

The Word of God

Some Reasons for
Believing the Bible
to be
"The Word of God"

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PREFACE

"OF making many books there is no end," said Solomon. What would he say if he were alive now? But among all, as Solomon said, one is indispensable if we would be saved—the Bible, of course, "the words of the wise," "given from ONE SHEPHERD" (Ecc. xii. 11). Have we read it? Or rather, the question should be, Do we read it? If not, why not?

When God condescends to write to men "the great things of His law," they ought to read. Of old, Israel did so. Moses read the words of the book of the covenant, which the people reverently accepted (Ex. xxiv. 7). The King was to read in the book of the law all the days of his life (Deut. xvii. 19). At the end of every seven years, in the year of release, the law was to be read solemnly in public (Deut. xxxi. 10-11). Joshua, at Shechem, read all the words of the law (Josh. viii. 34).

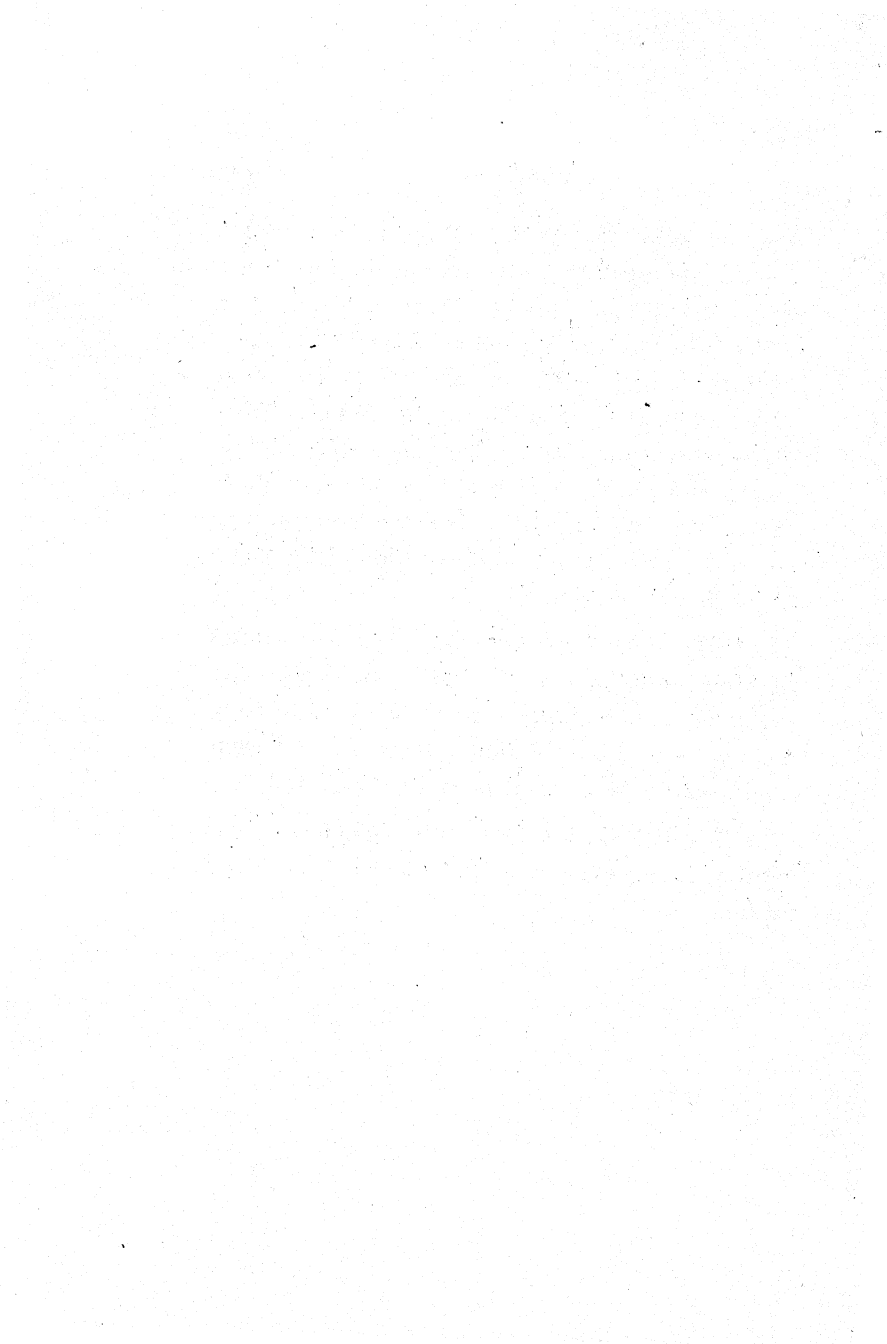
Individual illustrations of the results of heeding or defying the Word of God are frequent in the Scriptures. For example, JOSIAH, when the book of the law was found, trembled at the reading of God's word, and was divinely favoured in consequence (2 Kings xxii. 8). On the other hand, JEHOIAKIM rejected the word, and cut up and burned the scroll of Jeremiah, which was being read before him. His dishonoured dead body was the evidence of God's displeasure (Jer. xxxvi.).

When CHRIST came, his frequent rebuke of the ignorance and wickedness of the religious leaders of his day was in the form of the pointed question, "Have ye not read?" In the matter of their condemnation of his disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath—"Have ye not read what David did?" (Matt. xii. 3, 5). Rebuking the Pharisaical attack concerning divorce—"Have ye not read?" (see Gen. ii., with Matt. xix.). Justifying the acclamation of the children when they shouted Hosanna!—"Have ye not read?" (see Psa. viii., with Matt. xxi.). Clenching his parable of the vineyard—"Have ye not read" of the rejected Stone? (Ps. cxviii. 22, with Matt. xxi.). Silencing the Sadducean quibblers concerning the

resurrection of the dead—"Have ye not read" how God revealed it to Moses at the burning bush? (Ex. iii. 6, with Matt. xxii.). Warning his disciples to flee from the wrath to come upon Jerusalem—"When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the Holy Place (whoso readeth let him understand), then . . . flee" (Dan. viii. 9-14: ix. 27, with Matt. xxiv.). And when the time came, they were warned and fled—a very practical illustration of the value of reading the Scriptures.

When Christ is on earth again—in a world full of Bibles—similar questions will come home with great force. Now is the time to read and be wise, that we may know of things to come, and what God would have us do that we may be saved.

This little book is an attempt to indicate some reasons for believing the Bible to be "the Word of God."



The Word of God

I.

LETTER, WORD, AND SPIRIT.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES are made up of written words, and it is of these that Paul says they are all "given by inspiration of God." (He was speaking, of course, of the Old Testament.)

The *spirit* of a writing is the true meaning of its *words*. If the words be known, the spirit *can* be known; though the words *may be* misinterpreted. But if the words be not known, the spirit *cannot* be known.

LETTER.

It seems worth while to pursue this simple thought in some illustrations as to letters and words as affecting the spirit.

The difference between *pathos* and *bathos*, as concerns the mere writing, consists in the production of a part of a letter below or above the line

respectively; but how great is the difference between the ideas or "spirits" of the two words.

The difference between *shibboleth* and *sibboleth* is a single letter (in Hebrew "*schin*" and "*samech*" respectively—see Psalm cxix.). But it was death to the unhappy Ephraimite who "could not frame to pronounce it (*shibboleth*) right" (Jud. xii. 6).

Here are three instances of the value of an *iota* :—

1.—In 2 Sam. v. 22-25 we read that the Philistines invaded Israel, and God delivered them into the hands of David by directing him to ambush them. He was to "fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees" in the Valley of Rephaim. And God said: "When thou hearest the sound of a *going* in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines."

In the first edition of *The Visible Hand of God* (see page 245, third line from bottom) this episode is made the basis of some profitable reflections. But the printer dropped the *iota* out of "*going*" and turned it into "*gong*." The grammatical sense of the sentence remained excellent, but what had become of the idea? The

divine signal to David was a rustling of the leaves, or perhaps the sound of the "marching" of the angelic host of the Lord "going forth," or perhaps even the echo of the tramp of the Philistines (compare R.V.); unintelligible to the Philistines even if noticed by them, but the signal of attack and victory for David.

2.—In the last edition of Dr. Thomas' *Pictorial Illustration of Deity Manifested in the Flesh* there is an equally interesting and annoying combined illustration of the value of a "jot and tittle" (*iota* and *keraiā*, Matt. v. 18). In the upper left hand corner of the Chart, over the sun emblematic of the Father, is the text: "From Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God." But for "God" Dr. Thomas put *Ail*, to represent the Hebrew word for God, now generally transliterated *El* (Psa. xc. 2). The word was in capitals—"AIL," but the printer misread it and put "ALL," and thus the *iota* gave place to a letter differing from it only by a *tittle* or little horn (which is the meaning of *keraiā*). But how great is the change in the "spirit" of the text! It is nothing less than a change from truth to falsehood! It is perfectly true that the Almighty is God (*El*, Power) without beginning or end, but his being "All in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28) is a still future

consummation, as declared by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

3.—In the fourth century A.D. Christendom was convulsed over an *iota*, as the pagans derisively remarked, in the Trinitarian controversies that raged round the question of the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. There were *homoousians* and *homoiousians*, those who believed that the Son was “begotten, not made, being of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father,” as the Nicene Creed puts it; and those who believed that the Son was “of *like* essence (*homoiousios*) with the Father, and not of the *same* essence.” And much blood was spilt in the threshing out of the matter with carnal weapons. Dr. Thomas refers to it in *Eureka*, vol. ii., p. 324; vol. iii., pp. 122, 128. See also *Pearson on the Creed*. In this case both parties seem to have been sadly lacking in perception of the truth concerning “the mystery of Godliness,” of which Paul speaks to Timothy, his son in the Faith (1 Tim. iii. 16). But that is not here in question—only the importance of the *iota*.

Further, as to the importance of a letter, see the exposition of Paul concerning the divine promise to Abraham (Gal. iii. 16):—“To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith

not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of ONE, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Here in the English translation the difference is a single letter.

These illustrations, and many more that could be given, enable us rightly to appreciate Christ's words about the Law (Matt. v. 18), and to realise how implicitly he depended upon the scriptures, which he declared "could not be broken." It seems strange that there should be such an inveterate tendency to depart from Christ's view. If men are scrupulous concerning the letter of their writings—and they are—surely God, who taught men knowledge, is not less scrupulous. And surely "the word of God" is more important than that of men.

WORD.

It almost goes without saying that if the letter be so important in relation to the word, the word must be equally important in relation to the spirit. And in practice we find that it is so. Christ does not hesitate to hang an argument on a single word: Thus, "Is it not written in your law, I said Ye are *gods*? If He called them gods unto whom the word of God came, *and the scripture cannot be broken*; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou

blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God" (John x. 34-36). Here the whole argument hangs on "*gods*" (*Elohim*) (Psa. lxxxii. 6); and is buttressed with the inspired comment: "The scripture cannot be broken." Further, the Psalm is ranked with the Law—"your law"—and regarded as the voice of God and a portion of "the word of God." Is it "Bibliolatry" to follow this example of the Lord in our estimates of "the Word of God"?

Again, Jesus asked the Pharisees "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" They answered, "The son of David." He replied, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD (*Yahweh*) said unto *my Lord* (*Adoni*), Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him *Lord*, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matt. xxii. 41-46). Here again the whole argument hangs on a word, and that word is by Christ said to have been uttered by David, by the Spirit (compare Mar. xii. 36-37). Yet Dr. Driver does not scruple to say: "Psalm cx. can hardly have been composed by David!" He would scarcely have dared to say that to the Lord himself had he lived, say, in A.D. 29. Be that as it may, the word is

with us, and the fulfilment thereof has been history nearly nineteen hundred years. The coming fulfilment of the second verse of the Psalm will end all controversy concerning the oath of God concerning Christ, and the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah (ch. xxxvi.) saying : " Take thee a roll of a book and write therein *all the words that I have spoken* unto thee against Israel and against Judah . . . Then Jeremiah called Baruch, the son of Neriah ; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah *all the words of the Lord which he had spoken unto him.*" And Baruch read " the words of the Lord." The princes asked : " How didst thou write all these words at his mouth ? " To which Baruch simply answered : " He pronounced *all these words* unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book." When Jehoiakim burned the scroll, judgment was divinely pronounced upon him, and God commanded the prophet to take another scroll and write in it " *all the former words,*" and he did so. And there were added " many like words." Jehoiakim was taken captive, and the word of the Lord was fulfilled.

This was dictation by inspiration. It is not contended that the genealogical lists of Chronicles, or the copy of a blasphemer's letter, have been similarly produced ; but it is contended

that inspiration guided the writers in all things, and that it covers all the words of the original scriptures.

SPIRIT.

But, it is objected, that is a cold and mechanical "theory of inspiration," which can by no means be maintained in view of "the historical and scientific errors in the Bible"—in view of "the dark and cruel things attributed to God." Besides, is it not written, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life"?

One thing at a time. Let us leave over for the present the alleged "historical and scientific errors," and the alleged "dark and cruel things," and look at "the spirit." It is certainly written as alleged, that "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). But is that apostolic writing in conflict with our initial thesis that "the spirit of a writing is the true meaning of its words," and that the said words "may be misinterpreted; but if the words be not known the spirit cannot be known"? Very far from it; it is a striking corroboration of that thesis. For what is the apostle talking about in this allusion to "letter" and "spirit"? He is speaking of the old and new covenants, Moses and Christ, "the ministration of death written and engraven on stones" and "the ministration of the spirit";

or by another contrast, "the ministration of condemnation" and "the ministration of righteousness."

The letter "killed," inasmuch as a faithless and disobedient endeavour to observe the law whilst rejecting Christ, to whom the law bore testimony, only worked death. See his argument in Rom. ii. 12-29 and vii. 6. The spirit "gave life," inasmuch as a faithful and obedient acceptance of Christ as "the end of the law for righteousness" would at last result in the bestowal of eternal life by the Lord in "the day of Christ." "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10), and the spirit of the Law as well. The apostle did not and could not mean that the question of the literal text of the law was a matter of little or no concern! His words are rather to be read in the light of Christ's own rebuke of the punctilious scruples of his enemies, who made so much of the letter while so sadly missing "the testimony of Jesus." "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin," said he (Matt. xxiii. 23), "and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

The Pharisees were "blind guides." CHRIST is the "Leader." His view of letter, word and spirit is all that need concern us.

II.

"THE WORD OF GOD."

WHAT are your reasons, we are asked, for accepting the Bible as "the word of God"? Is it not more reasonable to say, not that it is the word of God, but that it *contains* the word of God? To the former question all of what follows may be considered an answer. To the latter we reply with another question: "How do you propose to discriminate the *contained* from the *container*?" Is every man to be judge for himself as to what in the Bible is "the word of God" and what is not?

"The word of God," "the word of the Lord," and kindred phrases are common in Bible usage and it seems to be only reasonable to ascertain that usage that our ideas may be conformed to God's ideas, as revealed to mankind in the Lord Jesus Christ and the prophets and apostles.

Paul was "a chosen vessel" unto Christ (Acts ix. 15), a man whose ministry God attested "with signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (Heb. ii. 4). "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" (Acts xix. 11). Here then is a man of inspiration and *divine authority*. How

does he speak of "the word of God," "the word of the Lord" ?

If we read carefully the opening chapters of the first epistle to the Thessalonians (i., ii.), we get an answer : "*Our gospel*," he says, "came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit. . . . And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the *word* in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit ; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out *the word of the Lord*" (i. 5-8). "We were bold in our God to speak unto you *the gospel of God* with much contention . . . As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with *the gospel*, even so we speak : not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts . . . Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not *the gospel of God* only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail . . . because we would not be chargeable unto any of you (when) we preached unto you *the gospel of God*. . . . We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received *the word of God* which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth *the word of God*, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (verses 2-13).

And he goes on to rank his own ministry with that of "the Lord Jesus and their own (the Jews' own) prophets" (verse 15).

These parallelisms are noteworthy: "Our gospel," "the word," "the word of the Lord," "the gospel of God," "the word of God"; and we might at once conclude from this example of apostolic usage that, so far as the Scriptures are concerned, "the word of God" is *the written record of the will and purpose ("gospel") of God upon earth*. Such a definition certainly applies to the whole Bible, and the words of the apostle concerning "the holy scriptures" of "their own prophets" (the Old Testament) apply not less powerfully to the New Testament. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

It will strike every reflective reader that the term "word" of the foregoing extracts from the apostolic writings has a broad and comprehensive usage, and is by no means to be confined to the actual utterances of the Almighty as upon Mount Sinai, or even to the direct messages given to the prophets. It will be advantageous to make sure that we have an adequate conception of the term, first of all in our own mother tongue. From the *Century Dictionary* we select the following:—

WORD. 1.—A sound or combination of sounds used in any language as the sign of a conception,

or of a conception with its grammatical relations ; the smallest bit of human language ; a vocable ; a term.

2.—The letter or letters, or other characters, written or printed, which represent such a vocable.

7.—An expression of will or decision.

10.—Affirmation, promise, obligation, good faith, etc.

These definitions, rightly combined and co-ordinated, will be seen to bear out the foregoing definition arrived at from apostolic usage.

In the OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES, the phrase "word of the Lord" occurs hundreds of times in the comprehensive sense above indicated. Thus we read in Genesis (xv. 1), "The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." In Exodus (ix. 20): "He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. And he that regarded not the word of the Lord, left his servants and his cattle in the field." In chapter xx. 1: "God spake all these words" (the Ten Commandments), which, in Deut. x. 4 (marg.) are called "the ten words." Balaam, though a wicked man, spoke the word that God put into his mouth (Num. xxii., xxiii.). The prophet like unto Moses was to speak God's

Thy
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words (Deut. xviii. 18, with John viii. 47). Joshua rehearsed "the words of the Lord" (iii. 9). In the days of Samuel's childhood, "the word of the Lord was precious. . . . there was no open vision" because of the iniquity of the house of Eli.

THE PSALMS are full of allusions to the word of the Lord and of the praise thereof, and David in particular spoke by the Spirit the word of the Lord concerning Messiah and his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension.

THE PROPHETS all claim to speak the word of the Lord. Thus *Isaiah* (i. 10): "Hear the word of the Lord." And in verse 2: "Hear O heavens and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken." And *Jeremiah*: "The words of Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of the Lord came" (i. 1, 2). *Ezekiel*: "The word of the Lord came expressly unto *Ezekiel*" (i. 3). *Daniel*: "The commandment (word) came forth" for Gabriel to enlighten him concerning the times of the manifestation of Messiah (ix. 23). *Hosea*: "The word of the Lord came to Hosea" (i. 1). *Joel*: "The word of the Lord came to Joel" (i. 1). *Amos*: "The words of Amos . . . which he saw . . . and he said The Lord will roar from Zion" (i. 1-2). *Obadiah*: "The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God" (verse 1). *Jonah*: "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah" (i. 1).

Micah : "The word of the Lord came to Micah" (i. 1). *Nahum* : "The vision of Nahum . . . God is jealous" . . . "The Lord hath given commandment" (i. 1, 14). *Habakkuk* : "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see" . . . "The Lord answered me" (i. 1 : ii. 2). *Zephaniah* : "The word of the Lord came unto Zephaniah" (i. 1). *Haggai* : At such a time "came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel" (i. 1). *Zechariah* : At such a time "came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah" (i. 1 ; and so throughout his book). *Malachi* : "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi" (i. 1).

No one can ponder all these allusions without feeling the force of Peter's allusion to "the sure word of prophecy"—"Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit" (2 Pet. i. 21).

This is not less the case in the NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Greatest of the Prophets, and his prophecy "came not by the will of man." He spoke "God's words," and the Father gave him not the Spirit by measure (John iii. 34). He prophesied concerning the "prophets and apostles" he would send forth : "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will

send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute ; that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation " (Luke xi. 49, 50). And so it came to pass.

In the New Testament the Greek word *logos*, word, translates *dahvahr* of the foregoing passages from the Old Testament, and carries forward the same ideas. Definitions are given by Liddell and Scott as follows :—

Logos. The word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed. Also the inward thought or reason itself.

I.—The word (in plural) words, *i.e.*, language, talk.

II.—The word in the fuller sense : the sentence.

III.—Dialogue, conversation, discussion.

X.—That which is laid down or stated. The principle, position, etc.

In the Septuagint, Greek translation of the Old Testament, the occurrences of *logos* for " word " throw light upon the New Testament, as when we read in Psalms xxxiii. 6 : " By the word (*logos*) of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (*pneuma*) of his mouth." This connects " word " with " spirit," as we read elsewhere (Job xxvi. 13) : " By his spirit he hath

garnished the heavens"; or (Gen. i. 2): "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This brings us back to Liddell and Scott's primary definition of *logos*: "The inward thought or reason itself." It has been well said that the Universe is but the manifested idea of the Almighty; and coming down to earth and contemplating God's purpose therewith, we are told (John i. 14) that "*The Word* was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Here are some New Testament usages of *logos*, word:—

In Matt. vii. 24, in the end of "The Sermon on the Mount," Jesus alludes to "these *sayings* of mine," which he exhorts men not only to hear, but to do. In Matt. xiii. 18, he alludes to his gospel as "*the word* of the Kingdom." In Mar. iv. 14 he explains that "The Sower soweth *the word*." The Jews by their doctrine concerning "Corban" made "*the word of God* of none effect" (Mar. vii. 13). A certain woman, carried away by her admiration of Jesus and his doctrine, called out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, Blessed are they that hear *the word of God* and keep it" (Lu. xi. 28). He declared "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but *my words* shall not pass away" (Lu. xxi. 33). In John

viii. there are some enlightening usages. Jesus said to those Jews who believed on him: "If ye continue in *my word* then are ye my disciples indeed" (verse 31). And to those who believed not, "Ye seek to kill me because *my word* hath no place in you" (verse 37). In verse 43, he asks, "Why do ye not understand my speech? (*lalia*), even because ye cannot receive *my word*" (doctrine, *logos*).

In the Revelation there are further striking testimonies. John "bare record of *the word of God* and of the testimony of Jesus Christ" (i. 2). He was an exile in Patmos "for *the word of God*, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 9). He kept the word and maintained the testimony though on pain of death. To the church in Philadelphia the Lord said: "Thou hast kept *my word*, and hast not denied my name . . . Because thou hast kept *the word* of my patience, I also **will** keep thee from the hour of temptation" (iii. 8, 10). In chapter vi. 9 there is a vision of the souls under the altar. They were "slain for *the word of God*, and for the testimony which they held." In the terrible course of the persecutions of the second and third centuries, they would not give up the scriptures, nor relinquish "the testimony of Jesus."

In chapter xii. 11 we have a glimpse of the

turn of the tide, when the name of Christ prevailed against Paganism in the days of Constantine : " They (the Christian community) overcame him (the Pagan " Dragon ") by the blood of the Lamb, and by *the word* of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death." In ch. xix. 9, the angel, heralding the marriage of the Lamb, says : " These are the true *sayings of God*," and in the next vision, the Lord is revealed in judgment, and it is said of him, " He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood ; and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD." Consequent upon his return to judgment, John sees the millennial thrones : " I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for *the word of God*, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

A careful consideration of all these examples of divine usage will convince us that the phrase *the word of God* is much more comprehensive than we might at first sight suppose, and will show how just is its application to the Bible as the written record of the will and purpose (" gospel ") of God upon earth.

Having reached the conclusion that the phrase "Word of God" as applied to the Bible means the written record of the will and purpose ("gospel") of God upon earth, it remains that the "spirit" of that record is the right interpretation of its words and letters.

As we have said before: "The *spirit* of a writing is the true meaning of its *words*. If the words be known the spirit *can* be known; though the words *may be* misinterpreted. But if the words be not known the spirit *cannot* be known."

What then are we to make of certain errors in the Bible as we now have it? For it is beyond dispute that there are interpolations, as in the notorious case of 1 Jno. v. 7-8; and arithmetical errors, as in the case of the sum of the Levites in Num. iii. ($7,500 + 8,600 + 6,200 = 22,300$, whereas the total is given in verse 39 as 22,000). The answer is, charge such errors to transcribers and translators, but not to the Spirit of God. A proved interpolation is, of course, to be rejected without cavil, and there are plausible suggestions for the explanation of arithmetical and other errors.

The example of Christ, who *knew*, is what we have to follow. He said the scripture could not be broken, and did not hesitate to base an argument upon a word. Doubts concerning letters and words would have interfered with the potency

of his appeal ; but, with all their sins, his enemies never questioned the inspiration and infallibility of the scriptures of Moses and the prophets. These were (as Paul afterwards said of his own ministry) " not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth " (1 Cor. ii. 13). Man's wisdom may err, but not the wisdom of God. Let us not attribute error to God, but accept the word of God as " perfect " as all His work. " He is the Rock, his work is perfect ; for all his ways are judgment : a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he " (Deut. xxxii. 4). " For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven " (Psa. cxix. 89).

III.

CREATION.

THE Word of God opens with a brief pronouncement on "creation." There is nothing like it elsewhere. It has become fashionable to regard it as a kind of distillate from the old Babylonian legends; but the true view would rather appear to be that these are a corruption of the original divine traditions.

The Bible is Monotheistic, and reveals God as the One Father and Source of all Creation. The Babylonian legends are polytheistic, and represent the present cosmos as the result of titanic warfare between the gods of good and evil. The Babylonian Creation and Deluge Tablets may be studied in the British Museum with the help of translations provided by the learned. They are really interesting only in so far as they testify to the existence of widespread traditions somewhat akin to the Bible in those early days. But so far from Babylon being the source of the writings of Moses, these condemn Babylon out of hand as the centre of confusion, from which the friend of God (Abraham) must be taken out, and to which he would on no account return. It was only when

Israel sinned against God that they were sent back to Babylon in punishment of their sins.

Very erroneous ideas have gathered round the term "create" in Gen. i. It has been supposed to mean the manufacture of all things out of nothing, and thus has encountered the contempt of those who were wise in their own conceit. But no such meaning attaches to the word, as a study of its divine usage will show. The radical meaning of the original word is said to be "to cut, to carve out, to form by cutting," certainly not to produce out of nothing.

The spirit of God is represented in the Bible as the Source of all creation. "By his spirit he garnished the heavens" (Job xxvi. 13). "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). "To us there is but ONE GOD, the Father, of whom are all things" (1 Cor. viii. 6). As to *how* "all things" are "in God the Father," we cannot understand it. It is sufficient to note that here we have an adequate source of all creation, and no contradiction of the maxim that "Out of nothing nothing comes." Nor is the view here expressed to be considered pantheism, or the doctrine that God and the universe are identical; a view that has led to such enormities as the statement that a corpse is but "a God-kissing carrion." God is distinct from His works, and

nothing is clearer than the Lord's recognition of this in the prayer he taught the disciples, beginning, "Our Father who art in heaven." The same doctrine of the Father's personality in heaven runs through the Old Testament Scriptures, as for instance in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple: "Hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place" (2 Chron. vi. 30). And there are many similar passages.

The "beginning" spoken of in the opening of Genesis is quite indefinite in relation to the present time. All we know is that it was some time in the immensely distant past, and that the characteristics of this world of ours then were chaos and darkness. "The earth was waste and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Babylonian legends reproduce in a crude and distorted form this vision of original elemental chaos. So also in a more reasonable way do the speculations of modern science.

Laplace's celebrated Nebular Hypothesis (1796), whatever may be its demerits, has at least this merit, that it agrees *to some extent* with the opening verses of Genesis.

"Laplace was struck with certain remarkable characteristics of the solar system. The seven planets known to him when he wrote, revolved round the sun in the same direction, and such

motions of rotation of suns, planets, and satellites about their axes as were known followed the same law. There were thus some 30 or 40 motions all in the same direction. If these motions of the several bodies were regarded as the result of chance, and were independent of one another, this uniformity would be a coincidence of a most extraordinary character, as unlikely as that a coin when tossed the like number of times should invariably come down with the same face uppermost."

"These motions of rotation and revolution were, moreover, all on planes but slightly inclined to one another; and the eccentricities of all the orbits were quite small, so that they were nearly circular."

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"From these remarkable coincidences Laplace inferred that the various bodies of the solar system must have had *some common origin*. The hypothesis which he suggested was that they had condensed out of a body that might be regarded either as the sun, with a vast atmosphere filling the space now occupied by the solar system, or as a fluid mass with a more or less condensed central part or nucleus; while at an earlier stage the central condensation might have been almost non-existent."

"Observations of Herschel's had recently revealed the existence of many hundreds of bodies known as nebulae, presenting very nearly such appearances as might have been expected from Laplace's primitive body. The difference in structure which they showed, some being apparently almost structureless masses of some extremely diffused substance, while others showed decided signs of central condensation, and others again looked like ordinary stars with a slight atmosphere round them, were also strongly suggestive of successive stages in some process of condensation."

"Laplace's suggestion, then, was that the solar system had been formed by condensation out of a nebula ; and a similar explanation would apply to the fixed stars, with the planets (if any) which surrounded them."

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"That Laplace himself, who has never been accused of underrating the importance of his own discoveries, did not take the details of his hypothesis nearly as seriously as many of its expounders, may be inferred from the fact that he only published it in a popular book, and from his remarkable description of it as 'these conjectures on the formation of the stars and of the solar

system, conjectures which I present with all the distrust (*defiance*) which everything which is not a result of observation or of calculation ought to inspire.'"—*Hist. Astron.*, ch. xi.

The speculation here referred to presents the idea of some common origin of earth, sun, moon and stars with a nebula as the suggested source and some undefined power behind it all. The Bible revelation is a common origin with the spirit of God as the source and "the power of the Highest" behind it all. The speculation is therefore rather in the direction of revelation than against it.

Laplace (like Newton), in his last words, was free to confess the paucity of human knowledge and the colossal ignorance with which it is accompanied, and this presents him in a more amiable light than that in which he is often placed by apologists for the Scriptures.

It has been well remarked as contrasting Babylonian legends with the Scriptures that whereas Babylon was the home of astrology and a pseudo-scientific stargazing, the Bible roundly condemns the whole system and practice and challenges comparison with the revelation of the Lord God of Israel. Thus the word of God by Isaiah against Babylon (ch. xlvii.): "Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast

laboured from thy youth ; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold they shall be as stubble ; the fire shall burn them ; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame " (verses 12-14). And so it came to pass. Babylon fell before Cyrus at the time and in the manner predetermined in the Word of God, and the astrologers *did not deliver themselves*. Yet astrology has survived from that day to this notwithstanding this striking combination of prophecy and history. It is a remarkable testimony at once to human ignorance and presumption on the one hand, and on the other to the unspeakable superiority of the Word of God.

The harmony between the Bible (rightly interpreted) and Nature is perfect. It is only where there is misinterpretation of either of these works of God that discord is introduced. Unhappily for the present the proximate interpreter of both is sin's flesh, so it is not to be wondered at that much discord prevails. To paraphrase the saying of the Samaritan woman : " We know that Messias cometh who is called Christ ; when he is come he will tell us all things " (John iv. 25).

She had the great honour of speaking to him face to face (at first *incognito*), and of receiving from him the first plain declaration of his office and mission : " I that speak unto thee am he." When he is upon earth again, no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit, and surrounded by the immortals, the interpretation of the Bible and Nature will be lifted on to a higher plane. " For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known " (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

It has often been remarked that THE ORDER OF CREATION in Genesis is in harmony with what is discoverable in nature by science. On the *first day* there is light, and the division of day and night. On the *second* the expanse, and the division of seas and clouds. On the *third* the division of sea and land, and the sprouting of herbage. On the *fourth* the revelation of " lights " in the expanse—sun, moon, and stars. On the *fifth* the waters bring forth fish, and the earth fowl. On the *sixth* the earth brings forth beasts, and, by a special creation, man in God's own image. On the *seventh* is the sabbath.

It seems to be fitting that light should come first. Although, as Dr. Thomas points out in *Elpis Israel*, " the Mosaic account is not a revelation to the inhabitants of other orbs remote from

the earth of the formation of the boundless universe, but to man as a constituent of the terrestrial system," there appears to be a majestic harmony between that revelation and the ascertainable facts relating to light and the sun and "the other orbs and their inhabitants." Thus "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 Jno. i. 5). And although the apostle's reference here is primarily to mental and moral "light," it does not exclude that other apostolic testimony that God "dwells in light that no man can approach" (1 Tim. vi. 16). "The Lord God is a Sun," and just as the Sun enlightens with his unspeakable brilliance all the orbs of the solar system and their inhabitants, so, in the higher physical and mental and moral sphere, the Lord God enlightens, governs, and sustains all creation. Attentive students of the Bible will know how its wonderful symbolism from Genesis to Revelation thus takes hold upon the literal and harmoniously carries out the figures into the Kingdom of God and the perfect state beyond. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. xxi. 23). Thus John by the Spirit describes the glory of the new Jerusalem; and Revelation is but the natural complement of Genesis.

“Day” is where the earth’s face is turned towards the sun; and “night” is where it is turned away from it. That is the natural. How apt is the harmony between that and the spiritual.

“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near.”

That is to say, it is not night if the disciple’s face is steadfastly turned to the Lord; but it is if his face be averted. And the condition of Christ’s “nearness” in light is the disciple’s obedience, as he said: “If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John xv. 10). The real “day of Christ” is when he returns to earth and turns mankind to God. Now it is “night.” But “the night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Rom. xiii. 12).

Another beautiful harmony is traced by Dr. Thomas when he refers to the creation of light on the first day, and adds: “So on the first day of the week ‘THE TRUE LIGHT’ came forth from the darkness of the tomb.” The resurrection of Christ is as it were the sunrise of a new day, and similarly the resurrection of his people as “the first fruits” will usher in “the day of Christ.”

"Let there be an *expansion*" (firmament) (Gen. i. 6). This is the mandate of the second day. And here the superiority of the word of God is manifest even in the comparison of the Hebrew original with the Greek and Latin and English translations. Mistaken ideas of nature introduced the idea of a crystal "firmament," but there was no mistake in the original. The revelation was far in advance of all scientific discovery and speculation. Expansion of water is dependent upon temperature; and the temperature of the earth is dependent upon its own internal heat and that of the sun. "As for the earth, out of it cometh bread; and *under it is turned up as it were fire*" (Job xxviii. 5). This fire it sometimes pours out in volcanic fury and destruction. Everywhere, as we descend into the bowels of the earth, there is a rise of temperature as we descend; and it is quite evident that the earth is losing heat.

It is quite natural therefore to look back to a time when the temperature of the earth would for the first time allow the condensation of seas and an expansion for the formation of clouds. Modern telescopic views of Mars with its polar snows, and clouds and markings are very suggestive of a similar "creation" to that of the earth. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. xix.).

Turning from the natural to the spiritual, we remember the striking citation of this psalm by Paul in Rom. x. 18: "Have they not heard? Yea, verily, 'Their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world'" (compare Psa. xix. 4). So here the voice of the heavens declaring the glory of God, and of the firmament showing His handiwork, is by Paul applied to "the word of God" (Rom. x. 17), to the perfect "law of the Lord converting the soul" (Psa. xix. 7) as ministered by God in Christ and his holy prophets and apostles.

"And God called the firmament heaven." Beyond earth's atmosphere is the illimitable expanse with the other worlds of light and beauty in the Father's House of Glory. Of these we earthborns can know but little in this mortal estate. But the promise of life in Christ Jesus opens up great potentialities, for as the angel told Daniel, a man "greatly beloved" of God, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3). Pre-eminent over all these is the Lord Jesus Christ himself: "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16). We wait the rising of that Star and the "creation" of the new heavens and new earth

wherein dwelleth righteousness (Isa. lxx. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 13).

The formation of sea and land, or rather the division between sea and land, is revealed as the work of the third day, together with the subsequent appearance of herbage on the land. Again the order is perfectly natural. Nothing is more familiar than the distortion with the contraction of cooling bodies. Islands and mountain ranges and at last whole continents would naturally be thrown up in the process, and the water would as naturally find its own level. Of course, the natural does not in the least degree obscure the spiritual in the case or imply that the whole process was any the less a creation of God. In passing it may be noticed that "natural" and "supernatural" does not indicate a Bible antithesis. There the contrast is "natural" and "spiritual," but the "natural" (in the physical sense) is always regarded as subordinately embraced by the spiritual. Thus there are natural bodies and spiritual bodies—men and angels—men of God in their mortal state are "a little lower than the angels," but shall at last be "equal unto the angels, and die no more."

The appearance of herbage naturally preceded that of the creatures which fed upon it. Some of their fossil remains have even contained herbal

remains within the wreckage of their gigantic ribs, strongly suggesting some primeval cataclysm in which the great beasts suddenly perished.

It will be perceived that this view regards the third day as ages before the creation of man, and the cataclysm in question as of incalculable antiquity. It is very evident from geology that such upheavals have been many in earth's remote past, but there does not appear to be any evidence at all that some six thousand years ago an existing cosmos was reduced to such a chaos as is described in Gen. i. 2. The "hints casually dropped in the scriptures," to which Dr. Thomas refers in *Elpis Israel* (that is Peter's and Jude's allusions to the angels that sinned—2 Pet. ii. 4 ; Jude 6), are susceptible of another interpretation than that which he put upon it, and one that is not open to the objection that it makes even the angelic state insecure from sin, and consequent "chains of darkness and reservation unto judgment," even "*the judgment of the great day*," as Jude expresses it, an expression that is strongly suggestive of the Judgment seat of Christ, and that the "angels" in question were men who were subject thereto—as much so as Noah's generation and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah. For, as Jesus reminded the Jews, "He called them *gods* (*elohim*—Psa. lxxxii.) to whom the word of God came" (John x.

35). And these human *elohim*, all of them "children of the Most High," were nevertheless to "die like men, and *fall like one of the princes.*" The "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown" (Num. xvi. 2), who were concerned in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, were cast down to *Tartaros* by a new and singular judgment of God (verse 30). Possibly, as has been suggested, this is the incident referred to by Peter and Jude. It was evidently something well known in Israel, which was certainly not the case with sinning angels of a Pre-Adamic era. But we cannot be sure over "hints casually dropped," and no moral damage results from a mistaken interpretation here. Let those who prefer Dr. Thomas's view stick to it; but let them not condemn others who can no longer do so.

As to the fourth day, it was a very remarkable revelation that there should be light before the sun, and one which implies the divine character of Moses' writings. But as to the "lights" of verse 14 in distinction from the "light" of verse 3, it would appear that the sun, moon, and stars themselves were for a long time *invisible* through the mists of the expanse. Still, there would be a division of light from darkness, as declared in verse 4; but not that more evident division that

obtained when the motions of sun, moon, and stars in the sky could be clearly seen.

We have already referred to the early view that the sun was, as it were, hung out in the sky by the Almighty "to give light upon the earth," in contrast with the later and true view that the sun is lord of the solar system. And as concerning the moon also, early ignorance was slow in giving way to later knowledge. In this connection it is a curious thought that professing Christian views have been wrong and contemporary or even earlier pagan views right. Thus Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in A.D. 177, "declared certain things to be beyond human understanding, including the phases of the moon and the source of the Nile" (Conder's *Rise of Man*, p. 6). Yet the phases of the moon were understood by Aristotle (B.C. 384-322), *Hist. Astron.*, p. 29. And the source of the Nile has been discovered in our own day. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in his *City of God*, ridicules the idea of the Antipodes, though the spherical figure of the earth had been known for centuries. Chrysostom also ridicules the idea of the earth turning on its axis. *No such scientific blunders are found in Genesis*. The language of appearance is indeed used, just as we use it now, but there is no clash with truth. It is to be presumed that the Roman Catholic Church is now ashamed of its persecution

of Galileo in the seventeenth century, but the historical fact remains. All the time the misinterpretation of scripture was with "the Church," while the word of God plainly declared that "he hangeth the earth upon nothing."

So also with other merely human views of Nature, as contrasted with those of the Word of God. The ancients supposed that earth, air, fire, and water were "elements," but the Bible makes no such mistake. There are miracles recorded with regard to earth, air, fire and water, but nothing in contradiction to true science. In fact the record has anticipated modern science in many ways. We hear of fire so intense that it consumes stones (1 Kings xviii. 38). And now such a phenomenon is a commonplace in the electric furnaces. We hear that the darkness and light are both alike to God, "whose eyes in darkness see" (Psa. cxxxix. 12); and now as a regular thing men photograph through opaque matter with invisible light. We hear that God spoke from Mount Sinai to all Israel "with a great voice" (Deut. v. 22). And now a woman sings a song to multitudes in a circle of a thousand miles radius. So in a hundred other things—the Word of God is the word of the Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth, and is free from the blemishes of ignorant human philosophy and speculation.

IV.

THE SABBATH.

“THUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it : because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made ” (Gen. ii. 1-3).

Thus *God's rest* is first introduced to us in the word of God. The literal day of rest appointed in Eden appears to be at once memorial and typical—memorial of “the works finished from the foundation of the world,” and of God’s “ceasing from” these ; and typical of the sabbath rest that “remaineth to the people of God ” (Heb. iv. 3, 4, 9.)

It has been well remarked that whereas the day, the month, and the year are well marked in nature, being written in the heavens in the motions of sun and moon respectively, the week is by no means an obvious division of time. Thus it has been said :—

“The origin of the week is quite different from that of the month or year, and rests on

certain astrological ideas about the planets. To each hour of the day one of the seven planets (sun and moon included) was assigned as a 'ruler,' and each day named after the planet which ruled its first hour. The planets being taken in the order already given, Saturn ruled the first hour of the first day, and therefore also the 8th, 15th, and 22nd hours of the first day, the 5th, 12th, 19th of the second day, and so on; Jupiter ruled the 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd hours of the first day, and subsequently the 1st hour of the 6th day. In this way the first hours and successive days fell respectively to Saturn, the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus. The first three are easily recognised in our Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; in the other days the names of the Roman gods have been replaced by their supposed Teutonic equivalents—Mercury by Wodan, Mars by Thues, Jupiter by Thor, Venus by Freia. (Compare the French: Mardi, Mercredi, Jeudi, Vendredi; or, better still, the Italian: Martedì, Mercoledì, Giovedì, Venerdì)."—*Hist. Astron.*, p. 18.

We quote this, though most readers will be quite familiar with the facts, for the sake of illustrating the natural tendency to go back to Babylon for everything, and to neglect the word of God which Babylon so sadly corrupted. The

true "origin of the week" rests not on these "astrological ideas," but upon the divine records of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2.

This has been very well illustrated and emphasised by the late Grattan Guinness in *The Approaching End of the Age* (1878), in which, in Part IV., Section II., he has three good chapters on "THE LAW OF COMPLETION IN WEEKS." Chapter I. is on "The Week in Relation to the Periodicity of Vital Phenomena." Chapter II., "The Week in Scripture." Chapter III., "The Week in History." The general conclusion is that "a septiform periodicity has been by God himself impressed upon nature." And that this is carried through the word of God in its ordinances. Thus there is "1, The Week of Days (Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx.). 2, The Week of Weeks, Pentecost (Lev. xxiii.). 3, The Week of Months, Jewish sacred year (Lev. xxiii.). 4, The Week of Years, Sabbatic year law (Lev. xxv.). 5, The Week of Weeks of Years, The Jubilee (Lev. xxv.)."

This is the more remarkable in view of the fact that the decimal notation is, as it were, imbedded in the very structure of man, for it is fairly obvious that the first counting was on the fingers of the hand—two fives making ten; though it was long ages afterwards that the Arabic notation, with its zero and place value of figures, enabled

children to handle arithmetic with a facility that would have astounded the mathematicians of old.

The week is manifestly divine ; but it does not therefore follow that the " six days " of Genesis chapter one, and the " seventh " of chapter two, are to be restricted to literal days, or that, as Dr. Thomas puts it, " the six days of Genesis were *unquestionably* six diurnal revolutions of the earth upon its axis." (Some say that there is no such thing as a " diurnal revolution of the earth upon its axis " !). Dr. Thomas says :—

" This is clear from the terms of the Sabbath law. ' Six days shalt thou labour (O Israel) and do all thy work : but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.' Would it be any fit reason that, because the Lord worked six periods of a thousand or more years each, and had ceased about two thousand until the giving of the law, therefore the Israelites were to work six periods of *twelve* hours, and do no work on a seventh period or day of *like duration* ? Would any Israelite or Gentile, unspoiled by vain philosophy, come to the conclusion of the geologists by reading the sabbath law ? We believe not.

Six days of ordinary length were ample time for Omnipotence with all the powers of the Universe at command to *re-form* the earth, and to place the *few animals* upon it necessary for the beginning of a *new order of things* upon the globe."—*Elpis Israel*, p. 10.

This view is associated in the context with that of "*the (previous) wreck of the globe* as the habitation of the rebel angels," a wreck which had apparently destroyed the "atmosphere" as well as the angels, and after which "our globe was *then* placed *in such astronomical relation to*" sun, moon, and stars as at present obtains.

Dr. Thomas' respect for the Word of God is altogether admirable, and his succeeding exposition concerning the Sabbath day thoroughly scriptural and beautiful, but the foregoing is by no means "unquestionable." It is, in fact, a mis-interpretation, going quite beyond the text of the word of God. The italics above indicate the ideas to which objection must be taken. "*Twelve* hours" is not the time of the "diurnal revolution." Moses by the spirit does not speak of the "*re-forming*" of the earth, or of placing upon it a "*few animals*" for the beginning of "*a new order of things*." The record of Genesis covers "the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and

the heavens " (Gen. ii. 4). Dr. Thomas has, in fact, been misled by those " hints casually dropped " (concerning Peter and Jude's allusions to the angels that sinned), to which he alludes in the context. In another place he speaks caustically of clerical speculations concerning " the time of the end," saying, " This is doing the work up in a flash, which none but the spiritual inebriates of the clerical kingdom could for a moment admit " (Preface, *Chronikon Hebraikon*). But his own speculations concerning the time of the beginning are by no means " unquestionable." A more chastened tone is better for all of us.

There does not appear to be anything incongruous in the idea of the literal Sabbath memorialising God's long rest from creation, especially in view of Peter's words: " Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day " (2 Pet. iii. 8). If the " one day " (the Sabbath) now foreshadows " a thousand years," which is " unquestionable " (the Millennial Rest), and even an eternity of rest beyond that, there does not appear to be any reason why it should not *memorialise* a divine rest or " ceasing from work " of a similar or longer duration. Dr. Thomas himself has a similar idea with reference to Jesus and his work. " When Jesus lay

entombed," he says, " he rested from his labours, abiding in his place all the seventh day. Having ended his work, he arose on the eighth day, ' and was refreshed.' The shadowy sabbath disappeared before the brightness of the SUN of righteousness." —*Elpis Israel*, p. 15. Here is a short typical "rest" after a working period many hundreds of times longer. And if it was so with Jesus and his comparatively short "work while it is day" (John ix. 4), why should it not be so with the Father in the original work of creation?

As a matter of fact, there is a certain amount of paradox attaching to the Sabbath. In a sense, God "rested" or "ceased from work," and in a sense he did not. Hence we have Paul affirming the "ceasing" and Jesus affirming the continuity of the work of God. Paul, quoting Genesis, says, "And God did rest the seventh day from all his works" (Heb. iv. 4); but he immediately goes on to emphasise the fact that the later scriptures speak of the true Sabbatic rest as still future, and to exhort men to labour "to enter into that rest." On the other hand, Jesus having healed an impotent man on the Sabbath, and being therefore accused by Sabbatarian zealots, answered them by saying, "My Father worketh hitherto (even until now) and I work" (John v. 17). Here again, however, is the implication that the true

Sabbatic rest "remaineth." Presently Jesus himself "finished the work," and "entered into rest," which he has enjoyed for nearly nineteen centuries, though it does not argue inactivity, as we may be sure from the book of Revelation.

So, looking back upon the record of Creation, we believe that the Sabbath was a "sign" from the beginning that God had finished the work of creation in the formation of man, and that there would be no further similar creation till the Sabbatic "manifestation of the Sons of God" in "the day of Christ."

As to Dr. Thomas' remark that "On the seventh day, which *was neither longer nor shorter than the days which preceded it*, God ended his work." Had these words been in the Bible, hypercriticism would have remarked that they were not strictly true to fact. But they are not in the Bible. Neither is that other formula found with reference to the seventh day. We do not read: "And the evening and the morning were the seventh day." Why is this? Is it because the true rest "remaineth"—because we are, as we often say, in "The World's Saturday Night"? We do not know. The "argument from silence" is dangerous; but the facts noted remain.

The "unquestionable" facts concerning the Sabbath are these. After the work of the six

"days" of creation (of whatever length) God "rested" the seventh day. The literal Sabbath memorialised this, and pointed forward to a rest of God that remaineth. Proximately other typical rests were included in this divine idea. There was the "rest" of Israel in the Land of Promise under Joshua, after the long servitude in Egypt. There was the personal "rest" of Jesus, the anti-typical Joshua, after his "walk (and work) to-day and to-morrow and the day following," as he told Herod (Lu. xiii. 33). There is his "glorious" millennial "Rest" (Isa. xi. 10), in which his redeemed "rest from their labours, and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). And finally there is the perfect Rest of the post-millennial age when there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying" (Rev. xxi. 4).

In all this we agree enthusiastically with Dr. Thomas in *Elpis Israel*, though we cannot agree to restrict the "days" of creation to literal days, and the original "rest" of God likewise to twenty-four hours. Critics will please be merciful to us, as they are to others who still more strenuously differ from Dr. Thomas. Paul said to the Corinthians: "Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise" (2 Cor. xi. 19). "I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me" (verse 16).

V.

HISTORY.

THE main object of these pages is to illustrate the Word of God—to produce and foster the impression that the Bible is “the Word of God,” wholly inspired and infallible. The Bible record of creation is unique, no matter what mistakes may be made in the reading and interpretation thereof. The Bible record of the Sabbath is likewise unique, and introduces the whole purpose of God in human history.

Anyone can see with a glance that human history must have a beginning and an end, but who is competent to define either the beginning or the end? Philosophers talk about teleology—the doctrine of final causes; the theory of tendency to an end. And they think they can trace this in various ways, as in the structure of animals and adaptability to their modes of existence. But who can apply the doctrine to humanity? Grotesque speculations there are in profusion: we came from tadpoles or monkeys, and are evolving into angels or Gods; but when and where is the “end”?

The Bible answer implied in the ordinance

of the Sabbath is : in *a rest of God* to be revealed hereafter upon earth, and all the *works of God* tend to that "end." The Bible speaks thus of an "end"—"the end." "Hitherto is the end of the matter." These are the concluding words of the angel who expounded to the prophet Daniel (vii. 28) his vision of the kingdoms of men in relation to the kingdom of God under the symbolism of "four great beasts," and their destruction by "the Ancient of Days." This is "the consummation" (ix. 27), in "the time of the end" (viii. 17). "The end shall be at the time appointed" (xi. 27). The tribulations of "those who understand among the people" are "to make them white even to the time of the end" (verse 35). And "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22). And the apostle, speaking of the post-millennial abolition of sin and death, says : "Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. xv. 24).

Where is there anything like this in any other so called sacred book ? In the Bible it is a matter of challenge by the Almighty : "I am God,—declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. xlvi. 10). The Sabbath, as we have said, is a general declaration "from ancient times" of this purpose or "counsel" of the Most

High. There shall be a rest of God in "the end"; "labour to enter into that rest." Even before sin had entered the world, and death by sin, there was this divine declaration of the end from the beginning, and still, after six thousand years, we labour and wait for the rest that remaineth.

The appointment of the Sabbath in fact involves the divine control of human history with this end in view. History in the light of the Bible is a revelation. Apart from that light it is a chaotic welter of despair. And contemporary history so most of all. In the Bible we begin with "the first man Adam" and genealogies as detailed as any that are traced in modern times. Even in the antediluvian age there is a typical work of God upon earth that strikingly illustrates the larger matter. This is the end of that age in Noah's flood and the salvation of a remnant by water. "The end of all flesh is come before me," said God to Noah (Gen. vi. 13). But "thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (vii. 1). We do not now consider the reasons for the flood but the fact; *the end of that age in a judgment of God*, and the solemn assurance of Christ that it is a typical matter referring to "the end" of "this present evil world." *The earth remained* after its terrible baptism, but only the line of Noah's descendants survived the flood.

With the new start of human society, in the saved remnant after Noah's flood there is a tripartite division of mankind which is visible and traceable to this day. "The sons of Noah that went forth out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah, and of them was the whole earth overspread" (Gen. ix. 18-19). We can scarcely fail to catch an echo of this in the modern "Anti-Semitic movement." Here is a certain stock jealousy in the human family that has its roots in ancient history—Bible history. If we trace this matter back through the ages and generations we shall infallibly be led to connect the present history of Mesopotamia with that of old time, and if we are content to be guided by the Bible, shall come to understand, and have hope in the prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem" (Gen. ix. 26); and to understand how the *Name* (*Shem*) of the Lord is manifested in that line.

There is nothing like this in other sacred books. Even the Koran, though in a sense a Semitic book, does not trace the rise of Islam, far less promise its perpetuity. On the other hand it is a clumsy plagiarism from the Bible, a sort of compost of the Old Testament, the Apocryphal New Testament, and the inanities of the flesh

run wild. It is amazing that such a book should be sacred in the eyes of some two hundred millions of the race. In one sense, no doubt, Mahomet was a prophet of God, a destroying Unitarian avenger whose astonishing career was symbolically marked out beforehand by the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation (ch. ix. 1-12). And in some places the language of the Koran is strikingly in harmony with this in the denunciation of the Trinitarian strifes and Mariolatry that provoked these judgments of God. But there is in that book no divine grasp of human history from the beginning to the end such as is visible in the Bible.

Ham was in the main an African family. The name means "black," "hot." Egypt was "the land of Ham." "The Egyptian word *Kem*, Egypt=Ham, as an adjective means "black" and "warm." His sons were Cush and Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. "Ham was the only son of Noah after whom a country was named" (Young). Not, however, that Shem has not a country—a "Holy Land." "The Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the Holy Land: and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. ii. 12). But we are thinking now of history rather than prophecy.

This remark must also apply to Japheth and the prophecy that God would enlarge him and that he should dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan

should be his servant (Gen. ix. 27). To a large extent this has been fulfilled, but this for the present must be passed by. But the tripartite division remains. Study the origins of the ancient nations and you are inevitably led into the tenth chapter of Genesis, into *Toldoth Beni-Noah*,—the generations of the sons of Noah—as Rawlinson well expresses it. A stronger guarantee of actuality and divinity could not be desired. A genealogy may be dry to most people, but it certainly is not so to those who are interested in an inheritance depending thereupon. And this is in fact the position of those who are really related to the promised SEED—"seed of the woman," "seed of Abraham."

Japheth and his sons spread mostly to the North and West. As Rawlinson says (*The Origin of Nations*), there is a proved "identity of the Mosaic names with the chief divisions of the Indo-European race." It is noted that in the genealogies of Japheth and Ham, after the first two or three personal links the genealogical sketch branches off into a more general description of *races*, as for instance in verses 15-18:—"And Canaan begat Sidon his first born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite :

and afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad." It is only in the line of Shem that the personal element comes in strongly (verses 21-29), for in that line is the purpose of God in human history revealed for the salvation of the world.

Gomer has been identified with a people the Assyrians called Gimiri or Kimiri, who dwelt originally in the Ukraine, South Russia. They migrated westward as far as Britain, where the Romans found them and called them Cambri and their country Cambria. Their descendants still call themselves Cymry, or, as we call them, Welsh. The name Cumberland is supposed to be derived from a settlement of Gomer's descendants, and the Gimiri were apparently the ancestors of "the great and powerful nation of the Celts."

Magog (closely connected with Gog) is identifiable with the Scythians, but it is a mistake on Rawlinson's part to suppose that Ezekiel xxxviii.-xxxix. is exhausted in past history. The invaders and spoilers of the prophet's day were but the prototypes of the "latter day" Gog and Magog.

Madai is unquestionably the Medes, and Javan is equally easily identifiable with Greece and the "Ionians." Tubal and Meshech represent ancient peoples with whose descendants in Asia Minor on

the southern shores of the Black Sea the Assyrians warred in the days of the prophet Isaiah.

So, following down the line of Gomer, we have for instance Togarmah, or the people of Armenia ; and the Greek descendants of Javan divide " the isles of the Gentiles." Tarshish points originally to Tarsus in Cilicia, the land of the apostle Paul, Kittim is Cyprus, and Rodanim is the Rhodians of the island of Rhodes (the Rose island).

Among the descendants of Ham is Mizraim (Egypt). This name is a dual, and means " the two Egypts." And it is remarkable that one of the most striking facts, well attested on the monuments, is the division of the country into " upper " and " lower " Egypt, as symbolised in the double crown worn by the Kings.

But it is in the history of ISRAEL, in the line of Shem, that our interest centres. A full end of all nations but Israel is the divine purpose. " Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee : but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished " (Jer. xxx. 11). " Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord, and my Servant whom I have chosen : that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he : before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me " (Isa. xliii. 10).

This is the golden thread in human history. The glad tidings of the Kingdom of God are centred in the covenants of promise that God made with the fathers of Israel—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What if Babylonia became the centre of a post-diluvian apostasy? God called Abraham out of it all, and thenceforward the history of his posterity was the channel of hope and blessing for all mankind. Apart from this, human history is meaningless. How could you take CHRIST out of human history at this time of day? And who is CHRIST but the "Seed" who should come? Follow down the ages and generations of Israel and "the Word of God" is illustrated and attested in a thousand ways.

The four centuries' sojourn of the seed of Abraham in the enemies' land (Gen. xv.) is followed by the uprising of a Deliverer (MOSES) at the time appointed. The conquest and settlement of the Land under JOSHUA, after the trying time of the Exodus, is but the type and shadow of "the rest that remaineth." The chaotic times of the Judges give place to the more stable and still typical times of the Kingdom under DAVID and SOLOMON. The division of the Kingdom because of iniquity, and the overthrow of the Kingdom of Israel and the subsequent overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, are "not a full end." It is only "until HE shall

come whose right it is " (Ezek. xxi. 27). And, saith God, " I will give it him."

And at last HE comes, but, as foretold, Israel rejects him and kills him. Still there is no failure. He rises from the dead and ascends to the right-hand of the Father in heaven, and all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. Henceforth Israel's history is one terrific " correction in measure," and " the times of the Gentiles " have their dreary course. But are these unregulated by the word of God? By no means. Read the prophet Daniel as Christ advised. Through all the times of the rise and fall of the kingdoms of the " four great beasts " (Dan. vii.) the hand of God in human history is visible, until now " the time of the restitution of all things " draws on. And the word of God is more than ever illustrated in the contemporary history of Jew and Gentile.

VI.

GEOGRAPHY.

"ISRAEL shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. FOR thus saith the Lord that created the heavens ; God himself that formed the earth and made it ; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited : I am the LORD, and there is none else " (Isa. xlv. 17, 18). Obviously we are here introduced to geography, and that the geography of the immortals—" everlasting salvation "—and this is made more sure by the apostolic exposition of the context (verse 23) to " the kingdom of God," and " the judgment seat of Christ," in Rom. xiv. 10-17.

Something must be somewhere, and the Bible naturally has to do with time and space. We never find in its pages any such extraordinary allusion as that of the hymn which says :

" Beyond the bounds of time and space
The Saints' secure abode."

The inheritance of the saints is the earth. " The meek shall inherit the earth." " The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein

for ever " (Psa. xxxvii. 29). " The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth " (Prov. xi. 31). " Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession " (Psa. ii. 8). " The Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again " (Zech. ii. 12). " All the land which thou seest (Abraham) to thee will I give it and to thy Seed *for ever* " (Gen. xiii. 15). " No man hath ascended up to heaven " (Jno. iii. 13). " David is not ascended into the heavens " (Acts ii. 34). " The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men " (Psa. cxv. 16).

Thus, as with reference to CREATION and to HISTORY, the Bible is unique as to GEOGRAPHY. It propounds a perfectly definite scheme of time and *place* with reference to the divine purpose in human salvation. Other so-called religious books and pseudo-revelations do nothing of the kind ; and a study of Bible geography will do much towards making manifest the difference between divine truth and the " cunningly devised fables " which masquerade in its garb. We cannot understand and believe the gospel of the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached apart from geography, although popular religion can get along very well without it, and is quite content to translate

"land" into "sky" or "beyond the sky" in its interpretations.

Bible geography has a natural order and development. It begins naturally in Genesis and widens out in an ever-expanding circle until all the earth is embraced in the finished purpose of God in Revelation. This purpose is to fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. "As truly as I live," said God to Moses (Num. xiv. 21), "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." This was when the spies (with the exceptions of Caleb and Joshua) disbelieved God's promises concerning the land of Canaan.

This purpose of God must have a starting point upon earth. The Bible reveals this. The place of the Creation of Man was what we now call "the near East" (that is from the standpoint of Great Britain, "the meridian of Greenwich"). "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in EDEN, and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen. ii. 8). Moses wrote Genesis some 2,500 years after the event, and the standpoint of his writing was like ours westward of Eden, or of the garden of Eden, though not so far westward as ours.

This brings before us the question of orientation, by which term we generally mean the fixing of the points of the compass, and now particularly

the north point, giving the true meridian. But in those far-off days no such idea had been developed, and the mariner's compass was as yet undiscovered. The eye naturally turned to the sun, and the primitive idea of orientation, in harmony with the literal meaning of the word, took the EAST or the place of the sun-rising as the point of reference. When this is rightly considered, it is a mark of the antiquity and authenticity of the Bible. For instance, in Joshua xii. we read of "the kings on the other side of Jordan towards the rising of the sun," and in chapter i. 4 of "the great sea toward the going down of the sun."

In this connection it is interesting to note that the word EuRoPe memorialises this ancient idea. In Hebrew EReB means EVENING, and to the ancient Hebrews Europe and the West, then but little known, was the land of the evening "towards the going down of the sun." Thus the East was called the Front, and so the West was Behind (compare "the hinder sea," Zech. xiv. 8). The North and South were thus the left and right hand respectively. Thus in Ezek. xvi. 46, God, addressing Jerusalem by the Prophet, says: "Thy elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand, and thy younger sister that dwelleth at thy right hand is Sodom and her daughters." Afterwards the North

began to be called *Tzaphon*, the hidden, the dark, because it was regarded as the seat of cold and gloom and darkness, while the South was called *Darom*, the bright and shining, "the sunny south," as we say in these cloudy islands of the Gentiles.

Long afterwards, when men had multiplied and subdued the earth, the North, approximately fixed by the Pole Star, and under the necessities of navigation, became the natural point of reference; but the beginnings of orientation in Bible geography were with reference to the sun as here indicated.

EDEN and the "Garden eastward in Eden" are two different though related ideas. Eden is an extensive district; the Garden eastward in Eden was the original Paradise or "Garden of the Lord." These things are obvious from the writings of Moses and the Prophets. Moses, who was born in Egypt, and died on Mount Nebo, naturally spoke of Eden as in the East. The word Eden itself means "delight," "pleasure," and in Psalm xxxvi. 8, the plural of the Hebrew word is translated "pleasures," where it is said of the righteous: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy *pleasures*."

Dr. Thomas, in *Elpis Israel*, has the following remarks on Eden and the Garden :—

While Eden was the East, “eastward of the wilderness, the Garden of Eden was eastward in Eden.” “Eden the garden of the Lord,” and “the Garden of Eden,” are quite different ideas—the former designates the whole of Eden as the Lord’s garden ; the latter, as merely a plantation in some part of it. To plant a garden is to fence in a certain piece of land, and to adorn it with fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs. If unenclosed, and consequently unguarded, it is not a garden ; the name of the plantation implies that its surface was protected from the invasion of the animals, whose habits made them unfit tenants of a garden. The place, then, was an enclosure planted with “every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food.” Its situation Moses says was “eastward,” having a river flowing through it to water it.

I suspect from this that it lay somewhere between the Gulf of Persia and the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The text reads : “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden ; and *from thence* it was parted, and became into four heads,” which I should interpret thus : “A river flowing out of Eden was caused to water the garden on its way to the sea ; and

from the garden northward the river diverged into its tributaries, which terminated at four several heads." The heads were not in the garden, but at remote distances from it; the Garden of Eden was watered by one and not by four rivers, as it is written: "A river went out to water it," which certainly excludes the four from its enclosure.

Of Eden, the extensive district which apparently extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates Valley, we read in Ezek. xxviii. 13 that God said of the King of Tyre: "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God." He was an ally of David and Solomon, who reigned "by right divine" in the Holy Land. By a figure of speech the Kings of Israel were "trees of Eden" (Ezek. xxxi. 9), and the Land of Israel was part of Eden. When Assyria prevailed over Israel because of their unfaithfulness to God this is how Ezekiel the Prophet referred to it in symbolic language:—

"The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him (the Assyrian), the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches, nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches so that

all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God envied him " (Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9).

Here " Eden the Garden of God " represents Israel and the surrounding kingdoms over which Assyria prevailed. It is that great country between the Euphrates and the Nile where the hand of God has always been revealed in human history, which is now the centre of world interest in this time of trouble, and where hereafter the " Paradise of God " is to be established.

The rivers of Eden are Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, the reckoning apparently being from East to West. Much wild speculation has been indulged in as to the identification of Pison and Gihon, but as to Hiddekel and Euphrates there has never been the least doubt. The modern Tigris and Euphrates are unquestionably identical with the two rivers of Genesis ii.

Now if the Bible be true, the earliest traces of civilisation should be found in the Euphrates Valley, and that is where they are found. Rawlinson, in *The Origin of Nations*, traces human civilisation back to this well recognised " cradle of the race " in a very interesting manner.

One sometimes hears an immensely superior antiquity attributed to the Chinese, but in the

article, CHINA, *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th edition, under "*Chinese Origins*," we read of "the earliest hieroglyphics of the Chinese ascribed by them to the Shang Dynasty (2nd millennium B.C.) betraying the Mongol character of the nation that invented them by the decided obliquity of the human eye wherever it appears in an ideograph." An illustrative diagram is given of the Egyptian and Chinese representation, but the point here is "the second millennium B.C.," in opposition to wild speculations of seven and even ten thousand years before Christ. According to the Bible the civilisation of Babylonia is the parent of all others, and so far as the Chinese are concerned their "earliest hieroglyphs" do not contradict the Bible.

There is in fact no geography earlier than that in the book of Genesis, which gives the date of the division of the earth among the nations and tongues of the Babylonian dispersal as somewhere in the third millennium B.C. (about B.C. 2300). "Unto Eber were born two sons; the name of one was Peleg for in his days was the earth divided" (Gen. x. 25). "By these (the families of the sons of Noah) were the nations of the earth divided in the earth after the flood" (verse 32). This "division" was consequent on the "scattering abroad" of the Babel builders, as explained in Gen. xi. 9. And philological and archaeological

research agree in tracing everything back to that Edenic centre.

Noah's flood was universal with reference to the then existing "world of the ungodly," but not with reference to "all the earth" in the literal physical sense. And in this connection it is useful to recognise that this expression "all the earth" is in the Bible used with a limited signification, meaning all the earth settled by the peoples under discussion in the context. Dr. Thomas, expounding Rev. vi. 4, in *Eureka*, vol ii., p. 155, says:—

“‘It was given to him (the rider of the symbolic “horse” in the version) to take the peace from *the earth*.’ ‘The earth’ in this place cannot be the earth wherever men dwell, comprehending what we term Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australasia. These last two were unknown to the ancients, and may, therefore, certainly be excluded from ‘the earth’ having relation to events being transacted in their time.” And Dr. Thomas goes on to limit ‘the earth’ of this text to the Roman Empire, which is the subject of the visions of Rev. vi.

And a similar limitation is visible in the prophecy of Daniel. Speaking of the kingdom of men, and of Nebuchadnezzar as the Babylonian head thereof, Dr. Thomas says (*Exposition of the Prophecy of Daniel*):

"Nebuchadnezzar had grown and become strong 'for his greatness had grown and reached unto heaven, and his dominion to *the end of the earth*' (Dan. iv. 22). In this testimony 'the end of the earth' is defined by the extent of the dominion of the kingdom of men. It does not extend to the entire globe, for an immense proportion of it has ever been beyond the limits of this kingdom. All Europe, America, and China were beyond 'the earth' when Nebuchadnezzar sat upon the throne of the kingdom of men. But when the brazen-coated Greeks, under Alexander the Macedonian, established themselves in Babylon, the limits of 'the earth' were enlarged; for in speaking of the 'third kingdom of brass,' Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that it should 'bear rule over all the earth.' When this was accomplished 'the end of the earth' advanced into Europe and was defined by the western limit of Alexander's Macedonian kingdom. But 'the end of the earth' was not fixed even then, for when the Iron kingdom annexed the brazen dominions to a considerable extent, it removed 'the end of the earth' to the Atlantic Ocean. The present constitution of the Iron Kingdom has enlarged 'the earth' far beyond the shadow of the Assyrian tree when it represented the greatness of the kingdom of men under the Chaldean dynasty" (pp. 5, 6.).

A circle with its centre at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates and of less than a thousand miles radius for a long time contained "all the earth" of scriptural discourse.

After Noah's flood there was soon another apostasy, of which Babel was the centre. Joshua reminded Israel of this in his parting exhortation: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (beyond the River—R.V.) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods" (Josh. xxiv. 2). Out of this idolatrous land God called ABRAM.

Even before the call of Abram there was a kind of prophetic forecast in the name EBER the Son of Shem, who is called the father of all the children of Eber. SHEM itself is a typical word meaning Name, because in his line "the Name of the Lord" was to be manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. So also Eber is not merely the name of the son of Shem, but is typical of the experiences of his descendants. It means almost the same as our word *over*, and indicates "the country on the other side." And the expression "Abram the Hebrew" (Gen. xiv. 13) means not only Abram, the son or descendant of Eber, which he was, but also "Abram the emigrant," the man who went over the river into the Land into which God called him.

Thus the very term *Hebrew* memorialised the hand of God in geography, for as Moses says, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). Palestine was known in Patriarchal times as "the Land of the Hebrews." When Joseph expounded the butler's dream in Egypt, and entreated him to remember him before Pharaoh when he should be restored to his place in fulfilment of the dream, he protested his innocence, saying, "Indeed, I was stolen away out of the Land of the Hebrews" (Gen. xl. 15).

A curious thought arises out of this term "Hebrew" and the migration of Abram westward "across the River." It is the question of the origin of the expression "beyond the River," to signify the realm beyond the grave. The soldier's expression "Gone West" contains the same idea. It comes over you impressively in upper Egypt as you wander through the ruins of Karnak, and then cross the river to Thebes and the tombs among the western hills. We are not dealing now with the oceans of superstition connected with these ideas; but our impression is that they all arise out of the original Bible references to "Abram the

Hebrew " and to the land of " the going down of the sun."

Conversely, the apocalyptic phrase, " kings of the East " (Rev. xvi. 12), connotes the idea of the resurrected " King of the Jews," and his " children of the resurrection," who shall come into the land from the East, or from the place of the Sun-rising like Joshua of old.

Again the idea of Abram being a foreigner is most important in relation to the history of Israel and current critical mishandlings thereof. This is well brought out by the late Emil Reich in his book, *The Bankruptcy of the Higher Criticism*. He points out that a nation would not invent a hero-ancestor of foreign extraction. And that as a matter of fact in actual history the foreigner has often played a most important part.

After Noah's flood, men wandering southward and eastward " found a plain in the land of SHINAR and dwelt there." The name is found only a few times in the Bible (Gen. x. 10 : xi. 2 : xiv. 9 ; Josh. vii. 21, " garment of Shinar " ; Isa. xi. 11 ; Dan. i. 2 ; Zech. v. 11). From these references, and especially from Dan. i. 2, it appears that the land of Shinar coincided more or less accurately with Babylonia. And the Greeks who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek some three hundred years before Christ called Shinar

Babylonia in one or two places at least. The name Shinar, which appears to be the earliest by which that country was known to the Hebrews, has been supposed to mean "the land of the two rivers" (the Euphrates and Tigris.)

There men built "a city and a tower"—Babel and the Tower of Babel—the site and ruins of which have become quite well known to western lands by reason of the happenings of the last few years. An engine-driver, who used to run up and down this countryside during the war of 1914-1918, sent us a number of rough coloured sketches illustrating the country and some of his adventures therein. He was quite familiar with Abraham's original country and with Hillah and Birs Nimroud, which mark the site of Babel and the Tower of Babel.

A century or so ago there were some who doubted the very existence of Babylon, and considered the records of her vanished glory almost mythical. There are none such left to-day. Modern exploration, particularly German, has done much to unearth the remains of the grandeur of the ancient city. The trouble now is that they want to make the Bible itself a sort of product of Babel—which is absurd.

They have traversed the comment of Gen. xi. 9: "Therefore is the name of it (the

city) called Babel ; because the Lord did there confound (*balal*) the language of all the earth." They have pointed out that to the Babylonians the name Bab-ili meant " Gate of the God." This may be freely admitted without invalidating the Hebrew definition, which is really a satirical play upon the name, and goes through the Babylonian boast to the divine root of the matter. The real " Gate of God " upon earth was westward in " the land of the Hebrews," though the original Paradise was in the Garden of Eden. See Bethel and Jerusalem. When Belshazzar, like Nebuchadnezzar, boasted of " the house of his god," God overthrew him ; and Babel has been proverbial for ages.

" Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in UR of the Chaldees " (Gen. xi. 28). And " Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife ; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran and dwelt there " (verse 31).

Over 100 miles down the Euphrates from Babylon, the ruins of which are now so well known, there are the ruins of an ancient city which was called by the Babylonians Uru, and is now called Makayyar. There is a great mound of ruins, which

shows it to have been an important place. The river would be a highway to the sea, and there was a route across the desert to Egypt. This was probably "Ur of the Chaldees." Some have thought that "*Ur Casdim*" (for that is what the place is called in the Hebrew) may have been Babylon itself. But the foregoing seems more likely. In any case, Abram was an idolator in Babylonia before God "called him alone."

HARAN was far up the river from Ur—some four or five hundred miles at least, and about as far from the land of Canaan. Many have made the great mistake of supposing that Abram struck out westward across the desert. And one critic got into sad disgrace by essaying to describe Nebuchadnezzar's "dash across the desert" against the land of Israel. Five or six hundred miles of desert make more of an obstacle than some arm-chair critics realise. Cattle droving is slow work, and it would no doubt take Abram months to work his way up from Ur to Haran with all his flocks and herds.

How long Abram sojourned in Haran we are not told. But in time God told him to depart out of Haran, just as he had told him to depart out of Ur of the Chaldees. This is evident from Gen. xii. 1-4, where (in verse 1) the difference between the A.V. and R.V. should be noticed. The R.V. is

true to the Hebrew. The A.V., "Now the Lord *had* said," etc., seems to refer this commandment to Ur, whereas the context shows it to refer to Haran. No doubt the A.V. is based upon Stephen's comment in Acts vii., where he refers to God calling Abram out of Ur. Abram was probably a comparatively young man when he departed out of Ur; for "Terah *took* Abram his son" (Gen. xi. 31); which seems to suggest Terah as the prime mover and Abram as the junior in the exodus from Ur. Whereas in the exodus from Haran, Abram "*went*" as the Lord had spoken unto him, being at that time "seventy-five years old." There are difficulties in the chronology here; but we are not dealing with them now.

From Haran the journey would be about as long as from Ur to Haran. They would cross the Euphrates, and work down past the site of "Tadmor in the wilderness," afterwards built by Solomon (1 Kings ix. 18), and so down to Damascus, where possibly he met that faithful "Eliezer of Damascus" (Gen. xv. 2), whom he made "steward of his house." Thence he would probably take the course followed by so many generations since (and years ago by the writer of these lines). Past the southern slopes of Mount Hermon, where afterwards the Lord Jesus was transfigured; down past the sources of the Jordan, and the country

afterwards occupied by Dan ; along the river to " the waters of Merom," on to the Sea of Galilee ; thence over the hills, perhaps to Nazareth ; across the great plain of Esdraelon (Armageddon) ; and so on through the hills again to Samaria and Shechem.

" Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem (R.V.—Shechem), unto the plain (R.V. oak) of Moreh " (Gen. xii. 6). This is the modern Nablous, lying between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. The vale of Shechem is a very beautiful place, and some have said that it is the natural site for the capital of Palestine. But as to that, we know that God has chosen Jerusalem.

Shechem has always been an important and well-known place ever since the days of Abram, some nineteen hundred years before Christ. It was one of the cities of Refuge, the symmetrical appointment of which on either side of Jordan, and their striking rules of " sanctuary," are so strong a mark of the divinity of the Bible. Here also Joshua addressed the tribes of Israel concerning the blessings and curses of the law (Josh. viii. 30-35) according to the prophetic directions of Moses (Deut. xi. 26-32 : xxvii. 1-26). The fore-ordained division of the tribes in this last scripture is very striking when the subsequent millenniums of the national history are remembered. Here

also, long after Joshua's day, the antitypical Joshua met the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, and revealed to her that he was the Messiah, the "Seed" of Abraham, and of the divine covenants of promise.

We do not know what kind of a settlement Abram had here, or how long he remained in the locality. It has been thought, from the allusions of Stephen in Acts vii., that he bought a piece of land here as Jacob afterwards did, and as Abram himself did later at Hebron. We do not know. If permitted to enter the kingdom of God, and to "see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," we shall learn many interesting things of the "sojourn" of those ancient days. But what we do know is that he "pitched his tent here," and that here the Lord God *promised him the land*. "Unto *thy seed* will I give *this land*; and there Abram builded an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him" (Gen. xii. 7). "And the Canaanite was then in the land." Where is he now? But where is Israel?

This is the "Holy Land," "Immanuel's Land," and "the Lord shall inherit Judah *his portion* in the Holy Land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. ii. 12). The whole divine purpose upon earth has this geographical basis, which was divinely settled and revealed ages before man, by exploration, knew anything in particular about

the extent and configuration of the earth. Now, when the time draws nigh for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, all human aims, ambitions and activities are infallibly attracted to this same geographic centre. That is why overburdened Britain is taxed with the costly Mesopotamian Question, and has the Mandate to administer the troubled affairs of "Immanuel's Land" amidst the unquenchable rivalries of Jew and Gentile, and a whole circle of national rivals with eyes upon "the inheritance."

Abraham dwelt at Shechem, where ages afterwards his "Seed," "which is Christ," like him sojourned as a stranger and pilgrim, and spoke to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well (John iv.) of the coming time of "desolation," and "great forsaking" of the land. Then, said he, neither on Mount Gerizim nor in Jerusalem should Jew or Samaritan worship the Father; but the worshippers "in spirit and in truth" should seek and be sought of the Father in all the lands of the Gentiles (Mal. i. 11), until the Kingdom of God should come.

From Shechem and the Plain of Moreh Abraham moved south to BETHEL, and pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai. It was here that God promised him all the land that he saw *for*

an everlasting possession (Gen. xiii. 14-15). The writer has been on the spot, and there is a magnificent and extensive prospect. Abraham was told to "arise and walk through the land"; so there is no possibility of mistake as to the geography of the everlasting inheritance. And the descriptions of the locality in the books of Genesis and Joshua have been abundantly confirmed by the latter-day surveys of the Palestine Exploration Fund, so that the late Col. Conder could say in his book, *Tent Work in Palestine*, that "of all the long catalogue in Joshua, there is scarce a village, however insignificant, which does not retain its desolate heap or modern hovels with the Arab equivalent to the old names." The justification of this most remarkable statement will be found in the excellent little volume issued by the Palestine Exploration Fund, entitled *Names and Places in the Old and New Testament and Apocrypha*.

By and bye, under the stress of famine, Abraham is obliged to go down into EGYPT and thenceforward the geography of Egypt with all its peculiarities is inextricably interwoven with the Scripture history. Here again exploration has shown the perfect harmony between the land and the book. The contrast between the famine stricken *negeb*, or southern desert, and the fertile "field of Zoan" in the well watered Delta, is as

visible to-day as it was in the days of Abraham ; and the latter part of the book of Genesis contains many Egyptian touches in connection with the history of Joseph, which are becoming more and more intelligible with the progress of Egyptian Exploration.

" The way of Shur," where the angel found Hagar when she fled from Sarah before the birth of Ishmael (Gen. xvi.), has become a very well-known " way " by reason of the recent Great War ; and Beersheba has similarly attained a newspaper notoriety.

The Desert of the Exodus has been thoroughly explored within the last century, and found to be in minute correspondence with the book of Exodus in all its allusions. And the route of the Exodus has been to a large extent identified. The traditional Mt. Sinai (Jebel Musa) is found to agree with the record completely, both as to the adjoining plain admitting of the gathering of a great concourse of people, and as to the well-defined boundary of the mountain which is a feature in the case.

After the time of Joshua, already briefly alluded to, and the chaotic times of the Judges, the records of the Kingdom bring us back to Babylon, with the sad story of the Captivity because of Israel's sins. In a sense the wheel has come full circle : Abraham " got out " thence by obedience,

and now his seed according to the flesh have got back thither because of their disobedience.

Henceforth for many centuries Bible geography is the delimitation of the Empires of the Gentiles during the prevalence of their "times." "Seven times"—"the times of the Gentiles"—were to pass over the kingdom of men before the Kingdom of God should come and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Then Paradise would be restored and "the land that was desolate" would become "like the garden of Eden" (Ezek. xxxvi. 35).

The four great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome—bore rule over all the earth, and the old tripartite division alluded to in the prophets (Isa. xix.), Assyria, Israel, and Egypt, vanished away. It is remarkable that as concerning the latter country, all four bore rule over it, fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel (xxix. 14-15) that it should be "a base kingdom" and should never more exalt itself above the nations.

When you wander among the tombs of Upper Egypt and see the evidences of the destruction by the Persian Cambyses; when you wander through the streets of Alexandria and remember the name of the Greek conqueror and founder; when you gaze upon the Roman portraits on some of the later mummy cases, and remember the sway

of the Caesars and the fate of Cleopatra, and compare all this with the continued "baseness," or low estate, of the country down to this day, you begin to realise that the hand of God is visible in the geography of the case as in everything else in human affairs.

Into his own land in due time came Christ, "the heir of all things." "Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. v. 2). "Where shall the Christ be born?" asked Herod of the chief priests and scribes. "In Bethlehem of Judea" said they, "for thus it is written by the prophet." And they quoted Micah's prophecy (Matt. ii. 5). And so it came to pass.

A small circle covered the geography of the earthly career of "the King of Glory" in the days of the flesh. In harmony with the typical origin and career of Israel, God's national "first born," the Lord Jesus, went down into Egypt because his life was threatened in the Land of Israel, and in returning came "out of Egypt" (Hos. xi. 1). But, apart from this Exodus, his short life in the flesh was spent in the Holy Land, where he died for the sins of the world, and from

whose mountains he ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High.

But how different thenceforward is his estate by comparison with that of the "stranger and pilgrim" looking forward to "a heavenly country." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," said he in parting commission to his disciples; "go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). And so the gospel passed westward and to "all nations." But the "heavenly country" was still the geographical basis of it all.

The Geography of the New Testament, after the gospels, is mainly concerned with the travels of Peter, Paul and John in the Holy Land, "Asia," "the isles of the Gentiles," Greece, and Italy, "and round about unto Illyricum" (Rom. xv. 19). So the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. i. 23).

But these "creatures" did no better with the gospel than did Israel of old, but, with the exception of a faithful remnant, always in the

insignificant minority, corrupted the way of God "as in the days of Noah." Hence upon Christendom as upon Israel of old have come and are coming the judgments of God. Of this, the Apocalypse, Christ's last message from heaven by the gift of God, is the final testimony, and the geography of the Apocalypse bears witness to the hand of God as much as does that of Genesis.

The "isle called Patmos," a secluded point in "the great sea," seems to be a fitting outlook for this last heavenly vision. The seven churches of "Asia" give us a typical view of the Lord's omniscient interest in all the "Churches" among "all nations." The objective of the divine purpose (chs. iv., v.) is still the establishment of the throne of God in heaven, that is of Messiah's throne in Jerusalem (Isa. lxxv. 17-19). The rival "heaven" of Rome, as concerning its Pagan imperial phase (vi. 14), "departs as a scroll" amidst "earthquake" and eclipse in the day of "the wrath of the Lamb."

The tripartite division of the Roman Empire is clearly foretold in the prophecies of the judgments of the "trumpets" (chs. viii., ix.). In the latter of these chapters the advent of the Saracenic locusts (Arabs) of the abyss, and of the destroying Turkish "angels" from beyond "the great river Euphrates," are symbolised; and all has come to

pass. More than a hundred years ago earnest students of the prophecy recognised France in the expression "the street (*plateia*, Broadway) of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." They rightly understood the sufferings and death of the Protestant "witnesses," and even anticipated the Great French Revolution and the rise of the people to power. And no one instructed in the Law and the Prophets could miss the import of the vision of the Lamb upon Mount Zion with the hundred and forty-four thousand with the Father's name written on their foreheads (ch. xiv.) ; and of the consequent proclamation from Mount Zion of the "everlasting gospel" and the judgments by Christ and the redeemed upon a guilty world.

And so with the symbolic "vials" of the seven last plagues of the wrath of God. Beginning in Europe (France), the geography of the case trends eastwards, till we are back again to "the great River Euphrates," and "Armageddon," and the Second Advent. "For behold the Lord *cometh out of his place* to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. xxvi. 21). But "In this mountain (Mt. Zion) shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the

lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all peoples, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it " (Isa. xxv. 6-8).

And so the last vision of the Apocalypse (chs. xxi., xxii.) shows us the NEW JERUSALEM, a new heaven and a new earth, " all things new," death abolished, and crying and sorrow, and " the tabernacle of God with men." This is the end of Bible geography :—" Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation ; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens ; God himself that formed the earth and made it ; he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret in a dark place of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me, in vain. I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right " (Isa. xlv. 17, 18).

VII.

CHRONOLOGY.

"TIME," "DAY," "HOUR."

Chronos, Time : Chronology, the science of Time.

In the abstract, nothing is more difficult to define than "time." In the concrete, nothing is simpler.

It is useful to look at the efforts of the learned as to the abstract, because it places some restraint upon our own notions, which are apt to persuade us that we know more of the fundamentals than we really do.

The *Century Dictionary* gives almost a score of definitions of "time," the following being the primary :—

1.—The system of those relations which any event has to any other as past, present, or future. This relationship is realistically conceived as a sort of self-existent entity, or object of contemplation. It may be conceived as a stream flowing through the field of the present, and is often so described : as the stream of *time* ; the course of *time*, etc. This notion, however, is a confused one. According to Leibnitz, time is the confused apprehension of a system of relations ; but looking at the

matter too much from the mathematical point of view, he failed to notice that time is not a general idea, but is contracted to the individual system of relations of the events that actually do happen. According to Kant, time (like space) is the form of an intuition ; this apprehension of it corrected Leibnitz's oversight, but at the same time lost the truth contained in Leibnitz's view.

Then follow more intelligible secondary definitions, as :—

2.—A part of time considered as distinct from other parts ; a period, etc.

3.—Age, epoch, as the *time* of the flood, of Abraham, or of Moses ; often in the plural, as, the *times* of the Pharaohs.

And so on to number 19 under the noun "time."

In the Bible we begin, not with bewildering Teutonic considerations of abstractions, but with concrete enumerations of phenomena ; and the simplest and most obvious unit of "*time*" is of course the "*day*."

"As the alternate appearance and disappearance of the sun, bringing with it light and heat, is the most obvious of astronomical facts, so the day is the simplest unit of time." But, as the Cambridge Manual, *History of Astronomy*, goes on to point out, in a footnote (p. 17) : "It may be

noted that our word 'day' (and the corresponding word in other languages) is commonly used in two senses, either for the time between sunrise and sunset (day as distinguished from night), or for the whole period of 24 hours, or day-and-night. The Greeks, however, used for the latter a special word, *nuktheameron*." [See 2 Cor. xi. 25: "A night and a day I have been in the deep."—C.C.W.]

"Some of the early civilised nations divided the time from sunrise to sunset, and also the night, each into 12 equal hours. According to this arrangement a day-hour was in summer longer than a night-hour, and in winter, shorter, and the length of an hour varied during the year. At Babylon, for example, where this arrangement existed,* the length of a day-hour was at midsummer about half as long again as in midwinter, and in London it would be about twice as long. It was, therefore, a great improvement when the Greeks, in comparatively late times, divided the whole day into 24 equal hours. Other early nations divided the same period into 12 double hours, and others again into 60 hours."

We have gone back to the Greeks in this particular, as *Whitaker* reminded us in 1921.

*He is speaking of the third millennium B.C. at the very earliest. No civilization can be traced back further than that.—C.C.W.

The following is a note in the first opening for January of that year.

"THE 24-HOUR CLOCK. In this issue of *Whitaker's Almanack*, the hours of the day are numbered from 0 to 23, the hour after midnight being 0, and the abbreviations A.M. and P.M. are not now used. This 'twenty-four hour' method has been in use in some other countries for some years, and was adopted by the British Services during the war. In 1919 the Home Secretary appointed a Committee to consider and report as to the advisability of adopting this method in the United Kingdom for official and other public purposes; and as the Committee decided to recommend the scheme, there appears to be sufficient reason for making this important change in this Almanack. The change from former practice is made by adding 12 to the number which indicated the hours from 1 to 12 in the afternoon and evening, the second hour after noon being now called 13, and that immediately before midnight 23."

"The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have already given instructions that the hours of the day shall be numbered in accordance with this in the *Nautical Almanac*, beginning with the issue for the year 1925."

In the Bible, or, rather, in the Old Testament Scriptures, "time" is often represented by the

word for "day." There are other words, the most common being *eth* in the sense of appropriate time, season, *etc.* *Yom* (day) stands for "time" in fifty or sixty places in the Old Testament, beginning with Gen. iv. 3. "In process of time . . . Cain brought an offering"; that is to say, "after certain days."

But "hours" are never mentioned in the Old Testament as fractions of the day, and when interpreters of Moses' writings emphatically affirm that God created the heavens and the earth in "six days of 24 hours" they are speaking without the Book, and without regard to the elementary facts indicated in the foregoing. As a matter of fact, "hours" are only mentioned about 5 times in the Old Testament, and then only in the book of Daniel, chapters iii., iv., v.; and even then not in the modern definite sense.

Moses wrote nothing about "hours," long or short, variable or invariable, but he did write about "days," long and short. Of the former we believe that Genesis, chapter i., furnishes the most remarkable and most controverted example. Of the latter there are multitudes of illustrations in the regulations of the Law.

On one occasion a speaker (the present writer) was endeavouring to show the superiority of the Genesis record of "creation" over the polytheistic

speculations of the heathen when he was roundly accused of "blasphemy" for stating his belief above indicated. He replied that he firmly believed that "*in six days* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is" (Ex. xx. 11 ; Gen. ii. 2), and that he as firmly believed that the Lord did it in *one day*, as it is written. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, *in the day* that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. ii. 4). It was merely a matter of interpretation to reconcile the two statements, and the true interpretation he believed was to be found in the elastic meaning of the term "day." In the last case it obviously covered the whole period of "creation," and could not possibly be restricted to "twenty-four hours." Why not, therefore, in the former cases, especially in view of Scripture usage ?

CHRONOLOGY.

The Bible is unique in its chronology, which is a strong testimony to the fact that it is "the Word of God." So far as we are aware, no other so-called "sacred book" has any chronology at all. That is to say, no such book propounds a world-purpose by its divinity, or divinities, and appoints a time-programme for its fulfilment or accomplishment.

We do not profess to be exhaustively read in such matters, but we have at least read through the Koran, the sacred book of more than two hundred millions of our fellow men, and know for certain that it does not propound any such chronology for Islam. It does not specify the times and seasons during which the sword of "the prophet" should rise and prevail; nor does it risk so rash a speculation as that Islam alone shall survive, and incorporate all mankind into its system.

But on the other hand, the Bible *has a chronology of Islam*. In the ninth chapter of Revelation, under the figures of the sounding of the trumpets of the fifth and sixth angels, the times and seasons of the Saracenic and Turkish plagues upon the Eastern Roman Empire are figuratively specified, and these have worked out truly in history. In fact, we have recently witnessed a crisis in this "time of the end," in the taking of Jerusalem by a Christian Power and the driving of the Turk out of the Land. And this took place *Anno Hegiræ* 1335, or A.D. 1917, a very striking testimony to Biblical chronology, though we cannot at present go into the details.

Again, going back from the Koran and Mahomet to the remotest dawn of civilisation, we have the scattered remains of the Babylonian

idolatry. But where is the least trace of any such chronology as you find in the Bible? But in the Bible, as with Islam so with Babel, its times and seasons are all delimited in detail, and have worked out, and are working out, true. In fact, it is one of the most striking things in the Bible that *it throws out a set and formal challenge to Babylon in this respect.*

"Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from these things that shall come unto thee. Behold they shall be as stubble: the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame" (Isa. xlvii. 12-14).

Babylon was the birthplace of astronomy and astrology, but her "monthly prognosticators" had not the remotest notion of prophetic chronology. Nebuchadnezzar wondered "what should come to pass hereafter," and was instructed by Daniel speaking "the Word of God." Belshazzar, still faithless of that "word," was almost frightened to death when the angelic hand wrote in four words upon the palace wall the speedy doom of his

kingdom. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (Dan. v. 30). And Isaiah's challenging prophecy was there and then fulfilled.

Leaving the vanities of false religions, and coming back to the Bible, we find the plainest possible enunciation of the fact that God has appointed "times" for the earth and mankind. Thus Paul spoke at Athens to the subtle and intellectual Greeks, when he was moved with their "devotions," and found an open door for the proclamation of the gospel in that strange inscription on the altar: "To the UNKNOWN GOD." He said:—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and *hath determined the times before appointed*, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from everyone of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 23, 29).

In this allusion to the divine *determination of times* and *bounds* Paul was only following Moses of old time. Indeed he declared before Agrippa and

Festus that this was his invariable practice : " I continue witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come " (Acts xxvi. 22). Moses had spoken the Word of God concerning the divine *determination of times and bounds*. And not only *spoken* but *written*. And that at the direct commandment of God. " The Lord said unto Moses . . . *Write this song* for you, and *teach* it the children of Israel : put it in their mouths, that this song may be A WITNESS FOR ME AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL " (Deut. xxxi. 16-19).

This was some three thousand five hundred years ago, and *litera scripta manet*, the written letter remains, both in Hebrew and in all the tongues of the Gentiles, *a witness for God against Israel*. " For," said the terrible word of God, " when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey ; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat ; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them and provoke Me, and break My covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness ; *for it shall not be forgotten* out of the mouths of their seed : for I know their

imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear " (Deut. xxxi. 20, 21). But what are the words of this unforgotten and unforgettable " witness " with reference to the divine *determination* of *times* and *bounds* for Israel and the world? Here are some of them :—

" Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations : ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people ; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance " (Deut. xxxii. 7-9).

Here then is the emphatic " witness " of the Most High to *the Israelitish basis of divine chronology and geography*. That is why in these " latter days " we see all the " separated sons of Adam " so mightily exercised over the Holy Land and the Jewish Question. But do these " sons of Adam " in general " remember the days of old and consider the years of many generations " to any better effect than did Israel of old? By no means ; the Word of God " witnesses " against them as effectively as against Israel. Babylon of old was no better than Israel in this respect and " Babylon

the Great " of our times is no better than Israel now. The expostulation of God against old Babylon is applicable to new " Babylon " : " Remember this, and show yourselves men ; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old : for I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is none like me, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done*, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure " (Isa. xlv. 10).

" Declaring the end from the beginning."
" In the beginning God created the heaven and the the earth " (Gen. i. 1). " In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it " (Ex. xx. 11). " This is the day (of Christ) which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord : O Lord I beseech thee send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord " (Psa. cxviii. 24-26). " We which have believed do enter into rest . . . There remaineth therefore a rest (a keeping of a sabbath) to the people of God " (Heb. iv. 3, 9).

These passages bring before the mind the great week of millenniums which God has *deter-*

mined with reference to the Aion of sin and death upon earth. It is revealed that the Sabbatic "Rest" of Christ is to endure a thousand years: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4). And mankind has now lived (in the lower mortal sense) and waited for Christ six thousand years. This is the week of God. "Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. xv. 24).

This is a sublime chronological conception, and seven thousand years, though nothing to God, is for mortal men a long stretch of time, in which they can exercise their senses in putting the Word of God to the test for their conviction and conversion.

It appears, as has already been pointed out in these pages, that although there is nothing in the mechanism of the heavens indicating the week in the same clear manner as the day, month, and year are marked off, yet we can hardly escape the conclusion, from a study of the Bible and nature, that "a septiform periodicity has been by God himself impressed upon nature." Thus the word of God specifies: "1, The Week of Days (Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx.). 2, The Week of Weeks, Pentecost (Lev. xxiii.). 3, The Week of Months, Jewish Sacred Year (Lev. xxiii.). 4, The Week of Years, Sabbatic Year law (Lev. xxv.). 5, The Week of Weeks of Years, The Jubilee (Lev. xxv.)."

And we may add to this enumeration by Grattan Guinness, 6, The Week of Millenniums of Years (Rev. xx. 4, compared with the scriptures above quoted, and other which speak of Christ's "glorious rest"—Isa. xi. 10—as a "Sabbath" following six millenniums of laborious preparatory work for the new creation). And 7, the endless Sabbatism, in which sin and death shall have been abolished from earth for ever, and "the tabernacle of God be with men."

Men sometimes adjust machines so that by suitable "*timing gear*" an electric spark is projected into an explosive mixture of gas and air in a confined chamber at a predetermined moment, and noise and power are at once manifested, and work designed is done. The work and the noise attest the proper adjustment of the timing gear.

God has adjusted human machinery upon earth something like that. A "day of the Lord" is specified, sometimes with and sometimes without arithmetical time measurement; but in either case when it comes the noise and power manifested, and work accomplished, attest the divinity of the purpose and of the specification.

There was in a sense "a day of the Lord" in Israel when the Lord Jesus was among the Jews in the flesh. When the Pharisees, failing to see in him the glory of the Lord (John i. 14),

asked him *when the kingdom of God should come* (Luke xvii. 20), he told them that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (*parateereesis*, any such critical and unfriendly *watching* as that in which they were indulging—Luke vi. 7: xiv. 1: xx. 20), "for behold (said he), the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (R.V., margin).

And then, turning to his disciples, he added: "The days will come when *ye* shall desire to see *one of the days of the Son of Man*, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you. See here, or, see there; go not after them nor follow them. For *as the lightning* that lighteneth out of one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be *in his day*. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

And he went on to compare the lightning-like revelation of the Son of Man in his day, to the coming of the Flood in the day of Noah, and the coming of the fire and brimstone out of heaven upon Sodom in the day of Lot, and to exhort his disciples to "Remember Lot's wife," who "looked back" in the day of judgment and deliverance, and "became a pillar of salt" for that disobedient "look" (Gen. xix. 17, 26); and thus the monument and memorial of all the "unfit" who, having put their hand to the gospel "plough" (Luke ix. 62;

1 Cor. ix. 10), "look back" and do not hold fast the "hope" to the end.

He stood before these Pharisees as a greater than Noah, and in a sense as the antitype of the ark (1 Pet. iii. 18-22); as a greater than Lot, when even Jerusalem had become a "Sodom" (Isa. i. 10); and his words to his disciples became more emphatic, if more enigmatical. He was about to be "rejected" and to lose his life at the hands of the Pharisees and Chief Priests and Scribes of Israel. And so he continued:—

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left."

"Where, Lord?" asked the puzzled disciples.

"And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body ('carcase'—Deut. xxviii. 26) is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke xvii. 33-37).

In all this there is chronology, a discourse concerning "his day," and the revelation of "the Kingdom of God"; but it is chronology without arithmetical specification of the timing gear, so to speak, the expiry of the time is to be known by

the thunder and lightning of the divine judgments that will characterise it.

With regard to that last saying about the "carcase" and the "eagles," there was a remarkable divine *double entente* that strikes our reverent admiration when we perceive it.

About forty years in the future when the Lord thus spoke there was the "day of the Lord" impending over Israel, when, as Moses had foretold ages before (Deut. xxviii. 26, 49), the Roman "eagles" (like the Babylonians before them) should devour the "carcase" of Israel in the day of the "siege" and "straitness."

And some nineteen hundred years in the future, when the Lord spoke, was "the day of the Lord" impending over the Gentiles at the end of their "times," when, as Ezekiel (who saw the depredations of the Babylonian "eagles") foretold, the Gentiles, enemies of the Lord and of Israel, should similarly become the "carcase" for the "eagles" (Ezek. xxxix. 17-20; Rev. xix. 17, 18).

Jesus, when "watched" and criticised by the Pharisees concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God and "his day," so spoke as to rebuke them, and instruct not only his contemporary disciples but those of all ages until that day should come. Surely this is "the word of God."

And the word of God had from the earliest

times pointed to the future work of God upon earth in a similar manner. There were many references to "the last days" and "the latter days," without numerical specification, but with indicated divine developments that would be a sufficient identification of the "days" when they came.

Thus in the Old Testament we read (Gen. xlix.) that Jacob, before he died, gathered his sons together that he might tell them what should befall them "in the last days." He foretold that the royalty should be in the tribe of Judah, and that the sceptre should not depart from him, because Shiloh should come, "and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

Long after Jacob's day, Saul the Benjamite, the first king of Israel, was put away, and David of Judah took the sceptre by the appointment of God. From him, however, the sceptre did "depart" by reason of death. But afterwards, in fulfilment of the covenant of God to David, "our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. vii. 14), his claims to the everlasting sceptre being divinely attested in many ways, chiefly and finally in his resurrection and ascension to heaven, with the departing assurance: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). These wonders were proof that "the last days" of Jacob's pro-

phesy concerning Israel were at hand. Not that the purpose of God was entirely fulfilled then, for there remained "the gathering of the peoples unto him." And this still remains to be accomplished.

But that the chosen witnesses of God recognised the time is evident from Heb. i. 2: "God hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by a Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things." And "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (verse 8).

Further prophetic allusions to "the last days" and "the latter days" always focalise in the revelation of that divine throne and righteous sceptre. ISAIAH (ii.) looked forward to this "in the last days" (verse 4). And MICAH (iv.) repeats the word, adding that "the Lord shall reign over them for ever" (verse 7). Even JOB looked forward to "the latter day" for the advent of the Redeemer and resurrection and deliverance (xix. 25). JEREMIAH declared that "in the latter days" men should "consider perfectly" the work and judgments of the Lord, which should be associated with the bringing again of the captivity of Jacob and "whirlwind" judgments upon the wicked (ch. xxiii. 20: xxx. 24). Both these features are before the world now, so we know we are "in the

latter days." EZEKIEL specifies the same "latter day" restoration of Israel, and gives many details of the "whirlwind" judgments more generally spoken of by Jeremiah. Thus in ch. xxxvii. is the vision of the resurrection of Israel, and then follows the proclamation against the northern spoilers, and that of the enmity of the southern forces of the friends of Israel against these same northern spoilers, who find "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all the young lions thereof" in actual occupation of the Land of Israel, saying, "Art thou come to take a spoil?" (xxxviii. 13). This is coming to pass in our days, so again we know we are "in the latter days."

The climax, however, remains. "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David (the Beloved Son of God and of David) their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. iii. 5). There will be no mistaking this. It will be as plain as thunder and lightning, as Jesus says. So also will be "the latter glory of the house" (or Temple of God) of which HAGGAI (ch. ii. 8—R.V.) speaks, and also Ezekiel in much greater detail (chs. xl.—xlviii.). The angel's revelation to DANIEL (x. 14) concerning "the latter days" and the revelation of "the MAN above the waters of the river" (xii. 6, 7) takes hold upon the same great

and unmistakable crisis, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judgment, and to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. It is in connection with the symbolic drying up of the Great River Euphrates, under the judgments of the sixth vial of the wrath of God (Rev. xvi. 15), that he says, "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." We "consider" the signs, we discern "the latter days." Are we "watching and keeping our garments"?

God has not only "determined the times before appointed" for all nations of men, as Paul told the Athenians, but he has also in many cases specified them numerically. And the historical working out of these appointed times has throughout the ages been a great testimony to the Bible as the Word of God.

In the Bible we have before us the Antediluvian Age, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, "the times of the Gentiles," "the Day of Christ," and "the End." All these are divinely "determined times," and the hand of God can be seen in their outworking.

From the genealogical tables of Gen. v.-vii. we learn that the duration of the Antediluvian Age was 1,656 years. And in connection with this we are told that God appointed a "*time of the*

end," so to speak, saying, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh : yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years " (Gen. vi. 3.—R.V.). These " hundred and twenty years " were " the time of the end " of the antediluvian age, and " world of the ungodly " (2 Pet. ii. 5). In them " the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing " (1 Pet. iii. 20). And for these many years did God bear with them and testify against them by his spirit in the prophet Noah. Compare Neh. ix. 30.

It is true that many have interpreted the passage in Gen. vi. as a divine promise that the average duration of human life from the time of God's speaking thus should be " an hundred and twenty years." But this, as many others truly declare, is a mistaken interpretation. " Man," with whom God strove by his spirit, *was mankind*, and the years delineated are the last measure of the antediluvian duration of the rebellious race, and not of the average life of the individual. The average life of the post-diluvian patriarchs (as many have pointed out) much exceeded " an hundred and twenty years," as witness the genealogy of Shem (Gen. xi.).

An hundred and twenty years are to sixteen hundred and fifty-six years as a " time of the end " is to the " time " of which it forms a part.

Is this a true statement of divine proportion and usage? If it be so, then such a "time of the end" is about one Fourteenth part of the whole ($14 \times 120 = 1680$). Within limits this seems to be reasonable, and to agree with later time measurements and allusions of the Bible. In a measure of length you would fairly say that the last inch of a foot rule was "the end" of the rule. You could not well say so of the last half.

But there are those who tell us that the whole scheme of antediluvian chronology is mythical, and they point to the variations between the records of the Hebrew, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint Version. The late Dr. Driver has the following table and destructive comment in the article BIBLE in the *Ency. Brit.*, 11th edition :

	Age of each at birth of next.		
	Heb.	Sam.	LXX.
Adam (930)	130	130	230
Seth (912)	105	105	205
Enoch (905)	90	90	190
Kenan (910)	70	70	170
Mahalalel (895)	65	65	165
Jared (962)	162	62	162
Enoch (365)	65	65	165
Methuselah (969)	187	67	187
Lamech (777)	182	53	188
Noah (950), age at Flood	600	600	600
Total from the Creation of Man to the Flood	1656	1307	2262

"The figures in parenthesis indicate the entire ages assigned to the several patriarchs; these are generally the same in the three texts. The Samaritan, however, it will be noticed, makes in three cases the father's age at the birth of his eldest son less than it is in the Heb. text, while the LXX. makes it in several cases as much as 100 years higher, the general result of these differences being that the total in the Samaritan is 349 years less than in the Heb., while in the LXX. it is 606 years more. The names, it need hardly be remarked, belong to the prehistoric period, and equally with the figures are destitute of historical value."

Then what becomes of the Word of God and of Christ? Because the Lord Jesus Christ was made "an offering for sin" and therefore "prolonged his days" (Isa. liii. 10), which Dr. Driver admitted, therefore "Sing, O barren (Jerusalem, Gal. iv. 26, 27), thou that did'st not bear! . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, SAITH THE LORD, THY REDEEMER. *For this is as the waters of Noah* UNTO ME: for as I have

sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Isa. liv. 1, 7-9).

The Lord's oath in the covenant with DAVID concerning CHRIST is therefore divinely comparable with his oath in the covenant with NOAH concerning CHRIST (Gen. ix. 8-17). For Christ is that DELIVERER who shall give mankind "Rest" ("This same shall comfort us"—Gen. v. 29), and of whom, and of whose salvation "by water," Noah and his ark were such striking types (1 Pet. iii. 18-22). "As the days of Noah were" (says Jesus, Matt. xxiv. 37), "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Thus the theses of hostile criticism directly contradict God and Christ.

But concerning the table and its variations. As regards the Samaritan Pentateuch the same article BIBLE in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (portion by another writer) tells us that "In point of age it furnishes *the earliest witness to the Hebrew text*. It is not a version, but merely that text of the Pentateuch which has been preserved by the Samaritan community since the time of Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 23-31), *i.e.*, about 432 B.C. It is written in the Samaritan script, which is closely allied to

the old Hebrew, as opposed to the late 'square' character."*

Now in any other literature surely no one would dream of attaching much value to the comparatively modern copy of a book made by a hostile school, when they had access to the approved copies of the ancient original. This is pretty much the case with the Samaritan Pentateuch by comparison with "Moses' writings" in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. God was then speaking to Israel by his spirit in the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra v. 1.). Joshua the High Priest was a man of sign representative of the Christ (Zech. iii.), and Ezra himself was "a ready scribe in the Law of Moses which the Lord God of Israel had given" (Ezra vii. 6). And this he read publicly "in the sight of all the people" (Neh. viii. 1-8: ix. 3). Under these circumstances, we cannot help preferring the Hebrew to the Samaritan, and accounting that the dropped hundreds, etc., in the latter are in error. It is known that the Samaritan Pentateuch contains *intentional* changes, as in the celebrated case of Deut. xxvii. 4, where "Gerizim" has been substituted for "Ebal," thus

*In *The Christadelphian* for September, 1914, pp. 399, 400, there are small illustrations of the Samaritan script in question; and of Jacob Shellaby, the high-priest, with a scroll of the law. These were secured on the occasion of a visit to Shechem (Nablous) in 1914.

virtually making the law a " blessing " instead of a " curse " * (Gal. iii. 10, 11), and this corruption was simply to satisfy a piece of tribal vanity ! But it is not here suggested that the three instances of variation in the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs are intentional ; for we know of no reason for such a suggestion.

As to the Septuagint version, and its half-dozen of added centuries, and simultaneous subtractions of centuries from the Hebrew numbers in Genesis representing the rest of the lives of the Patriarchs to make the whole-life periods of the LXX. agree with the Hebrew, the thing is so obviously intentional that it seems wonderful that the LXX. ever obtained any credence at all. No doubt it was because it was the recognised Bible of the times, and Greek was so much better known than Hebrew. There is a very plausible reason for these intentionally added centuries in the current boasts of Egyptian antiquity, and the natural desire of the Jews to be on a level with the Egyptians, if not superior to them ! But when it comes to a question of drawing the long bow in matters of chronology, no Hebrew, ancient or modern, could hope to compete with

*The stones were erected on Ebal, the mountain of the " curse."—See verses 12, 13.

any Egyptian, ancient or modern ! No one with any real respect for the Hebrew Scriptures would put this Greek translation of the third century before Christ on a par with them.

A similar list of century additions by the Septuagint attaches to the names of several of the patriarchs after the Flood. Thus the LXX. makes the time from the Flood to the birth of Abraham 1,272 years, introducing a link, Kainan, which is not found in the Hebrew. And there are also various readings of the numbers, which would make the time still greater. The Hebrew makes this interval 292 years ; so there is a discrepancy of no less than 980 years.

Admitting the difficulties of the earlier ages of Bible Chronology such as the times of Abraham, and of the Judges, and granting also that there does not appear to be sufficient data for the *precise* determination of the Annus Mundi, there are nevertheless time specifications from the days of Abraham downwards which prove the Bible to be the Word of God.

Thus in Gen. xv. God told Abraham that his descendants should be exiles in foreign lands for four centuries, after which they should return to the Land and expel the Amorites and other peoples who defiled it by their iniquities. The books of Genesis and Exodus contain in outline the divine

history of those four centuries, and in Ex. xii. 40 we read: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt." The date of the Exodus, as nearly as can be ascertained, appears to be B.C. 1626; but there are various other computations. These however are not now under discussion.

Then the forty years' wandering in the wilderness because of the unbelief of Israel is another chronological landmark in the Bible. And long afterwards the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, concerning which we are told that Daniel the prophet "understood by books" (Dan. ix. 2; Jer. xxv. 11, 12: xxvii. 6, 7; xxix. 10) God's purpose concerning the captivity and "the desolations of Jerusalem." Upon this "understanding" Daniel prayed to God for the return of His favour to Jerusalem, and was honoured by a visit from the angel Gabriel, and a revelation of the "Seventy Weeks" symbolic time to the manifestation of Messiah and his "cutting off" in sacrifice.

In the New Testament we read of that manifestation, and of the expectation that was current

in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke iii. 15). "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" said "the wise men of the east." "We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. ii. 2). "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17). The time of Messiah had come—not indeed the time of his kingdom (except in the incipient sense of the manifestation in the flesh of his "resurrection-and-life" power—"the finger of God," "the Spirit of God," "the Kingdom of God," as he told them. Luke xi. 20; Matt. xii. 28)—it was but the time of his "cutting off" in sacrifice—the time of the further "desolations of Jerusalem" "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). Then, said Jesus, that is, in the end of these "times of the Gentiles," there should be "upon earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (verses 25-27).

The greatest of these "times of the Gentiles"

was revealed to Daniel in Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv.).—the “seven times” of the Babylonian symbolic tree-stump (verse 14). Seven times are literally 2,520 years; and that number of years has just elapsed since the days of Nebuchadnezzar until now. And the characteristics of our “latter days” of “the times of the Gentiles” are the threatened ruination of the Gentile world, and the incipient “regeneration” of the Jewish world, of which we cannot now speak particularly.

The half of “seven times” is three and a half times, or “time, times and a half,” as it is expressed in the books of Daniel and Revelation (Dan. viii. 25: xii. 7; Rev. xi. 3: xii. 6). In the last two places the equivalent expression is “a thousand two hundred and threescore days,” though it is not the same period that is alluded to in both these places. The point here is that half-way through the greater “time of the Gentiles” there arise notable Gentile powers that fill the latter half of that period, and in their fall give place to the same “regenerated” Israel. These are the Papal and Moslem Powers, that arose in the seventh century of our era, and are now declining to their fall.

Protestant students of the Bible have for centuries rightly studied “the signs of the times.” Peter Jurieu, Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Whiston,

Bishop Newton and many others have anticipated the Great French Revolution of 1793, the Fall of the Papal Temporal Power (1870), the decline and fall of the Turkish Empire, the last phase of which in the deliverance of the Holy Land is so striking a sign of our times.

This is not the place for detailed demonstration. The effort now is only to give some strong reasons for belief in the Bible as "the Word of God," and we say without fear of effective contradiction that its chronology proves it. Some sixteen hundred years before Christ, Moses exhorted Israel on these lines, saying: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 7, 8). And according to the times "of the children of Israel" as well, as abundantly appears. And now we are in "the time of the end" when "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii. 19-21).

VIII.

ETHICS.

“WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO” (Acts x. 6).

ETHICS—the philosophy of manners and morals, conduct and character. What has the Bible to say on this subject? Are its utterances such as to convince us that it is indeed “the Word of God”? The answer is that the Bible claims the world of mankind as God’s property, and makes the ultimate life of man contingent upon faith in God’s promises and obedience to his commandments.

Thus the phrase quoted at the head of this chapter is a divine, and not a human utterance. It is from the directions of the angel to Cornelius the Roman centurion, when he told him to send from Cæsarea to Joppa for Simon Peter. The angel’s words were these:—“He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” There were Greek and Roman ethical philosophies current then, but they differed from Bible ethics and did not go to the root of the matter—which is GOD. They conceived man to be naturally immortal, whether he knew much or little about “the gods.” But all the time there was on record in the prophets of Israel the

divine conditions upon which "souls" should "live." "Incline your ear, and come unto me : *hear and your soul shall live* ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David " (Isa. lv. 3).

Here we are at once in touch with the realities we have been discussing :—CREATION, THE SABBATH, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, CHRONOLOGY. The very indifference and antagonism with which these things are regarded by the mass of mankind, is really a proof of their superiority to merely natural philosophy, as is indeed affirmed in the context of this prophecy. For it goes on to say : " My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts " (verses 8, 9).

In the thoughts and ways of God, Earth is destined to become a House of Glory for the Father in the hands of Jesus and his brethren, who are themselves " the house of God, the church of the living God " (1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Heb. iii. 1-6). To this Jesus alludes in promise in John xiv. : " In my Father's house are many abiding places : If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again* and receive you

unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." It is customary to apply this text to heaven, but it really applies to the kingdom of God upon earth, which is Christ's "inheritance" (Ps. ii. 8), to which he is about to return. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5) "for ever" (Psa. xxxvii. 29). Melchizedek spoke of God to Abram as "the Most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth" (Gen. xiv. 19); and the Most High God promised Abram "all the land . . . for ever" (Gen. xiii. 15); that is with Christ, who is "Abraham's seed" (Gal. iii. 16, 29).

In harmony with these things is the repeated declaration of God that it is His purpose to fill the earth with His glory. Thus, in the days of the Exodus, when the spies were for the most part faithless concerning this promise, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and all that generation, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua who did believe. At the intercession of Moses God pardoned the people as a whole, but declared, "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. xiv. 21). "Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9); that is, when the Lord Jesus Christ "the Root of Jesse" reigns in his "glorious rest." The very evils occurrent are but

the earnest of this. "Behold is it not of the Lord of Hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. ii. 13, 14). The "time of trouble such as never was" will give place to a time of righteousness and peace such as never was. Paradise lost will be followed by Paradise regained—here upon earth where it was lost.

This is "the Father's will" from the beginning, fore-ordained from the foundation of the world. The creation of man "in the image of God" is the first step in the divine work. The creation of woman "of the man" as an help-meet for him, differentiates mankind from the lower animal creation, and at the same time furnishes a divine allegory of the creation of "the Seed of the woman" and of "the bride" for Christ the heavenly "Bridegroom." If we destroy the beginning of Genesis we must also destroy the end of Revelation, for Christ's God-given prophecy is but the complement of the first book of Moses, also and equally God-given.

The ethics of merely natural thinkers ignore these divine ethics and rebel against the imposition of divine law, the breach of which means death. "Why," say the natural philosophers,

"could not the Most High have created a generation of immortals without all this cruelty and suffering, this

'Right for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne'?

Why this everlasting reign of sin and death?
Indeed, Is it Sin? Is it Death?"

They have not enough real "ethics" to perceive that the "clay" must not and cannot argue with the "Potter" (Rom. ix. 21); and that, though there be broken bottles in hell (Jer. xix.) the divine Potter will yet produce many immortal "vessels unto honour." On this matter the "ethics" of the prophet Isaiah are the true model: "Now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever" (Isa. lxiv. 9).

Ethos is character, and how can we have character without law, and the test of faith and obedience. Where is the ground of complaint against God? Do not men themselves among themselves impose law and tests of faith and obedience, and visit breaches of faith and obedience with severity even unto death? The wonder is, not that there is sin and death but that there

should ever be "everlasting righteousness" and "eternal life" accessible to sinners on any conditions. "All flesh is grass" (Isa. xl. 6). The "voice crying in the wilderness" taught in this "cry" a lesson hard for "all flesh" to learn; but it simultaneously proclaimed "the way of the Lord . . . a highway for our God"—that is CHRIST THE DELIVERER (Matt. iii. 1-3; Mar. i. 1-11; Lu. iii. 1-17; John i. 6-34). "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." So he spoke (John xiv. 6); but many find it hard to receive his words as the word of God. They say they can worship God "according to the dictates of their own conscience." They say,

"For forms and creeds let senseless bigots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

But what is "conscience"? Is there no such thing as "the form of sound words" which the apostle Paul delivered to Timothy his son in the faith, exhorting him to hold it fast "in faith and love in Christ Jesus?" (2 Tim. i. 13). What is "wrong"? What is "right"?

When we fairly face and answer these questions in the light of the Word of God, we discover that Conscience is no safe ethical guide. Conscience is simply the conviction that one's actions do or do

not conform to *one's ideal of right and wrong*. And since that ideal varies with the individual, the actions may be right "according to the dictates of one man's conscience" and wrong according to the dictates of another's. The Bible is full of illustrations of this. Cain worshipped God "according to the dictates of his own conscience," which ignored a first principle of God's religion (the shedding of blood in sacrifice). His offering was rejected by God. Abel "by faith" worshipped God "according to the dictates of his own conscience," which was enlightened by the word of God. He offered "of the firstlings of his flock" (Gen. iv. 4). "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" because "by faith" it was "a more excellent sacrifice" (Heb. xi. 4). Because of this he was slain by Cain his brother and fellow worshipper.

So also with Christ himself, who was slain by his religious brethren whom he denounced as "serpents" and "a generation of vipers," and upon whom he said should come "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zecharias the son of Barachias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. xxiii. 33-35). That is to say—from one end of the Hebrew scriptures to the other. And he warned his disciples that "the

time cometh that whosoever killeth you *will think that he doeth God service* " (John xvi. 2).

The outstanding illustration in the New Testament of the fulfilment of this prophecy is the case of Saul, afterwards called Paul. He quite "conscientiously" "persecuted" Christ (Acts vii. 58 : viii. 3 : ix. 4 : xxii. 19-20 : xxvi. 9 ; 1 Tim. i. 13). But, becoming enlightened by the direct revelation of Christ, he perceived that he was at that time only "a blasphemer"—"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious : but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." "Conscience" then is quite compatible with *blasphemy, ignorance and unbelief*, CHRIST and the apostle Paul being witnesses. And we can come down to modern times and find the same thing in the burning of heretics by the Inquisition. The *auto da fe*, Act of Faith, was justified as most conscientious, and the very burning, instead of beheading, was a scrupulous abstention from "shedding blood"! (Gen. ix. 5, 6).

So much for "conscience" as, of itself and apart from external enlightenment, an ethical guide. What is the alternative? The will and word of God. This is the only final and absolute standard of right and wrong for mankind. In the Old Testament it is revealed in laws and ordinances

from Eden downwards. "The way of God," the Sabbath, Sacrifice, Circumcision, the Passover, etc. : all these things were the divine tests of faith and obedience, and at the same time shadows of a divine substance that was to come—that is CHRIST.

This was the declaration of "the spirit of Christ" in David (Psa. xl. 6, 8) : "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire . . . Then said I, Lo I come . . . to do thy will, O my God" (Compare Heb. x. 5-10). Thus Christ's Ethics were *The doing of the will of God*, expressed in His "word," or "commandment." When questioned in a reverent spirit by one of the scribes, he told him that the first commandment was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" ; and that the second was like to it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And he added, "There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mar. xii. 30, 31). And when the man, "answering-discreetly," approved the divine word, Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God then is Christ's objective, and here are his ethics.

Identifying himself with the antitypical "Manna in the wilderness" (John vi.), he said, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of

all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." " The Father's will " required his laying down his life in sacrifice ; hence he went on to say (v. 51), " The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." At another time he said, " No man taketh (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power (*exousia*, authority, R.V. marg., right) to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father " (John x. 18).

Even in the days of the flesh he had the " power " (*exousia*, authority and right) of the Father to forgive sin and heal the consequent disease, and even raise the dead. He said so when he healed the paralytic (Matt. ix. 5, 6), and when he raised Lazarus (Jno. xi. 40, 41). Thus " grace and truth came by Jesus Christ " (Jno. i. 17), having been foreshadowed only by " the law given by Moses."

He preached " the gospel of the Kingdom of God," and, after his resurrection, "repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem " (Lu. xxiv. 47). His last

commission to his disciples when "all power" (*exousia*—all divine authority and right) had been given to him by the Father in heaven and in earth, was this:—"Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20).

His "chosen witnesses," the apostles, went forth and taught in obedience to this command. The record of their work is in the Acts of the Apostles and is further illustrated in the epistles of Peter and Paul and John. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" said the convicted hearers of Peter's "preaching" on the day of Pentecost. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," said Peter. And there were added to them that day "about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 37-42).

"What ought I to do?" mused Cornelius the centurion at Cæsarea. "Send for Peter," said the angel, "He shall tell thee" (Acts x. 6). Peter, whose Jewish scruples were overcome by a thrice-repeated vision, came from Joppa to the house of Cornelius, and forthwith drew attention to "THE

WORD OF GOD :—"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (he is Lord of all), that word ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached ; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him."

And Peter went on to assure Cornelius and his household that he and his companions were "witnesses" of this divine mission, and also of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, who had commanded them "to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" ; and that through his name, as the prophets testified, "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." At this stage of Peter's "preaching" the Holy Spirit "fell upon all them which heard the word" ("God also bearing them witness"—Heb. ii. 4). "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Thus "WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO" was indicated to and done by this Roman soldier and his believing household. There is no haze or ambiguity about Bible ethics. "The word of God" is clear and well attested. It went forth westward from Jerusalem into Greece and Europe generally: "Ye received *the word* in much affliction," said Paul to the Thessalonians, and "with joy in the Holy Spirit. So that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out *the word of the Lord* not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 6-10).

And wherever "the word" is truly preached and received to this day, similar results follow, and, in the transformation of Gentiles into "Jews inwardly," attest the ethics of the Word of God.



Postscript.

MAKE WAY FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

PERHAPS we are very busy, and feel we cannot spare much time. We all spare time for what we love. Suppose we squeeze half-an-hour a day, in the morning if possible, when the mind is fresh. Then the Word of God will give us ideas with which to get through the day. Let us have a plan.

We divide the Bible into three parts. The New Testament, one part, and the Old Testament we will divide into two—at the end of Job)—and from each of these three parts we will read a chapter or more daily, beginning with the first chapter of each part, next day taking the second, the next day the third, and so on. By this plan we shall get through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in the year, without missing any part. In following up this plan we will use printed tables, setting forth each day of the month, and the chapters that are to be read. These tables are known as “THE BIBLE COMPANION,” and may be obtained of almost any Christadelphian.

It is supposed by some that parts of the Bible are not what is called “devotional reading,” but

the Scriptures countenance no such distinction as the phrase assumes. Whatever God has caused to be written we should read. So Paul argues (Rom. xv. 4), and Jesus always makes the fact of anything being written a reason for its acceptance.

The Bible is the connected history of a divine development on earth. We cannot afford to leave parts out. Everything that is written in the Scriptures is contributive to that state of enlightenment that is acceptable to God. To be understood, the Scriptures must be known, and to be known, they must be read, and to be read to any purpose, they must be read systematically, daily, and perseveringly. By this, we shall come at last to know God and His glorious purpose and His beneficent will. By this, we shall be drawn to Him in friendship and prayer, and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16). By this, we shall have hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God that is coming.