke, were great saurians, of which the crocodile was the type, and any one who has the least acquaintance with geology knows that the Triassic Rocks (that is, those of

the Upper New Red Sandstone, which come after the coal formation) are *characterized* by the footprints of great lizards (that is, saurians) and great winged creatures; and that the other secondary rocks above the Triassic, namely, the Lias and Oolite (the Jurassic), and the chalk, are characterized by remains of enormous saurians (that is, animals of the type of the crocodile) and winged creatures (the ichthyosaurus, plesiosaurus, deinosaurus, iguanodon, pterodactyl, and megalosaurus).

But the most extraordinary mistranslation is yet to come. The conclusion of the fifth day's work is, "And God created the great *tanninim* (which we might translate *saurians*) and every soul of life that creepeth (*haromeseth*), which the waters brought-forth-abundantly (*sharats*, the first verb) after their kinds, and every winged bird after its kind" (ver. 21). The word *haromeseth* here used is from *ramas*, and *ramas* means to creep or crawl and nothing else, while its derivative *remes* means only a reptile. Now, in describing the reptiles or creeping things of the sixth day (vers. 24, 25, 26), and the dominion given to man over creation, *ramas* and its derivations are the only words employed. Our translators, however, probably did not know or think of the early appearance of reptiles in the geological formations, and disregarding the Septuagint's consistent rendering (ἑρπετῶν), they have, from some fancy of their own, translated *ramas* by "move" in their account of the fifth day's work (ver. 21). So in ver. 20, they give us the wrong rendering "move" in the text, though the correct rendering "creep" in the margin. How then are we to explain this strange mistranslation and misrepresentation of the Mosaic account? We may imagine either that the translators, like Mr. Gladstone's Hebraist, fancied that "the waters" of the fifth day had ceased to be the sort of "waters" indicated in vers. 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, and thus thought, as Mr. Gladstone evidently thought, of "water population" or "fishes," and not of reptiles, which form the population of a slimy mixture of land and water, or water adjoining land. Or the translators perhaps imagined, as Mr. Huxley seems to think, that Moses proposed to give us a full account of the creation of all animals, and not the mere characteristics of every age. In the account of the sixth day's work, "in vers. 24, 25, 26," says Mr. Gladstone, "the creeping thing is distinguished from cattle, as if it (the reptile) were a formation wholly new." If the Mosaist really intended to convey that this was the first appearance of creeping things, there is, I suppose, no doubt that he is at war with the firmly established witness of science. If, however, the common rendering is to be maintained, it may be just worth while to suggest a possible explanation. His suggestion is that these reptiles are "a minor fact in creation" (*Good Words*, p. 311), that they were "skulkers fallen from greatness," and "introduced as a sort of appendage to mammals" on the sixth day (*Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1886, p. 14). Mr. Huxley "marvels at the exactness of Mr. Gladstone's information as to the considerations which affected the method of the Mosaic writer;" but however "contemptible and even reprehensible" reptiles may be, Mr. Huxley considers that an account, which, according to Mr. Gladstone's translation, would place their first appearance in the wrong age, is not scientific. It is noteworthy that in summing up man's dominion over creation, the Septuagint reads: "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven, *and over the beasts and all the earth*, and over all the creepers (reptiles) that creep on the earth." The "beasts and all the earth" are not mentioned in the Masoretic text.

The account of the **Sixth Day** or cainozoic age of mammals could not be more scientifically given than in Genesis, and needs no comment.

The statement that God rested on the **Seventh Day** from all His work seems to Mr. Gladstone an extraordinary use of language; and certainly it needs more explanation than a reference to "its bearing on the great institution of a day of rest" (*Good Words*, p. 303). God never ceased working, as our Lord told the Jews when they persecuted Him for healing on the Sabbath (John v. 7). Another justification of the language of Genesis will be found in its right interpretation or translation. The primary idea of *Shabath* is to "sit down," to "sit still." The Hebrew word translated "end" in the Authorized Version and "finish" in the Revised Version is *Killah* (the piel of *Kalah*). Now this word means to "complete" or "make perfect," as in Gen. ii. 1 (the verse preceding our text), and in Gen. vi. 16. Also the preposition *min*, properly "from," may be rendered "after." Thus on the seventh day God completed His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day after all His work which He had made" (Gen. ii. 2). But how did God "rest" or "sit down"? "It behoves us to be adorned with works of righteousness along with our calling, that the Holy Spirit may rest (*requiescat*) upon us," said Irenæus (iv. 36); "for this is the wedding garment." In reference to these white robes, John is told that those arrayed in them are they who have come victoriously through the great tribulation, and that He who sitteth on the throne shall "tabernacle upon them" (Rev. vii. 15). There remaineth, therefore, this rest or Sabbatism for the people of God (Heb. iv. 9): for after God had made man, He completes or makes perfect His work on this seventh age, by Himself descending (sitting down) or tabernacling or resting upon man; in other words, by communicating Himself or His own Nature to men.