

**The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Bible: What It Is!, by
Charles Bradlaugh**

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Bible: What It Is!

Author: Charles Bradlaugh

Release date: May 29, 2011 [EBook #36266]
Most recently updated: January 27, 2013

Language: English

Credits: Produced by David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS! ***

THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS!

BY 'ICONOCLAST'

By Charles Bradlaugh

Published By The Author

Sold By Holyoake And Co., 147, Fleet Street; Parker, Ridge Heath; Sharp, Tabernacle Walk, London; J. Bates, Champton; J. B. Cooper, Manchester; G. Miller, Glasgow; Watson, Newcastle-On-Tyne; And Robinson, Edinburgh.

BEING AN EXAMINATION THEREOF FROM GENESIS TO REVELATIONS

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

The author states the scope of his work as "BEING AN EXAMINATION THEREOF FROM GENESIS TO REVELATIONS". My copy of the first two pamphlets give only the first nine books of the 39 book St. James version--nor can I find in any old book stores or on internet search any print or electronic copy which goes beyond the first nine books of the Old Testament. Either my nine books are but a fragment of the whole of Bradlaugh's work, or he may not have completed it. Regardless, the detail of his work here, with Hebrew and Greek references, make this a valuable study. If any reader has access to the remainder of this work, whether whole or partial, kindly notify: DW.

Click on any page number to view an image of the printed page. These images display all the Hebrew and Greek passages marked in the digital page as [—].

Contents

BOOK I.	GENESIS
BOOK II.	EXODUS
BOOK III.	LEVITICUS
BOOK IV.	NUMBERS
BOOK V.	DEUTERONOMY
BOOK VI.	JOSHUA
BOOK VII.	JUDGES
BOOK VIII.	RUTH
BOOK IX.	SAMUEL

BOOK I. GENESIS

The Bible is the name by which the collection of Books beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelations [{pg1}](#) is commonly known. It is derived from the Greek word [—] (Books), and this name is supposed to have been first applied in the fifth century by Chrysostom, before which time those books were known as [—] holy writings, sacred writings, writings of God.

The Bible is divided into three parts: the Old Testament, containing thirty-nine books, the New Testament, containing twenty-seven books, and the Apocrypha, containing fourteen books; making in the whole eighty books. It is only the first portion, known as the Old Testament, upon which I intend to treat at present. It professes to be translated from the Hebrew, in which Language (according to the learned Parkhurst) God communicated with Adam; or, perhaps to quote the learned divine more correctly, I ought to say that 'Hebrew was the language in which God taught Adam to speak.' It has been suggested by other saintly writers that Hebrew will be the language spoken in Paradise by the Saints. It is perhaps to be regretted that God did not choose a language more copious, and less capable of being misconstrued; but I will not at present stop to question whether the fact be as above stated—it is sufficient for us to know that the original of the Old Testament is (with some slight exception) written in the Hebrew.

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

The earliest complete translation into English of the whole of the Bible was made in the fourteenth century by the famous John Wickliffe, who was born in 1324 and died in 1384. This translation was reprinted in 1731, and again in 1810. Wickliffe's version of the Old Testament, I believe, still remains in manuscript. Portions of [{pg2}](#) the Bible had been previously translated into Saxon, and it is alleged that one John de Trevisa had completed a translation prior to Wickliffe.

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

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

One would now be inclined to think that the priests well knew that to place the Bible in the hands of the people would be to tear down the veil from the temple, would expose their trickeries, and would place in the hands of the mass the means of detecting their false pretence. Under the guise of preachers of a revelation

from God, they had ruled the minds of the people; and they were fully aware or the danger which would accrue to themselves should the people ever examine too closely into the merits of that revelation. Sir Thomas More wrote against Tyndale in language which will startle the readers of the present day, especially when we remember that Tyndale's crime was the presenting us with a translation of the Bible admirable for its style and general accuracy. More says, 'Our Saviour will say to Tyndale, Thou art accursed, Tyndale, the son of the Devil, for neither flesh nor blood hath taught thee these heresies, but thine own Father, the devil, that is in Hell. Ah, blasphemous beast, to whose roaring and lowing no good Christian man can, without heaviness of heart, give ear.' The next published translation was by Miles Coverdale (born 1535), who partially used Tyndale's text. Coverdale appears only to have translated from the Dutch and Latin into English. It does not seem at all clear that Tyndale translated from the Greek and Hebrew direct. It is quite certain that prior to this time the monks placed great difficulties in the way of acquiring either of those languages, in fact, Erasmus tells us that to know Greek was to be suspected, and to know Hebrew would prove you heretic outright. [\(pg3\)](#)

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

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

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

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

In 1582, the Douay edition of the New Testament was issued; and, in 1609, the Old Testament also. The former was printed at Rheims, the latter at Douay; and both were issued under the superintendence of Cardinal Allen. This brings us to the period at which what is commonly known as the authorised version was issued. This being the version I have to examine, I shall quote the history of it as given in an able article which appeared in the *Penny Cyclopædia*:—'Early in the reign of King James I., there was a conference of divines of different opinions, at Hampton Court, for the settling of the peace of the Church. In this conference much was said concerning the imperfection of the existing translations of the Scriptures. The king himself, who was often present at these meetings, expressed a strong opinion on that point of the debate. "I wish," said he, "some special pains were taken for an uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned in both Universities, then reviewed by the bishops, presented to the Privy Council, and, lastly, ratified by royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and no other." Out of this speech of the king's arose the present English Bible; for the suggestion soon ripened into a resolution. As this is the Bible which has for more than two centuries been the only Bible allowed to be read in the English Church, and as it is also the Bible universally used in dissenting communities, we may be expected to give a more extended notice of it than of the former editions. Fifty-four of the persons in that age most distinguished for that particular species of learning which such a duty required, were selected for the work, according to the king's suggestion; finally, forty-seven of them undertook it. They divided themselves into six independent classes, to each of which a certain portion of the work was assigned. Each person in the class was to produce his own translation of the whole committed to them, and these several translations were to be revised at a general meeting of the class. When the class had agreed upon their version, it was to be transmitted to each of the other classes; so that no part was to come out without the sanction of the whole body. [\(pg4\)](#)

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

'They were employed upon the work for three years, namely from 1607 to 1610; proceeding with that deliberation and care which so weighty an undertaking required. The names of the divines engaged in it, and the portions known which were committed to each class, are reserved. If we say that there are few names among them which have acquired a lasting celebrity, we are only saying of them what is the usual fete of divines. The name of Bishop Andrews is first in place and the first in celebrity. It is believed that Bancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury, though not one of the professed translators, had much to do in the superintendence of the work. It came forth from the press of Robert Barker in 1611.'

I have a copy printed by Robert Barker before me which contains the whole eighty books. It begins with these words, 'The first book of Moses, called Genesis.' Not one word of this title is to be found in the Hebrew. The word Genesis is a Greek word, signifying production, generation, birth, origin, or formation. It seems curious that the translators should have given a Hebrew book a Greek title. In the Hebrew there is no title to the book; the first word [—] (in the beginning) is merely written in larger characters. The headings to each page and chapter are also additions made by the translators; and this is sometimes very important, as they are made to improperly govern the meaning of the text. As to Genesis being called 'the first book of Moses,' I think that grave censure should be cast on those who prefixed those words; they are entirely omitted in the Douay edition. Long since, our churchmen have been acquainted with the fact that these words, fixing the authorship on Moses, form no part of the original text, yet they allow edition after edition to be printed bearing the same title as that of 1611. Why is this? It is not that they are afraid of tampering with the authorised version, for they have actually, in the later editions, omitted the whole fourteen books of the Apocrypha, which were included in the original edition. In an edition of King James's authorised version, printed in 1630, the page containing Ezekiel, chapter 7, is headed by mistake with the word 'Apocrypha.' This mistake has been corrected in the later editions; why not also have corrected those five false statements which allege Moses as the author of the Pentateuch? There have been, also, several printers' errors corrected [\(pg5\)](#)

in the later editions, yet the words in question are allowed to stand; why is this? again I ask. The persistence in an error of so important a character would justify suspicion, and even the allegation of fraudulent intent on the part of those who issue the book. It is an attempt to give an anonymous work an undue claim on our attention. Moses himself, in no part of the five books, claims to be the author of them; and in no part of the Bible is he alleged to be the writer of the Pentateuch. It is certainly alleged that Moses wrote 'the law,' 'the book of the law,' but there is nothing whatever to show that that work outlived the destruction of Jerusalem, and there are several express declarations to the contrary (*vide* Letter on the Pentateuch by Thomas Cooper, M.D., and Esdras, chap, xiv., v. 21). I am aware of the texts quoted by those who allege that Moses was the author of the whole Pentateuch; viz., Exodus, chap, xvii., v. 14, chap, xxiv., v. 4 and 7, chap, xxxiv., v. 27, Numbers, chap, xxxiii., v. 1 and 2, Deuteronomy, chap, i., v. 5, chap, xxxi., v. 9, 13, 22, 24, 26; but do not think that they will, even in the hands of the most partial supporter of the Mosaic hypothesis, bear on the question sufficiently to decide it in the affirmative, or even to create a presumption in its favour. That Moses was the author of the Pentateuch as it now stands is a proposition which no intelligent man in the present day will venture to support, especially after the elaborate criticisms of Aben Ezra, Spinoza, Hobbes, Peyrerius, Astruc, Pere Simon, Volney, Voltaire, Gesenius, Vater, Paine, and others. The whole of the five books abound with passages which could not have been written by Moses, or during his life time. See—Genesis, chap, xii., v. 6, also chap, xiii., v. 7; these verses must have been written at a period when the Canaanites had been expelled from the land of which they were in quiet possession during the lifetime of Moses:—

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

Genesis, chap, xx., v. 16, and chap, xxiii., v. 15 and 16. Of these verses, Voltaire writes as follows; 'Learned and ingenious men, full of their own talents and acquirements, have maintained that it is impossible Moses could have written the book of Genesis. One of their principal reasons is, that in the history of Abraham that patriarch is stated to have paid for a cave he purchased for the interment of his wife, in silver coin; and the King of Gerar to have given Sarah a thousand pieces of silver, when he restored her, after having carried her off for her beauty at the age of seventy-five. They inform us that they have consulted all the ancient authors, and that it appears very certain that, at the period mentioned, silver money was not in existence:—' [\(pg6\)](#)

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

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

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

Numbers, chap, xii., v. 3. No man will for one moment suppose that a meek man would write his own character, to be handed down to posterity in this fashion. Paine, quoting the verse, says, 'If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the meekest of men, he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs, and the advocates for these books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them; if Moses was not the author, the book is without authority, and if he was the author, is without credit, because to boast of meekness is the reverse of meekness, and is a lie in sentiment':—

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

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

Deuteronomy, chap, xxxiii. It is scarcely probable that Moses wrote a chapter containing phrases such as 'the man of God, Moses, blessed the Children of Israel before his death,' 'Moses commanded us a law,' &c:— [\(pg7\)](#) Deuteronomy, chap, xxxiv. I do not consider it necessary to reason upon the proposition that a man cannot write an account of his own death and burial, or to endeavour to prove that he cannot relate that his grave remains undiscovered to the present day. Beside which, the names used in this chapter are those which were given to the places after the Israelites had obtained possession of the land, and which could not have been known in the time of Moses. The same remark applies to Deuteronomy, chap, iv., v. 43, in which the reader will at once discover a glaring anachronism, as it is impossible Bezer, Gilead, and Golan, could have been called Bezer of the Reubenites, Gilead of the Gadites, and Golan of the Mannassites, until after those tribes had conquered and taken possession of Bezer, Gilead, and Golan respectively, which they did not do until after the death of Moses.

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

In Professor Newman's 'Phases of Faith,' pp. 83 and 84, there is an eloquent repudiation of the attempts at

argument of those theologians who contend for the Mosaic Pentateuch. (The word Pentateuch is a compound Greek word, meaning five books.)

Why should we acknowledge Moses as the author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy? We have positive evidence that he was not the writer of very many portions, and we have no evidence at all to support the assertion that he wrote a single line of either of the five books.

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

'1.—It seems difficult that Moses could have written the Pentateuch which we attribute to him, in the desert. If his people came from Egypt, where they had lived, says the author, 400 years (although he is mistaken in 200 years), the book would, probably, have been written in Egyptian, and we are told it was in Hebrew. It must have been graven upon stone or wood, because, in the time of Moses, they had no other mode of writing. This was a very difficult art, and one which required long preparations, since it was necessary to polish the wood or the stone. It does not appear that this art would have been exercised in a desert, where, according to the book itself, the Jewish horde were not able to make their own clothes and shoes, and where God was obliged to work a continual miracle during forty years to preserve their vestments without decaying, and the coverings of their legs and feet. It is so true that they were only able to write upon stone, that the author of the book of Joshua says that Deuteronomy was written upon an altar of rough stones, plastered with mortar. It appears Joshua did not even imagine this book was durable. '2.—Those men who are most versed in antiquity think these books were written more than 700 years after Moses. They found this opinion upon that which is spoken of the Kings of Edom and Israel, when there were no kings till a long time after Moses; upon the position of the cities, which is false if the books were written in the desert, and true if they were written at Jerusalem; upon the names of the cities and small towns of which these books speak, which were neither built nor called by the names there given them till many ages afterwards, &c.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

yielding fruit brought forth.

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

'The present number of named species of plants is about 280,000, spread in provinces over the known world. The greater part of this large number are peculiar in their habits, and arbitrary in their provinces of growth. The palms of the tropics would die in the ungenial atmosphere of the northern hemisphere; and the plants that flourish under the chilling blasts of the Arctic Regions would wither under the scorching suns of the Torrid Zone. It is, therefore, a preliminary question—was this a multitudinous creation, assorted to their several localities, or a creation of one or two plants of a class from whence all the rest proceeded? If the former is alleged, I ask, as the ordered world was then only two days old, what provision was there, by known laws, to meet numerous physical wants of this immense creation? Were they created perfect plants, as we are informed they were, yielding seed, or only the germs for future growth? If perfect plants, I apprehend the periodical rings, the distinctive mark of the exogens, would, by natural laws, be wanting; but, I suppose, added in the plants proceeding from the parent stem. We have, then, a *development* process at once admitted; a process, I conceive, manifestly opposed to the Mosaic narrative.

'Of the oneness of vegetable "creation," "making," or "formation," Genesis leaves no doubt. Now Geology, or rather palaeontology, adduces many proofs which, to unbiassed minds, I apprehend, will be conclusive, that such was not the case; but, on the contrary, the vegetable world progressed with the altered structural and climatic conditions of the earth. This is evidenced by the presence of special fossil vegetable productions in certain strata, and the absence of others. Negative evidence may, in some cases, be inconclusive; but it must be borne in mind that there are certain conditions or collateral circumstances which impart to *negative* the force and conclusiveness of *positive* and direct affirmative testimony. Thus, in considering the value of that evidence in favour of the existence of a certain class of vegetable life at any given period, if we find (says the Rev. B. Powell) that some vegetable forms existed, and a fitness at the same period for the existence of others, the non-appearance of the latter in such cases is tantamount to "non-existence." On evidence thus valued we will inquire into the simultaneous creation and existence of the vegetable world as related in the 11th and 12th verses.

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

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

'When we enter on the Carboniferous, we "are surrounded by the spoils of the first great woody era." Now, during the Carboniferous period, it cannot be denied that we have every requisite for supporting vegetable life, and the most undeniable evidence of its existence by the fossiliferous preservation of near 500 species. These were peculiar to the Carboniferous period. They died away and have not left one species specifically the same with our present vegetation. 'Further, there is scarcely any evidence of a true exogen up to and through the vast and immeasurable periods of the coal measures; and he who dreams that, in the woods of the primeval world there flourished the oak, the elm, and the hundreds of our other forest productions, introduces in the landscape a feature equally immaginative to the wildest Eastern allegory. Of the great family of the leguminosae we have no trace until we come to the London clay, forming a part of the eocene series. In the same formation (deposited in the geological calculation tens of thousands of years past, and hundreds of thousands of years subsequent to the Carboniferous era) we have abundance of fossil fruits—palm nuts, custard apples, and the gourd and melon family. That the most delicate and perishable parts of vegetable structure can be preserved through immense periods of time, is shown by the state of these, and also of the fossil ligneous coverings of nuciferous fruits, cones of firs, and even the indication of flowers. This preservation of parts of fructification, and the pollen of coniferae, displays the art with which nature embalms her relics. Who, having examined the fossils of the Carboniferous beds, can fail being struck with amazement at the clear and distinct tracing of leaves and forms of the most delicate articulation and structure? We have, also, in our coal measures, found trees of species long extinct, thirty to forty feet high, with roots attached as they grew *in situ*.

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

'A large portion of the earth's surface, we may infer from analogy, in the Carboniferous ages had the appearance of an immense Polynesia of equable temperature, where her peculiar vegetable productions grew in immense profusion, and, for their species, attained gigantic size.

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

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

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

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

'I have thus far had the task of showing how negative evidence, in the non-appearance and the subsequent varied forms, contradict the order of oneness in the creation or "formation" of vegetable life.

'I will now produce positive evidence bearing upon the same discrepancies. We have in the third day the creation of vegetable life, but *no animal life* until the fifth day—then we have (we must be excused reiteration) fish and fowl and the whales, whilst on the sixth and last day were brought forth creeping things. The first sign of animal life yet discovered is of the radiate class, in the lowest zone of the lower Silurian. We have another class of animal life, the *articulata*,

in the same zone; and we have some three hundred species of molluscs through the silurian. Nay, so large is the last named class at this early period, that it is denominated by American geologists "the age of molluscs." I must remind our readers that during the whole of this immeasurable age, we have not a single authenticated *land plant*; nay, further, we have *fish*, the creation of the *fifth* day, before aught of the *third day's* creation appears.

'We have, also, a reptilian vertebrate land animal in the Devonian ages incalculably before the appearance of any seed bearing herbs or fruit bearing plants. Here, then, is positive and direct evidence of the appearance of types of the four great groups of animal life—the *radiate*, the *articulate*, the *mollusca*, and the *vertebrata*—not a few hours or days or months, or a few years, but thousands upon thousands of years before a single evidence of the seed-bearing and fruit-bearing plants of the first day's creation existed. It must not be said they might have existed yet are not preserved, for this is opposed to the facts previously stated of the preservation of the algae and fucoids during these periods, and of the immense flora during the subsequent coal formation, and the pollen, flowers, fruits, leaves, and trees in still younger formations. Nor can it be met by an argument against the fitness of the condition of the earth at this time.

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

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

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

McCausland proceeds, 'It is well known that the transactions of years are often compressed, in a dream, into the space of a few minutes; on the same principle, the operations of the divine author of creation, which *may* have occupied a long series of years, may have been presented to Moses as the events of a single day.' What may have been or may not have been, is hardly sufficient to base an argument upon. It is most extraordinary that, in discussions upon this subject, the reverend advocates arrogate to themselves the right of conjecturing 'What God meant to do,' 'What God's intentions were,' 'What might have happened before this occurred or that was prevented,' 'That this is literal,' 'That that is allegorical,' etc., etc.; and yet, while they are conjecturing and supposing outside the text to an unlimited extent, it becomes rank blasphemy to advance an opinion to the plain English meaning of the text itself. I am afraid that Moses is not the only dreamer; for a few pages further I find this remarkable sentence, 'We know from Geology, in confirmation of Scripture, that there was a beginning, when the universe was formed out of nothing'!! In which strata or in what rock was this knowledge found? Are we to be told in the present day that in the universe we find evidence which convinces us that there was a period when the substance of that universe did not exist—when there was nothing? Why, the very form of words conveys an absurd and contradictory meaning. It is impossible for man, in his boldest flights of imagination or doubting, to annihilate existence; he may, in his fancy, vary its modes, but he cannot, even in his wildest moods, ignore its substance.

Of the fiat, 'let there be light.' the harmonizer says, 'This divine command and the result of it does not negative the previous existence of light. It only conveys the information that light was commanded to shine. The sun had sent forth his rays from the date of the creation, but the black misty envelope of the deep could

not be penetrated until the divine fiat went forth for the advent of light to its surface.' Quoting Genesis, chap, i, v. 14 to 19, he says, 'With respect to this language, all philologists agree that it does not mean that the sun, moon, and stars were for the first time called into existence at this period of the creation.' This is not true; if the verses mean anything, they positively do mean that the sun, moon, and stars were, for the first time, created on the fourth day, and it is only the evident falsity of this statement which has compelled religious philologists to twist 'the language' into a spiritual meaning.

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

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' The word here translated God is [—] (Alehim or Elohim) which is a plural noun (*vide* Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, article [—], and although translated by the singular word God, it is often associated with plural adjectives, pronouns, and verbs, see Genesis, chap, i, v. 26, chap, iii, y. 22, chap, xi, v. 7; nay more, on the same orthodox authority we learn, that in many other passages the translators have ignored the plural accompaniments for the purpose of supporting the orthodox theory, and yet we are told in the present day that the Bible does not want retranslation. It has been before pointed out that there is a double creation narrated, one from Genesis, chap, i, v. 1 to chap. ii, v. 3; in this the only word used is the plural word Alehim, or the Gods (that is, if Alehim be either God or Gods as it has been differently translated; elsewhere we find the expression 'God' applied to Moses—this would lead us to doubt as to the precise meaning of the word. I am told by some of my reverend friends that the meaning of the word God is varied according to the mode of printing; if with a capital letter 'God,' it means an incomprehensible anything they like, if with a small initial, 'god,' it means an inferior anything you like). Volney, in the notes to his 'Ruins of Empires,' says, 'If we further observe that the root of the word *Elohim* signifies strong or powerful, and that the Egyptians called their decans strong and powerful leaders, attributing to them the creation of the world, we shall presently perceive that the Book of Genesis affirms neither more nor less than that the world was created by the *decans*, by those very genii whom, according to Sanconiathon, Mercury excited against Saturn, and who were called *Elohim*. It may be further asked why the plural substantive *Elohim* is made to agree with the singular verb *bara* (the Elohim creates). The reason is, that after the Babylonish captivity, the unity of the Supreme Being was the prevailing opinion of the Jews; it was therefore thought proper to introduce a pious solecism in language, which it is evident had no existence before Moses. Thus, in the names of the children of Jacob, many of them are compounded of a plural verb, to which Elohim is the nominative case understood; as *Raouben* (Reuben), *they have looted upon me*, and *Samaonm* (Simeon), *they have granted me my prayer*, to wit, the Elohim. The reason of this etymology is to be found in the religious creeds of the wives of Jacob, whose Gods were the taraphim of Laban, that is, the angels of the Persians, and the Egyptian decans.' The other account commences with the fourth verse of the second chapter, and in this the words translated 'Lord God' are [—]; what these really mean it is impossible to say, unless they mean Chief of the Gods. Parkhurst translates it into a trinity. The word [—] (rendered in our version Jehovah) simply represents time past, present, and future. The two accounts differ considerably; in the first we find water forming an important feature, and ultimately drained off so that the dry land appears; in the second we have the land dry without water, and it becomes necessary to send a mist to water the face of the earth.

Genesis, chap, i, v. 1 to 27. Whoever wrote these verses must either have been an inspired man, a dupe, or a knave—that is, he could not have gathered from tradition, because here tradition is outstepped; it could not have been known by man, as he was not yet made; he must either have received it from God, or have been deceived by man, or must have intended to deceive man himself. If inspired, it is a pity God did not explain the creation of light before the sun (verse 3), the creation of herbs and fruit trees bearing seed and fruit before there was a sun to ripen the fruit and bring the seed to maturity (verse 11), the creation of 'female-man' in his own image (verse 27), etc. By verse 29 it appears that God intended man to be a vegetarian; by Genesis, chap, ix, v. 3, he gave them all kinds of cattle for food; and by Leviticus, chap, xi, v. 12, he forbade man to eat certain kinds there specified; one of God's attributes notwithstanding all this is immutability. Chap. ii. v. 2 and 3, he rested on the seventh day and blessed it and sanctified it, because in it he had rested:—see Deuteronomy, chap, v, v. 12 to 15; which is the correct reason for the sanctifying the sabbath day?

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

Of verses 10 to 14 Voltaire speaks as follows:—'According to this version, the earthly paradise would have contained nearly a third part of Asia and of Africa. The sources of the Euphrates and the Tigris are sixty leagues distant from each other, in frightful mountains bearing no possible resemblance to a garden. The river which borders Ethiopia, and which can be no other than the Nile, commences its course at the distance of more than a thousand leagues from the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates; and if the Pison means the

Phasis, it is not a little surprising that the source of a Scythian river and that of an African one should be situated on the same spot. We must therefore look for some other explanation, and for other rivers. Every commentator has got up a Paradise of his own.'

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

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

Voltaire continues:—

'It is very respectable and pleasant for a man to "cultivate his garden," but it must have been somewhat difficult for Adam to have dressed and kept in order a garden of a thousand leagues in length, even although he had been supplied with some assistants. Commentators on this subject, therefore, we again observe, are [\(pg17\)](#) completely at a loss, and must be content to exercise their ingenuity in conjecture. Accordingly, these four rivers have been described as flowing through numberless different territories.'

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

Verses 18 and 19. It is somewhat remarkable that immediately after the Lord God had declared his intention of making a helpmeet

for Adam, that he formed all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. This is open to many objections; first, see chap, i, v. 21, but as we must admit there are two distinct accounts of the creation, I will not further burden my work with the contradictions between them; second, the strong improbability of the story of the Lord God bringing the beasts and fowl to see what Adam would call them; either the Lord God had fore-ordained the names to be applied by Adam, or the theologians are wrong—either the Lord God foreknew what names Adam would give each bird and beast, in which case Genesis is incorrect, or prescience, one of the attributes applied to Deity, is deficient; third, the immense time which this naming of every bird and beast must have taken, especially when we remember that Adam was waiting for his wife—it almost appears as if verse 18 should come after verse 20 to make sense of the story. Lawrence says that the account of all the animals being brought before Adam is zoologically impossible ('Lectures on Man,' p. 169). Voltaire says that if Adam had named the animals according to their various natures, he must have either previously eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or it would apparently have answered no end for God to have interdicted him from it. He must have already known more than the Royal Society or the Academy of Sciences of Paris. The mode of manufacturing the woman from the rib of the man has been the subject of much controversy, but is only noticed here as another illustration of the fabulous character of the book we are dealing with.

Having passed through the two accounts of the creation contained in the anonymous book I am examining, I shall strive to ascertain the source from whence some of the doctrines and traditions contained in this book were derived. Aware of the magnitude of my task, I will now only deal with authorities to whom no exception should be taken by the religious reader. One is the pious and erudite Sir William Jones, the other the Reverend Thomas Maurice. Of the claims of the first to our attention I will say nothing, for every man ought to be more or less acquainted with the character of the great linguist; of the second I can only say that I find [\(pg18\)](#) his work issued under the countenance of the heads of the Church, and supported by some of the first men of his day.

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

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

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

"This world (says he) was all darkness, undiscernible, undistinguishable, altogether as in profound sleep; till the self-existent invisible God, making it manifest with five elements and other glorious forms, perfectly expelled the gloom. He, desiring to raise up various creatures by an emanation from his own glory, first created the *waters*, and impressed them with a power of motion: by that power was produced a golden egg, blazing like a thousand suns, in which was born Brahma, self-existing, the great parent of all rational beings. The waters are called *nàrà*, since they are the offspring of *Nara or Iswara*; and thence was *Náryána* named, because his first *ayana*, or *moving*, was on them.

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

Sir William Jones admits that the Vedas are 'very ancient, and far older than any other Sanscrit works,' but assigns to the Manava Sastra, and the Bhagavat a later date than 'the Scriptures of Moses,' on the ground

that 'the nakedness of the Hebrew dialect, metre, and style must convince every man of their superior antiquity.' On the same page Sir W. Jones, however, states that the Brahmans affirm that the Vedas, the Manava Sástra, and the Bhagavat, were all written in the first age of the world. Is it honest to reject the [\(pg19\)](#) testimony of the Priests of Brahma while we are content to place our reason in the hands of the Priests of our own Church?

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

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

The third chapter of Genesis contains, according to its heading, an account of man's 'most shameful fall.' It will be in vain to attempt to treat the contents of this chapter as a relation of actual occurrences. The following is a summary: a serpent, walking erect on its tail instead of crawling on its belly, tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, urging that Adam has been deceived by God; the woman (not at all surprised at being addressed by one 'in such a questionable shape') saw that the tree was good for food (how she saw this does not appear) and ate and gave to her husband. Upon eating, their eyes are opened, and they are ashamed of their nakedness, and sew fig leaves together to make breeches. This sewing was before the invention of needles. The species of this fruit has formed the subject of much conjecture; one kind only has since been known to confer on man and woman a knowledge of their nakedness after mutually partaking thereof, and it has therefore been suggested that this chapter is an allegorical representation of the union of the sexes. After eating, Adam and Eve hear the 'voice of the Lord God walking,' and they hide themselves. It is not easy to understand how either God or his voice could walk in the garden, nor why he should walk in the cool of the day, as we cannot suppose heat to affect him. The reason Adam gives for hiding himself is not a correct one, [\(pg20\)](#) he was not naked unless his fig-leaf garment had fallen to pieces. God having ascertained that Adam had disobeyed his command, cursed the serpent and commanded it to eat dust and go upon its belly all the days of its life; God also cursed the ground. It does not appear, however, that he carried out the threat contained in chap. ii, v. 17; in fact, the serpent appears to have been more correct in saying to Adam and Eve, 'Ye shall not surely die.' Some divines would have us believe that by the sin of Adam death was introduced into the world, and the Rev. Dr. John Pye Smith tells us, 'It is probable, had not man fallen, that, after a continuance in the earthly state for a period of probation, each individual would have been translated to a higher condition of existence.' Unfortunately, this hypothesis will not bear investigation. Professor Newman says, in relation to this subject, 'A fresh strain fell on the Scriptural infallibility, in contemplating the origin of death. Geologists assured us that death went on in the animal creation many ages before the existence of man. The rocks formed of the shells of animals testify that death is a phenomenon thousands and thousands of years old; to refer the death of animals to the sin of Adam and Eve is evidently impossible. Yet, if not, the analogies of the human to the brute form make it scarcely credible that man's body can ever have been intended for immortality. Nay, when we consider the conditions of birth and growth to which it is subject, the wear and tear essential to life, the new generations intended to succeed and supplant the old—so soon as the question is proposed as one of physiology, the reply is inevitable that death is no accident, introduced by the perverse will of our first parents, nor any way connected with man's sinfulness, but is purely a result of the conditions of animal life. On the contrary, St. Paul rests most important conclusions on the fact, that one man, Adam, by personal death, brought death upon all his posterity. If this was a fundamental error, religious doctrine also is shaken.'

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

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

Verse 22. (And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us.' One of whom? To whom are these words addressed? It is evident that the writer of this book believed in a plurality of Gods, and had not any very elevated ideas in relation to those Gods, for, in the very same verse, he makes God express fear lest Adam should take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever. Does it mean that man's soul was not then immortal? it cannot mean that man's body could become immortal. If man's soul was not then capable of living for ever, when did its nature become changed? Verse 24. 'Cherubim!' This word is ridiculous; cherubim [\(pg21\)](#) is the plural of cherub; the is merely a specimen of Bible orthography. In Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary I find the following severe remark on the word 'Cherubim:—Those who understand no language but their own are apt to commit an unpardonable fault with critics, by mistaking this word for a singular, and writing the plural "Cherubims." It is evident, therefore, that if God inspired the Bible, he did not inspire the grammar. But what is a cherub? the word [—] (kereb) is of very doubtful meaning, and seems to have been used to express an inferior kind of deity. In the seventh edition of Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, the correspondence

between the description of the cherubim in Ezekiel and the inferior deities in other mythologies is fully and ably pointed out under this head. Were it not for the length of Parkhurst's article, I would quote the whole, it constituting an elaborate essay in which the astronomical origin of every religious system is clearly proved. An interesting astronomical explanation of the allegory or the fall is given in pp. 294-5 of 'Volney's Ruins.' Some of the cherubic figures are a compound of ox, eagle, lion, and man. Are we to imagine several of these with a flaming sword, guarding the way to the tree of life?

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

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

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

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

Verse 13. This verse is translated in a very different manner to the Douay. In our version Cain complains of the severity of his punishment; in the other, Cain says that his sin is too great for pardon. Which is right?

Verse 14. What does Cain mean when he says 'Every one that findeth me shall slay me.' 'Every one 'can only [pg221](#) be used when there is a likelihood of meeting with many persons, yet Cain must have been well aware that no persons were then in existence beside his father and mother.

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

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

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

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

Verses 1 and 2 contradict the previous chapters.

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

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

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

Chapter vi, v. 2. 'The Sons of God.' Who are the Sons of God?; How could God have Sons? Is not Jesus said to be the only Son of God? Voltaire says of this verse, 'No nation has ever existed, unless perhaps we may except China, in which some God is not described as having had offspring upon women. These corporeal Gods frequently descended to visit their dominions upon earth; they saw the daughters of our race, and attached themselves to those who were most interesting and beautiful; the issue of this connexion between Gods and mortals must, of course, have been superior to other men, thus giants were produced.' But there is a further objection to our authorised version; the original is not 'Sons of God,' but [————] (Beni Alehim, Sons of the Gods). In the mythologies of Greece, Italy, and India, we find the same idea of Gods having intercourse with women; and it is also remarkable that, although in many cases the woman bears a child, yet all true believers devoutly contend for her virginity. Verse 3 seems out of place, it should come in after 5 or 6; but in any place it is not correct. One hundred and twenty years is neither the average nor the limit of man's life. What does God mean when he says 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man?' What was the striving about? Does the verse mean that God's spirit strove in vain? What does 'that he also is flesh' mean? Does it mean that the Lord's spirit and man are both flesh? Verses 5 and 6. God made mankind and the circumstances which [pg231](#) surrounded them, and must have foreknown what would have been the effect produced upon man; why not have made better circumstances? Shall we presume either that God had not the power to have created things differently, or that he is careless of man's welfare? In what manner did God make known his repentance? In Numbers, chap, xxiii, v. 19, we are led to believe that God never repents. Why should God destroy the beasts, creeping things, and fowls? they surely could not have been parties to man's wickedness. Why should God repent that he made 'the beasts, the creeping things, and the fowls of the air?' What does the phrase mean in relation to God, 'it grieved him at his heart?' The expressions 'repent,' 'grieve,' etc., could scarcely have been used if the book had been a revelation from a God who intended to convey to us an idea of his omnipotence and immutability. The following quotation is from Robert Taylor:—

'What blasphemy! thus to represent the Creator of the world. Omnipotence repenting that he had made man, sitting upon a stone, and crying like a child, wringing his hands, tearing his hair, calling himself all the fools and idiots he could think of, stamping his foot, cursing, swearing, and vowing vengeance, that he would not leave a dog nor a rat alive. We should yet have but a faint idea of the' exceeding sinfulness of sin, and how poor and impotent language of any kind must be, to convey to us the emotions of that infinite wisdom

and inconceivable benevolence which repented that he had made man, and grieved that man was no better than he had made him.

'There can be no doubt at all that such language as this, when used in relation to the Supreme Being, is used only in gracious condescension to our ignorance, and in accommodation to the dulness and stupidity of our powers of conception, which require to be stimulated and excited by strong and impassioned figures of speech, ere they can be led to form an idea at all on sacred subjects.'

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

Verse 14 to chap. viii, v. 19. Of this account Professor Newman says 'It had become notorious to the public that geologists rejected the idea of an universal deluge, as physically impossible. Whence could the water come to cover the highest mountains? Two replies were attempted: 1—The flood of Noah is not described as universal; 2—The flood was indeed universal, but the water was added and removed by miracle. Neither reply, however, seemed to be valid. First, the language respecting the universality of the flood is as strong as any that could be written; moreover, it is stated that the tops of the high hills *were all covered*, and after the water subsides the ark settles on the mountains of Armenia. Now, in Armenia, of necessity, numerous peaks would be seen unless the water covered them, and especially Ararat. But a flood that covered Ararat would overspread all the continents, and leave only a few summits above. If, then, the account in Genesis is to be received, the flood was "universal. Secondly, the narrator represents the surplus water to have come from the clouds, and perhaps from the sea, and again to drain back into the sea. Of a miraculous *creation and destruction* of water, he evidently does not dream.

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

Voltaire says of the deluge:—

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Supposing the mountains to be only twenty thousand feet high, forty oceans each five hundred feet in height would be required to accumulate on each other, merely in order to equal the height of the mountains. Every successive ocean would contain all the others, and the last of them all would have a circumference containing forty times that of the first.

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

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

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

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

'How eight persons could keep in order, feed, and water such an immense number of inmates, shut up in an ark—for nearly two years, for, after the cessation of the deluge, it would be necessary to have food for all these passengers for another year, in consequence of the herbage being so scanty.'

The dimensions of the ark, which are slightly varied according to the different lengths assigned to the cubit, were between 450 and 574 feet in length, between 75 and 91 feet in breadth, and 45 and 55 feet in height. An ark that size must have been a tremendous undertaking for a man nearly six hundred years old, even with

his three sons to help him. The ark was divided into three stories and many rooms, but only had one window and one door. The situation of this door is curious, 'in the side;' if it gave access to all the floors it must have extended from top to bottom. It is hardly possible to imagine a large number of animals, civet cats, musk rats, etc., existing in an ark in which ventilation was so badly provided for; when the door was shut and the window shut to keep out the rain and water, it must have been absolutely stifling. But it is impossible to imagine seven of each of the clean beasts and two of each of the unclean, and seven of each of the birds, crammed into so small a space. Even if there were room for it, we hear nothing of any food being collected for the sustenance of all these birds and beasts. Did they fast? How did Noah know which were clean and which unclean? Thomas Paine treats the account of the flood as follows:—

[\[pg26\]](#)

'We have all heard of Noah's flood; and it is impossible to think of the whole human race, men, women, children, and infants, (except one family) deliberately drowning, without feeling a painful sensation; that must be a heart of flint that can contemplate such a scene with tranquillity. There is nothing in the ancient mythology, nor in the religion of any people we know of on the globe, that records a sentence of their God, or of their Gods, so tremendously severe and merciless. If the story be not true, we blasphemously dishonour God by believing it, and still more so in forcing, by laws and penalties, that belief upon others. I go now to show, from the face of the story, that it carries the evidence of not being true.

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

'We have here two different epochs, or points of time; that of the flood, and that of the law of Moses; the former more than six hundred years prior to the latter. But the maker of the story of the flood, whoever he was, has betrayed himself by blundering, for he has reversed the order of the times. He has told the story as if the law of Moses was prior to the flood; for he has made God to say to Noah, Genesis, chap, vii, v. 2, "Of every clean beast, thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of beasts that are *not clean* by two, the male and his female." This is the Mosaic law, and could only be said after that law was given, not before. There were no such things as beasts clean and unclean in the time of Noah—it is nowhere said they were created so. They were only *declared* to be so *as meats*, by the Mosaic law, and that to the Jews only; and there were no such people as Jews in the time of Noah. This is the blundering condition in which this strange story stands.

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

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

[\[pg27\]](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The token of this covenant is to be the rainbow—v. 13. The Geneva translation has it, 'I *have* set my bow;' the authorised version, 'I *do* set my bow;' the Douay, 'I *will* set my bow. Of this latter, Voltaire remarks—[\[pg28\]](#) 'Observe, that the author does not say, I *have* put my bow in the clouds; he says, I *will* put; this clearly implies

it to have been the prevailing opinion that there had not always been a rainbow. This phenomenon is necessarily produced by rain; yet, in this place, it is represented as something supernatural, exhibited in order to announce and prove that the earth should no more be inundated. It is singular to choose the certain sign of rain, in order to assure men against their being drowned.'

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

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

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

Verse 25. It is hard to understand why Canaan should be cursed because his father, Ham, accidentally walked into a tent and saw Noah naked. If Ham even deserved a curse, it is no reason for cursing his son, who was no party to his father's offence.

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

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

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

Voltaire says, 'People have wished to know how the children of Noah, after having divided among [\(pg29\)](#) themselves the islands of the nations, and established themselves in divers lands, with each one his particular language, family, and people, should all find themselves in the plain of Shinaar to build there a tower, saying, "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

'The book of Genesis speaks of the states which the sons of Noah founded. It has related how the people of Europe, Africa, and Asia all came to Shinaar, speaking one language only, and purposing the same thing.

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

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

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

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

Verse 5. 'The Lord came down.' This idea pervades the book—that is, that God resides in heaven, above the earth, and that he leaves heaven occasionally and comes down to earth, and after having finished his business, goes up again to heaven. The writer appears to have had no conception that God could see from heaven to earth, but makes God come down to ascertain whether the tale which had reached him in heaven be true. Unfortunately, even after ignoring the attribute of omnipresence in relation to God, the idea is not a correct one. That which is above me when I look up and pray is not above the New Zealander, if he looks up and prays at the same instant. The powers above to him would be the powers below to me. The verse implies that God could not see the tower until he came down.

Verses 6 and 7. Who did God speak to? 'Let us go down;' who are 'us?' Did the Almighty actually fear lest his creatures should build a tower so high that they might scramble into heaven without his assistance? The whole of this account is absurd in the extreme. Dr. John Pye Smith says that 'the confusion of language was probably only to a certain point, not destroying cognation.' I do not the better understand the story with the aid of this comment. The only thing proved by the elaborate commentaries of many divines is, that they gave God the credit of inspiring an inexplicable revelation, and that, instead of endeavouring to make it explicable, they burden the margin of the book with suppositions which only increase the difficulties of the text. Verse [\(pg30\)](#) 26. 'And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram.'

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

Chapter xii., v. 1. And the Lord said to Abram, 'Get thee out,' etc. So that Abram must have been one hundred and thirty-five years old when he left Haran; but, according to verse 4 it appears that Abram was only seventy-five years of age. This has been regarded as an inexplicable difficulty by St. Jerome and St. Augustine; and I, who am not a saint, must confess with Voltaire that I cannot understand how a man can be

seventy-five and one hundred and thirty-five years of age at the same time.

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

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

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

Chapter xii., v. 11 to 20. The account of the chosen of God having recourse to a lie to pass off his wife for his sister, deserves notice. When this happens twice (chap. 20), it excites suspicion; and when it occurs a third time in the same country to the son of Abraham, it creates doubt as to the truth of the whole. Voltaire writes thus of Abraham:—

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

'Abraham, who was then very old, went this way with his wife Sarah, aged sixty-five; she was very [pg31](#) handsome, and Abraham feared that the Egyptians, smitten by her charms, would kill him in order to enjoy her transcendent beauties; he proposed to her that she should pass for his sister, etc. Human nature must at that time have possessed a vigour which time and luxury have since very much weakened. That which Abraham had foreseen came to pass; the Egyptian youth found his wife charming, notwithstanding her sixty-five years; the king himself fell in love with her, and placed her in his seraglio, though, probably, he had younger females there; but the Lord plagued the king and his seraglio with very great sores. The text does not tell us how the king came to know that this dangerous beauty was Abraham's wife; but it seems that he did come to know it, and restored her.

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

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

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

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

Abraham, hearing that Lot, his relative, was taken prisoner, took three hundred and eighteen men, and, by night, pursued and smote the four allied kings, and recaptured his brother. As he went near to Damascus in [pg32](#) pursuit, he must have travelled more than one hundred miles, beside crossing some very mountainous country; this, of course, enhances the character of the victory. One of the fruits of this triumph seems to have been, that the King of Sodom, who is killed in verse 10, comes to meet Abraham, alive and well, in verse 17. Verse 18. 'Melchizedek;' who was he? Before answering this question, read Psalm ex., v. 4, Hebrews, chap, v., v. 6, 10, and 11, chap, vii., and chap, viii., v. 1. In the verse we are examining, he is described as [—] (melekitedek)— [—] (melek) [—] (shelem).

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

This description does not answer to any man who ever lived on the face of the earth; nearly everybody claims to have had a father and a grandfather; everybody has had a mother. Everybody was one hour old before he grew older; and after existing some few score years, more or less, every man has, sooner or later, died. So Melchizedek could not have been a man. In Malachi, chap iv., v. 2, we find [—] (Chemesh zedek); this is translated *Sun* of Righteousness, and it is only to the sun that the description of Melchizedek will apply. The ancients looked upon the sun as the everlasting source of all existence, and personified it in

various names; Melchizedek, king of the zodiac, appears to be one of the Bible personifications. But supposing Melchizedek to be not a real person, what becomes of the story of Abraham giving him tithes of his spoils? If this story be not fact, how much is allegory?

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

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

Chapter xv., v. 13. If this four hundred years refers to the Egyptian captivity, it is four hundred and thirty years according to Exodus, chap. xii., v. 40 and 41 (also see Galatians, chap. iii., v. 17); but, according to the Bible chronology, it is only about two hundred years. It is impossible to give credit to one more than the other; for Genesis, Exodus, and Chronology, while they contradict one another, are not supported by any other evidence themselves. Verse 18 to end. Ten nations are specified here; in Joshua, chap. iii., v. 10, seven [pg33](#) only are mentioned; in Deuteronomy, chap. xxii. v. 17, six; in Exodus, chap. iii., v. 17, and chap. xxiii., v. 23, six; 2 Chronicles, chap. viii., v. 7, five only. The land from the Nile to the Euphrates has never yet been in the undisturbed possession of the Jews; large portions have never been in their possession for a single moment, so that this promise has never been performed.

Chapter xvi., v. 13. In the Douay this is translated, 'And she called the name of the Lord that spoke unto her, thou the God who hast seen me; for she said, verily here have I seen the hinder parts of him that seeth me.' The reader will perceive a strange difference in the two texts. If the Douay be the correct translation, where are the hinder parts of a God who is without parts? (*vide* thirty-nine articles).

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

The intent of this chapter is to induce a belief that the Lord appeared in person to Abraham; and that, after he had talked with him for some time, he left and went *up*. It is also intended to convey that Abraham showed his respect to the Lord by falling down before him; and, according to the Douay, 'flat on his face.' I have before remarked on this going up and coming down, which is utterly inconsistent with any idea of an infinite and omnipotent God. I do not wish to fill my pages with mere repetitions, and shall, therefore, at once deal with Genesis, chap. xvii., v. 1 and 22, chap. xviii., v. 1, 2, 7, and 8, chap. xxii., v. 11 and 15, chap. xxvi., v. 2 and 24, chap. xxviii., v. 13, chap. xxxii., v. 30, and chap. xxxv., v. 7, 9, and 13. It is quite clear that the author of these verses in Genesis considered not only God was material, and could be seen, but also considered God in the light of a superior or more powerful being than man, yet of somewhat the same form and passions. Man is represented as made in the image of God. Men, Gods, and Angels are strangely confused together; angels are spoken of in three characters—viz., as intermediary messengers, as inferior Gods, and as God. This would be sufficient of itself to cause great confusion. God is spoken of in this book as eating, talking, walking, going up and down, grieving, repenting, and swearing, making impossible covenants and never keeping them, fearing lest man should eat of the tree of life and live for ever, or that he should build a tower which should reach to heaven. In the eighteenth chapter, the terms 'Angels,' 'Men,' and 'Lord,' are indiscriminately used in reference to the same persons.

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

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

'But it is, perhaps, better worth knowing that one of the first of man's ideas has always been, to place [pg34](#) intermediate beings between the Divinity and himself; such were those demons, those genii, invented in the ages of antiquity. Man always made the Gods after his own image; princes were seen to communicate their orders by messengers; therefore, the Divinity had also his couriers. Mercury and Iris were couriers or messengers. The Jews, the only people under the conduct of the Divinity himself, did not, at first, give names to the angels whom God vouchsafed to send them; they borrowed the names given them by the Chaldeans, when the Jewish nation was captive in Babylon; Michael and Gabriel are named for the first time by Daniel, a slave among those people. The Jew Tobit, who lived at Nineveh, knew the angel Raphael, who travelled with his son to assist him in recovering the money due to him from the Jew Gabael.

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

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

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

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

'It is not known precisely where the angels dwell—whether in the air, in the void, or in the planets. It has not been God's pleasure that we should be informed of their abode.'

Chapter xvii., v. 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. According to the latter verse, no uncircumcised man will be

admitted into heaven; so the Mahomedans would get in and Christians be excluded. The following will be found in the Philosophical Dictionary under the head 'Circumcision.' "'It appears," says Herodotus, in his book Euterpe, 'that the inhabitants of Colchis sprang from Egypt. I judge so from my own observations, rather than from hearsay; for I found that, at Colchis, the ancient Egyptians were more frequently recalled to my mind than the ancient customs of Colchis were, when I was in Egypt.

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

"With respect to Ethiopia and Egypt, as this ceremony is of great antiquity in both nations, I cannot by any means ascertain which has derived it from the other. It is, however, probable that the Ethiopians received it from the Egyptians; while, on the contrary, the Phoenicians have abolished the practice of circumcising newborn children since the enlargement of their commerce with the Greeks."

'From this passage of Herodotus, it is evident that many people had adopted circumcision; but no nation ever pretended to have received it from the Jews. To whom, then, can we attribute the origin of this custom; to a nation from whom five or six others acknowledge they took it, or to another nation, much less powerful, less commercial, less warlike, hid away in a corner of Arabia Petraea, and which never communicated any one of its usages to any other people?

'The Jews admit that they were, many ages since, received in Egypt out of charity. Is it not probable that the lesser people imitated a usage of the superior one, and that the Jews adopted some customs from their masters?

'Clement of Alexandria relates that Pythagoras, when travelling among the Egyptians, was obliged to be circumcised, in order to be admitted to their mysteries. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to be circumcised to be a priest in Egypt. Those priests existed when Joseph arrived in Egypt. The government was of great antiquity, and the ancient ceremonies of the country were observed with the most scrupulous exactness. (Joseph was married into the family of the Priest of the Sun before his relations had established any religious system.)

'The Jews acknowledge that they remained in Egypt two hundred and five years (the Bible says four hundred and thirty). They say that, during that period, they did not become circumcised. It is clear, then, that for two hundred and five years, the Egyptians did not receive circumcision from the Jews. Would they have adopted it from them after the Jews had stolen the vessels which they had lent them, and, according to their own account, fled with their plunder into the wilderness? Will a master adopt the principal symbol of the religion of a robbing and runaway slave? It is not in human nature.

'It is stated in the book of Joshua that the Jews were circumcised in the wilderness. "I have delivered you from what constituted your reproach among the Egyptians." But what could this reproach be, to a people living between Phoenicians, Arabians, and Egyptians, but something which rendered them contemptible to these three nations?'

Chapter xviii., v. 1. The Lord appeared, according to verse 2, in the shape of three men, who wash their feet and sit down under a tree, and eat cakes, butter, milk, and veal, until the tenth verse, when they become only one, and it is 'he said.' This *he* would, according to verse 13, appear to be the Lord; but, in verse 16, we go back to 'the men' again, who walk with Abraham. During the walk, the Lord speaks (verse 17), and, in verse 22, the Lord is mentioned separately from 'the men.' Verses 20 and 21. This is scarcely the language to be expected from an omniscient God. It is here stated that a report of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah has reached God; that God is uncertain and ignorant as to the correctness of the report, and that he is determined to go down to the city to ascertain the truth for himself. This is just what an ignorant and superstitious man might fancy, but not that which we should expect a God would reveal. The argumentative conversation between God and Abraham, and the strange comment, that, after the conversation was finished, 'the Lord went his way,' are worthy of notice. The Douay Bible explains this chapter in a foot-note, as follows:—"The Lord here accommodates his discourse to the way of speaking and acting amongst men, for he knoweth all things, and needeth not to go anywhere for information. Note here that *two* of the three angels went away immediately for Sodom, while the third, who represented the Lord, remained with Abraham.' How is this ascertained? This comment is, like all the rest, a barefaced attempt to make falsehood appear like truth; but failing in the attempt, because, like upon the contact of fire with water, a loud hiss is always raised against those who endeavour to mix falsehood with truth.

Chapter xix. My original publishers and my present printer, more moral than the Queen's printers, decline to print or publish any comment upon, or any quotations from, the obscene part of this chapter. In defence of the publishers, I may observe that, if this chapter was in any book but the Bible, and was published by any one not well protected by the aristocracy, he would be most assuredly prosecuted by the Society for Suppression of Vice; Regent Street, a few Lords, a Duke or Marquis, a Bishop, or the Bible, will, however, cover with mystery, and varnish over with fashion, that, which if stripped of its tawdry gewgaws or solemn black cloak, is nothing but disgusting and degrading immorality.

I shall, therefore, pass with but scant notice, and without the slightest attempt at examination, all those chapters or verses which may be classed under the head 'obscene.'

It is said that the Bible would not be an authentic history unless it contained such chapters as this, and that the relation is given for the purpose of showing that God condemned and punished such conduct, and as a warning and example to futurity. Now, I feel that 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' and, although I regret that God made such an unfortunate mistake in selecting a family who trained up such bad children, when he drowned everybody beside, yet I cannot admire and reverence his conduct in leaving them to fall into disgusting crime for the purpose of furnishing us with the horrid scene of the inhabitants of two cities

burnt alive.

Lot's wife being changed into a pillar of salt, is a chemical problem not easy of solution. 'Looking back' seems scarcely sufficient to account for the transmutation. Jesus told his disciples that they were the salt of the earth; perhaps they were descended from Lot's wife.

Chapter xx. This has been before adverted to in the general remarks on Abraham. Newman, in his 'Phases of Faith,' asks, 'What was I to make of God's anger with Abimelech, whose sole offence was the having believed Abraham's lie? for which a miraculous barrenness was sent on all the females of Abimelech's tribe, and was bought off only by splendid presents to the favoured deceiver.'

According to verse 6, Abimelech was not free and responsible; this makes the punishment still more remarkable; and why punish others for Abimelech's offence (if offence was really committed)? If God withheld Abimelech from committing sin, why is he not as merciful to every one? it would be more Godlike to prevent sin than to punish the sinner.

Chapter xxii., v. 12 and 14. The sending Hagar and Ishmael into the desert with only one bottle of water is cruel and barbarous conduct. Abraham does not seem to have had much parental affection; his first-born son he turned out into the desert with a small amount of food and water, and he prepared to cut the throat of his second son without the slightest hesitation.

God informed Abraham that in Isaac should the great promise be fulfilled; and on this Ishmael was sent away. Voltaire says—

'It was in Isaac that the race of the Patriarch was to be blessed; yet Isaac was father only of an unfortunate and contemptible nation, who were for a long period slaves, and have, for a still longer, been dispersed. Ishmael, on the contrary, was the father of the Arabs; who, in course of time, established the empire of the Caliphs, one of the most powerful and most extensive in the world.'

Verses 30 and 31. In chap, xxvi., v. 25, 32, and 33, we are told that it was not Abraham, but the servants of Isaac who digged the well; and that it was not Abraham, but Isaac who called the name of the place Beersheba. Which is correct, or were there two Beer-shebas? The thirty-third verse reads, 'Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.' The Rev. Dr. Giles adds, 'It is sufficient to remark that no city of Beersheba existed in the time of Moses; consequently, the Book in which it is found could not have been written by Moses or any of his contemporaries.'

Chapter xxii., v. 1. 'God did tempt Abraham.' It is quite clear that James, 'a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,' did not believe this verse; for, in his epistle to the twelve tribes, chap, i., v. 13, he says, that God never tempteth any man.

Verse 2. In the Douay, Abraham is told to go 'into the land of vision,' in our version, 'into the land of Moriah.' The Bible is so much made up of dreams and visions, that we cannot wonder the preachers should chiefly discourse upon castles in the air and crowns in heaven, not to be looked at in the present life, but to be enjoyed without stint in the next. It is one drawback that we are all to die first, because men may well doubt whether their decaying and decayed remains will rise again with capacity to enjoy the good things. This influences all; per example, assuming a bishop to be a sincere believer, we all know that he is reluctant to retire without his five shillings in this world, even while upheld by his faith in the crown he is to receive in the world to come. Any doubter can satisfy his conscience by reference to the late debates on the retiring bishop's bill.

Verse 4. Abraham does not speak the truth when he tells the young men that he and the young lad will return after worshipping, because at that time he intends to kill Isaac. I do not wish to imply by this criticism that I expect to find Abraham speaking the truth, because such an implication would not be justified. Abraham might have respected truth, perhaps did, but he kept a long way from it very often (*vide* his before-mentioned adventures with Pharaoh and Abimelech). Abraham even deceived his own son; see verses 7 and 8. On this Voltaire remarks—

'It seems astonishing that God, after causing Isaac to be born of a centenary father and a woman of ninety-five, should afterwards have ordered that father to murder the son whom he had given him, contrary to every expectation. This strange order from God seems to show that, at the time when this history was written, the sacrifice of human victims was customary amongst the Jews, as it afterwards became in other nations, as witness the vow of Jephtha.'

Newman adds, 'Paul and James agree in extolling Abraham as the pattern of faith; James and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews specify the sacrifice of Isaac as a first-rate fruit of faith; yet, if the voice of morality is allowed to be heard, Abraham was (in heart and intention) not less guilty than those who sacrificed their children to Molech.' See also 'Phases of Faith,' p. 91.

Verse 14. 'And Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah jireh;' in Exodus, chap, vi., v. 3, God says positively that he was not known to Abraham by the name Jehovah; which is true? If Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah jireh, he must have known the Lord by that name; either the account as to Abraham is untrue, or God had forgotten or made a mistake in Exodus. Which ever supposition is adopted, the Bible ceases to have any claim on us as a revelation from a truthful deity.

Verse 16. 'By myself have I sworn.' Can my readers imagine any form of oath an omnipotent, eternal, and infinite God would be like to use? Is God's oath to be considered more binding than his word? In our day, if a man swear to an untruth, We call it perjury; but, although God did not keep his oath, we must remember that his ways are not as our ways.

Chapter xxiii., verses 2 and 19, and verses 15 and 16 have been before noticed on page 5.

Chapter xxiv., v. 1. Abraham, in his old age, was more vigorous than in his youth and prime of life; for, by chap, xxv., v. 1 to 3, we learn that after this he took another one, and had six sons, and, by chap, xxv., v. 6, it would appear that he had other wives and children.

Verse 3. The conduct of Abraham and of God, as previously detailed, as to oath-taking, is disapproved in Matthew, chap, v., v. 34 to 37, and James, chap, v., v. 12.

Chapter xxv., v. 5 and 6. If Abraham gave 'all that he had' unto Isaac, what kind of gifts did his other children get?

Verse 8. One would scarcely fancy when reading the life of Abraham and this conclusion, that he had died younger than any of his predecessors on record. The Douay has it, 'and decaying, he died in a good old age, and having lived a long time.' Why, instead of dying in a good old age, he had lived a much shorter period than any of his ancestors, and the verse, to be in accordance with the previous chapters, ought to have lamented his premature death.

Verse 23. God seems to have a preference for younger sons; the dutiful Ishmael (who, though turned out into the desert to starve, forgot his wrongs, and attended to place his father's body in the grave) was set aside for his younger brother Isaac. The truthful, manly, and forgiving elder born Esau is supplanted by the crafty, cowardly, and untruthful Jacob.

Chapter xxvi., v. 7 to 11. Of this adventure happening a third time in the history of father and son, and a second time in the same country, Professor Newman says, 'Allowing that such a thing was barely not impossible, the improbability was so intense as to demand the strictest and most cogent proof; yet, when we asked who testified it, no proof appeared that it was Moses; or, supposing it to be he, what his sources of knowledge were'—and, on chap, xxvii., 'Was it at all credible that the lying and fraudulent Jacob should be so specially loved by God?'

Verse 34. These wives are differently named and described in chap, xxxvi., v. 2 and 3.

Chapter xxviii., v. 11. Even in a dream, the idea of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven to enable God and his angels to go up and down is rather ludicrous. The Douay says that Jacob 'saw the ladder in his sleep.' A dream, in Genesis, is intended to have a stronger significance than we should attach to it; we are told that God often appeared to various persons in dreams. The writer of Genesis evidently conceived a ladder necessary to enable God to get up to heaven, in the same style in which you or I might ascend to the roof of a house.

Verse 20. The inference from this conditional statement is, that if God does not keep, clothe, and feed Jacob, then he shall not be Jacob's God. Jacob was rather a shrewd fellow; he did not want to be religious for nothing.

Verse 22. How can a stone be God's house, and what benefit would tithes be to God?

Chapter xxix., v. 5. Laban was the son of Bethuel, not the son of Nahor; see chap, xxv., v. 20. Verse 17. [fpg40}](#) The Douay says that Leah was bleary-eyed. Verse 25. The cunning Jacob was outwitted by Laban, his uncle.

The bickerings between Jacob and his wives, and the curious mode of cheating Laban (chap, xxx., v. 32 to 42), need no comment other than that of surprise that a special providence should interfere to make women fruitful or barren, or to make sheep of divers colours, white, black, brown, speckled, spotted, grised, and ringstraked—extraordinary sheep those. In the Douay and Breeches Bibles, the word 'sheep' stands instead of 'cattle' in our version. Perhaps the authorised translators had never seen sheep so peculiar as those first described:

Chapter xxxi., v. 53. Who is the God of Nahor?

Chapter xxxii., v. 1. Who are the 'Angels of God?'

Verses 24 to 30. If any meaning is intended to be conveyed by; these verses, it is that the omnipotent and infinite God and his creature Jacob wrestled all night, and that in the morning God, finding that Jacob was as strong and clever at wrestling as himself, unfairly puts Jacob's thigh out of joint; notwithstanding which, Jacob refused to let go his hold of God Almighty until he had given him his blessing. I will not comment on this, because, to Freethinkers, the matter is too absurd, and, to Believers, too outrageous for remark.

On verse 32, the Rev. Dr. Giles remarks, 'This reference to a custom still existing among the Israelites, seems decidedly to indicate a later date than that of Moses. No one has ventured to assert that the Mosaic Law was observed by the Jews before it was instituted by Moses. Now, the words of the passage before us seem to show that the Israelites had, for a long time, abstained from eating the sinew which shrank. Moses, being conscious that this custom was ordained by himself, could hardly have used such language, or have claimed such great antiquity as the words seem to indicate.'

Verse 3 to 22, and chap, xxxiii., v. 1 to 15. Read this account attentively, and then ask yourselves which of the brothers was the more worthy of the promise—Esau, cozened out of his birthright, swindled out of his father's blessing, yet forgetting and forgiving when he had the power to crush and punish; or Jacob, the cheater, the liar, and the coward.

Chapter xxxiii., v. 19: In the Douay, instead of 'a hundred pieces of money,' we are told that Jacob gave the children of Hamor 'a hundred lambs.'

Verse 20 is thus translated; 'And raising an altar there, he invoked upon it the most mighty God of Israel.'

Whether Douay or Protestant translation be correct, it is quite certain that Jacob was a little too fast—there was no [—] (al alei ishral)—Jacob was not called Israel until chap, xxxv., v. 10—so that the 'El-elohe-Israel' of our version, and the 'most mighty God of Israel' of the Douay, are both out of place unless Jacob used the words in the spirit of prophecy, which will explain many difficult passages.

Chapter xxxiv. Upon this chapter Voltaire indulges in criticism more pungent than before:—

[fpg41}](#)

'Here our critics exclaim in terms of stronger disgust than ever. What! say they, the son of a king is desirous to marry a vagabond girl; the marriage is approved; Jacob, the father, and Dinah, the daughter, are loaded with presents; the King of Sichem deigns to receive those wandering robbers, called patriarchs, within his city; he has the incredible politeness or kindness to undergo, with his son, his court, and his people, the rite of circumcision, thus condescending to the superstition of a petty horde that could not call half a league of territory their own! And, in return for this astonishing hospitality and goodness, how do our holy patriarchs act? They wait for the day when the process of circumcision generally induces fever; when Simeon and Levi run through the whole city with poignards in their hands and massacre the king, the prince his son, and all

the inhabitants. We are precluded from the horror appropriate to this infernal counterpart of the tragedy of St. Bartholomew, only by a sense of its absolute impossibility. It is an abominable romance; but it is evidently a ridiculous romance. It is impossible that two men could have slaughtered in quiet the whole population of a city. The people might suffer, in a slight degree, from the operation which had preceded; but, notwithstanding this, they would have risen in self-defence against two diabolical miscreants; they would have instantly assembled, would have surrounded them, and destroyed them with the summary and complete vengeance merited by their atrocity.

'But there is a still more palpable impossibility. It is that, according to the accurate computation of time, Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, could be only four or five years old; and that, even by forcing up chronology as far as possible in favour of the narrative, she could, at the very most, be only eight. It is here, then, that we are assailed with bursts of indignant exclamation. What! it is said, what! is it this book—the book of a rejected and reprobate people—a book so long unknown to all the world—a book in which sound reason and decent manners are outraged in every page—that is held up to us as irrefragable, holy, and dictated by God himself? Is it not even impious to believe it? or could anything less than the fury of cannibals urge to the persecution of sensible and modest men for not believing it?'

Chapter xxxv., v. 11. Although kings were to come out of Jacob's loins by promise, Esau's issue have been quite as successful, in fact rather more so, without any of God's assistance.

Verse 22, and chap, xlix., v. 3 and 4. The family to whom God promised 'the land,' seem to have been as immoral and vicious as any on record. Abraham has been noticed; the conduct of Lot, his family, and neighbours I dare not comment on; Isaac was pretty free from blame, except in the matter of Rebekah; but his goodness is overborne by the rascality of his son Jacob and his wife, Rachel, who (worthy partner of such a husband) robs her own father—the cutthroat propensities of Simeon and Levi—and the licentiousness of Reuben. [\[pg42\]](#)

Chapter xxxv., end of verse 22 to verse 26. Dr. Giles speaks of the inaccuracy of the last verse, as follows:

—
"These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-Aram."

'But it is well known that Benjamin was born some years after Jacob returned to Canaan. The text, therefore, is incorrect, and creates a serious difficulty, if we suppose that Moses, writing in the presence of God, could have been liable to such an error.'

Chapter xxxvi., v. 2 and 3, are contradicted in chap, xxvi., v. 34.

Verses 14, 16, and 18. It is difficult to discover from this whether Korah was the son or grandson of Esau, as he is described in both characters.

Verse 31 has been referred to on page 6. In Dr. Giles's 'Hebrew Records,' page 140, the critical reader will find the matter discussed more fully than my pages allow.

Chapter xxxvii., v. 1. In the Douay, instead of 'wherein his father was a stranger,' it reads, 'wherein his father sojourned;' and, in verse 2, instead of 'seventeen,' it reads 'sixteen,' and states that Joseph 'accused his brethren to his father of a most wicked crime.'

Verses 25, 27, and 28. These verses are criticised in the 'Hebrew Records' as follows:—

'Here the merchants, to whom Joseph is sold, are twice called Ishmaelites, and once Midianites. Bishop Patrick explains the inconsistency in the following extraordinary manner:—

"*Ishmaelites*. They are called below Midianites. These people were near neighbours to each other, and were joined together in one company, or caravan, as it is now called. It is the custom, even to the present day, in the East, for merchants and others to travel through the deserts in large companies, for fear of robbers or wild beasts."

'If the passage to which these comments are annexed, occurred in one of the famous Greek or Latin historians—Livy, Thucydides, or any other—such a note would not, for one instant, be taken as sound criticism, because none of those able writers would be guilty of such an absurdity as applying two names, known to be distinct, to the same people, within the space of four lines. If some idle and weakly written tale contained the inconsistency, the mode of interpreting it, which Bishop Patrick applies to the passage before us, might be passed over, but, even then, more from its being of no importance, than from its soundness or its propriety. But, when we find this discrepancy in a work which professes to be inspired, it is highly desirable that such an inconsistency or discrepancy should be cleared up. Why have none of the commentators remarked on the singular circumstance of there being Ishmaelitish merchants at all, in the time when Joseph was sold into Egypt? Ishmael was Jacob's uncle, being brother to Isaac, Jacob's father. The family of Ishmael could not have increased to such an extent in the time of which the history treats. The mention of Ishmaelites, in the text before us, indicates that the writer lived many generations later, when Ishmaelitish merchants [\[pg43\]](#) were well known. Still less likely is it that there were Midianitish merchants in those days; for Midian was also one of the sons of Abraham, and fifty-four years younger than Isaac; see chap, xxv., y. 2. At all events, the variation in the name of this tribe of merchantmen renders it impossible that Moses could have written the narrative, unless we suppose that, when he had it in his power to describe the matter accurately and definitely, he rather chose to relate it in such a manner as to puzzle all future ages as to its exact meaning.'

Verse 35. In the Douay, the word 'hell' is substituted for the word 'grave.' The Hebrew is [—] (shale). Jacob believed his son devoured by wild beasts, and, therefore, could have hardly expected to find him in his grave; and, although hell might, perhaps, be the appropriate receptacle for one who had been so great a rascal as Jacob, yet, I much doubt whether he ever expressed his intention to go there to find his son. I must refer my more precise readers to the various controversial works written by various shades of Catholic and Protestant divines, on the words 'purgatory,' 'limbo,' 'hell,' and 'grave.'

Verse 36. The word [—] translated 'officer,' means eunuch, and is so translated in the Douay; if this be correct, we can scarcely wonder at the conduct of Potiphar's wife, as detailed in chap, xxxix.

Chapter xxxviii Judah and his children are a still further illustration of the happy and moral family in

whom all the nations of the world were to be blessed. The following is quoted from Voltaire:—

'The Rev. Father Dom Calmet makes this reflection, in alluding to the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis:—"Scripture," he observes, "gives us the details of a history, which, on the first perusal, strikes our minds as not of a nature for edification; but the hidden sense which is shut up in it is as elevated, as that of the mere letter appears low to carnal eyes. It is not without good reasons that the Holy Spirit has allowed the histories of Tamar, of Rahab, of Ruth, and of Bathsheba, to form a part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ."

'It might have been well, if Dom Calmet had explained these sound reasons, by which we might have cleared up the doubts, and appeased the scruples, of all the honest and timorous souls who are anxious to comprehend how this Supreme Being, the Creator of the world, could be born in a Jewish village, of a race of plunderers and of prostitutes. This mystery, which is not less inconceivable than other mysteries, was assuredly worthy the explanation of so able a commentator.'

Chapter xxxix. is inserted, I presume, by way of contrast, to heighten the effect produced by the previous chapter.

Chapter xl., v. 5, 8, 9, 12, and 16—chap, xli., v. 15 and 25. In Leviticus, chap, xix., v. 26, we find these words according to the Douay, 'You shall not divine nor observe dreams.'

Chapter xli., v. 38 and 39. One would imagine, by these verses, that Joseph and the Egyptians worshipped the same God, but this is not the fact; Pharaoh speaks to Moses of the Lord *your* God, and if the Egyptians had spoken in their usual manner, it would have been not to have praised Joseph for the Spirit of God being in him, but rather to have upbraided the infidel prisoner with having obtained his knowledge from the devil, unless, indeed, we are to assume that the religious Egyptians were more humane than the religious Christians. If Joseph had lived a few years later, he would have stood a fair chance of being stoned to death, for his divinations and fortune-telling (*vide* Exodus, chap, xxii., v. 18, and Deuteronomy, chap, xviii., v. 10, 11, and 12).

Verses 45 and 50. Potipherah is here called priest of On; in the Douay, he is denominated priest of Heliopolis. In plain truth, he was priest of the sun; and it might be instructive if it were possible to ascertain the reasons which induced the translators to hide Joseph's close connexion with sun worship.

Verse 56. This famine was over the whole earth, so that the favoured family of Abraham were worse off than the Egyptians, to whom God gave seven years' notice, to enable them to prepare against the coming trouble. We have all heard of people living on hope; and the children of Isaac might have hoped for the fulfilment of the promise, but such would be very unsubstantial food during a seven years' famine.

Chapter xliii., v. 32. How could it be considered an abomination for the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews? the latter were only the descendants of Abraham, few in number, and the Egyptians could not have known of their existence until they made acquaintance with Joseph; and, by giving him the daughter of the high priest to wife, they had conferred great honour and favour on him—he was the first in the land, and the only Hebrew amongst them.

Chapter xliv., v. 5 and 15. Joseph, according to this, used to divine in a cup. My grandmother used to inspect the dregs of her tea cup, and prophesy wondrously; but it is really too much to expect us to find a creed in such a cup.

Chapter xlvi., v. 1 to 3. God again appeared in a vision at night, that is, Jacob dreamed that he saw God.

The Rev. Dr. Giles observes on verses 8 to 26:—

'An error is found also in the other catalogue of Jacob's children, who accompanied him into Egypt. The names occupy from verse 8 to 25 of Genesis, chap. xlvi. In verse 26 it is said:—

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were three score and six."

'This total is erroneous, for the names, added properly, amount to sixty-seven; and a still greater difference is found between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, in the twenty-seventh verse; the former makes "all the souls of the house of Jacob," to be "three score and ten," whereas the latter states them to have been seventy-five.

'We might set aside the authority of the Septuagint as inferior to that of the Hebrew in such a matter, were it not, that in St. Stephen's speech, in the Acts of the Apostles, chap, vii., v. 14, the number 75 is repeated; and an awkward dilemma is created, from which it is impossible to extricate ourselves, if these conflicting accounts, both written by inspiration, are to be considered as having come down to us in their original state. This may, with justice, be called in question; for Dean Shuckford, who supposes that the transcribers have added something in chap, xxxv., accuses them of having omitted something in chap, xlvi., of having added a verse in xlvi., 27, of the Septuagint, which is more full than the Hebrew, and, lastly, of having altered seventy into seventy-five, in chap. vii. of the Acts. It is difficult to imagine how a book, with which such liberties have been taken, can properly be regarded as an immaculate record. But the same mode of interpretation is entirely inapplicable to explain the remarkable fact, that, among those who accompanied Jacob into Egypt, are enumerated, in chap, xlvi., v. 21, ten sons of Benjamin, and, in v. 12, two grandsons of Judah, Hezron and Hamul. Jacob surely went into Egypt soon after the famine began; and Benjamin was then a lad, if we may trust the chronologers, under twenty years of age. The grandsons of Judah, through his son Pharez, could not have been born until many years later; for Pharez, their father, was only two or three years old when the whole family first entered the land of their servitude.

'In verse 34 it is said, as a reason for the Israelites being placed in the land of Goshen, that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." But it appears, from every other part of the history of Joseph and Pharaoh, that there was no such enmity between them. This is also the opinion of Dr. Shuckford, whose account of the matter is as follows:—

"There is, indeed, one passage in Genesis which seems to intimate that there was that religious hatred, which the Egyptians were afterwards charged with, paid to creatures even in the days of Joseph; for we are informed that he put his brethren upon telling Pharaoh their profession, in order to have them placed in the

land of Goshen, for, or because, 'every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians,' Genesis, xlvi., v. 34. I must freely acknowledge that I cannot satisfy myself about the meaning of this passage; I cannot see that shepherds were really, at this time, an abomination to the Egyptians; for Pharaoh himself had his shepherds, and, when he ordered Joseph to place his brethren in the land of Goshen, he was so far from disapproving of their employment, that he ordered him, if he knew any men of activity amongst them, that he should make them rulers of his cattle; nay, the Egyptians were, at this time, shepherds themselves as well as the Israelites, for we are told, when their money failed, they brought their cattle of all sorts unto Joseph, to exchange them for corn, and, among the rest, their flocks of the same kind with those which the Israelites were to tell Pharaoh that it was their profession to take care of, as will appear to any one that will consult the Hebrew text in the places referred to. Either, therefore, we must take the expression that every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians to mean no more than that they thought meanly of the employment, that it was a lazy, idle, and inactive profession, as Pharaoh seemed to question whether there were any men of activity [\(pg46\)](#) amongst them, when he heard what their trade was; or, if we take the words to signify a religious aversion to them, which does, indeed, seem to be the true meaning of the expression, from the use made of it in other parts of Scripture, then I do not see how it is reconcilable with Pharaoh's inclination to employ them himself, or with the Egyptians being many of them, at this time, of the same profession themselves, which the heathen writers agree with Moses in supposing them to be. [Diod. Sic., lib. 1]," Though learned men have observed that there are several interpolations in the books of the Scriptures, which were not the words of the Sacred Writers, some persons, affecting to show their learning, when they read over the ancient MSS., would sometimes put a short remark in the margin, which they thought might give a reason for, or clear the meaning of, some expression in the text against which they placed it, or to which, they adjoined it; and from hence it happened, now and then, that the transcribers from manuscripts so remarked upon, did, through mistake, take a marginal note or remark into the text, imagining it to be a part of it. Whether Moses might not end his period in this place with the words, *that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen*; and whether what follows, *for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians*, may not have been added to the text in this way, is entirely submitted to the judgment of the learned. Connexion Book 5, vol. i., p. 341."

'The learned writer of this extract is more correct in his statement of the difficulty, than in its solution. It is a principle in criticism to consider a book as free from interpolation, until it is proved that interpolations have certainly been made. The charge of interpolation is brought against the books of the Old Testament for no other reason, than to reduce them into harmony with the preconceived opinion that they were written by the authors to whom they are commonly ascribed. In the present instance, there has been no interpolation.

The compiler, relating the honours paid to the family of Jacob in Egypt, and endeavouring to harmonise them with the state of things in his own times, 1,000 years later, when the Egyptians, by their religious absurdities, had been made to entertain an enmity towards shepherds, has given us a description which, in this particular, is inconsistent with itself. In short, the Egyptians held shepherds in aversion in the fifth, but not in the fifteenth, century before the Christian era.'

It is scarcely necessary to add to the above; but, if it were, it would be hard to reconcile there being an abomination with the eleventh verse of chap, xlvii., in which it is stated that Pharaoh gave these very people 'the best of the land, in the land of Rameses.'

Chapter xlviii., v. 22. Jacob's life contains no account of his wars with the Amorites; in fact, had it not been for these concluding words, I should have looked upon him as rather likely to gain victories by cozening and diplomatic swindling, than by his bow and sword.

Chapter 1., v. 10 and 11. These verses could not have been written by Moses, because Atad was not [\(pg47\)](#) *beyond* but on *this* side Jordan to him. Joseph did not cross the Jordan to bury his rather.

Before quitting Genesis, I will endeavour, as briefly as possible, to sum up the effect of my partial examination (I say partial, because there are many differences in the readings of the various manuscripts, and in the translation of the different versions, which I passed without notice, because they have seemed to me to be of comparative unimportance). I have shown, in the foregoing pages—first, that in the authorised version the book claims our attention under false pretences, that, in fact, it is not, and in the original does not claim to be, the work of Moses; many passages he could not have written, of the rest, some passages are evidently taken from different manuscripts, and badly joined or fitted in, so as to make up the text as we have it, forming, in many cases, a twice or even thrice told tale, as in the accounts of the creation, of the flood, the adventures of Abraham's wife, and of Jacob's wife, etc. Second, that it is impossible the book can be a revelation from God, because it contains passages in relation to deity which are in themselves ridiculously absurd, because it speaks of more Gods than one, treating some as superior and some as inferior Gods, because it degrades the deity to the level of man, making him grieve and repent, and become subject to the same passions and feelings as man, liable to heat and cold, etc, because it treats of the deity as a finite being, occupying a small portion of space, travelling from one part of the earth to another, going up to heaven and coming down therefrom with the aid of a ladder; because it relates that God has, or sometimes assumes, a finite, substantial shape, which a man may lay hold of and wrestle with; because it pictures God as favouring, without apparent reason, some men in preference to others, and, in very many instances, choosing as the objects of his divine favour the worst possible characters, rewarding fraud and knavery with lands flowing with milk and honey, and discouraging and discountenancing virtuous conduct either by leaving it unnoticed or by depriving the unfortunate virtuous man of some benefit to which he appeared to be entitled; because it represents a just and Almighty God allowing the happiness of his own creatures to be destroyed by one of the animals he had created, and then cursing the tempted man and woman for being frail enough to fall at the first temptation, when, in fact, he (God) was the cause of that very frailty; because it represents the same Deity pledging his oath to a promise which he either never intended to perform, or which he did not possess the ability to perform, or which he afterwards wilfully broke.

Third.—That it cannot be relied on as a relation of actual occurrences, because, in the account of the creation, science has enabled us to detect several positively false statements in the account of the flood; also several gross and palpable mis-statements occur; because, in dealing with dates and genealogical statements, it contradicts and confuses its own narrative; because, even where it pretends to be the most real, it is

alleged, in another book of the same Bible, to be purely allegorical. Fourth.—That it ought not to be used as [\(pg48\)](#) an educational work for the foregoing reasons, and because of the various obscene passages spread throughout the book; because, also, the youthful scholar will find cunning, craft, and cheating rewarded and preferred, while honesty and noble conduct is unnoticed; because he will find the practice of sacrifice is encouraged, and sacrifice, either human or bestial, is degrading and debasing; because he will find cruelties detailed at which his nature must revolt or become deteriorated.

In Foxton's work on 'Popular Christianity,' a quotation is given from the *Prospective Review*, in which the writer suggests:—

'That the Jews, like every other nation of antiquity, have framed for themselves a mythical history, which, with the lapse of time, has been received for fact. This at once releases us from the necessity of any elaborate contrivances for reconciling their belief with probability and the laws of nature; and exhibits a phenomenon so universal and so natural, that it would have been a miracle if the Jewish literature had been an exception to it. But the transition from regarding the first chapters of Genesis as an inspired record, to treating them as only a picture of the popular notions of the age in which they were produced, is too violent to be made at once by any large portion of the public. We are not sorry, therefore, that, from time to time, hypotheses are proposed which smooth the descent from one of these opinions to the other, and make the gradients safer. The clerical geologists would have been suspended by their diocesans, or hooted from their pulpits, if they had not been able, at first, to profess that their discoveries confirmed the Mosaic account of the deluge, and did not contravene that of the creation. Time has familiarised men with the idea that they are not to look into Scripture for geology; and we hope that its professors will soon come openly to avow this, and cease to torture the words of Genesis into a conformity with their science. Public opinion is so tyrannically intolerant, and its penal power so fearful, that we cannot expect the whole truth to be told, or even to be seen, at once. But while we admit the temporary value of such intermediate stages of opinion, we are bound to declare our judgment that they are merely temporary, and have no solid basis.'

My only object in collecting together these criticisms on the Bible, is to free the human family from the many evils which, in my opinion, attach to, and are consequent on, a belief in the divine origin of the Book.

The child is taught to believe the Bible is the word of God, at an age when he can scarcely read its words; he is taught to regard with horror every attempt to criticise its pages; and the result is, that when his senses point out a fact, and that fact clashes with his Bible, he is bewildered and confused, he knows not what to think, and unless he be of great mental power, he ends by not thinking at all, and becomes professedly a believer, but in reality a man who dares not reason.

BOOK II. EXODUS

The title, 'Second Book of Moses,' is an interpolation, forming no part of the text. The remark on page four, [\(pg49\)](#) as to titles and headings, applies to the whole of the Bible.

Chapter 1., vv. 6 and 7. 'Joseph died and his brethren, and all that generation and the children of Israel were fruitful, * * * and the land was filled with them.' If these words mean anything, they mean that in the duration of a little more than one generation, the children of one man multiplied so as to fill the whole of the land of Egypt, and to become exceedingly mighty. Devout believers can only wonder that this numerous and exceedingly mighty people allowed the Egyptians so to maltreat and oppress them; or that this fruitful and abundantly increasing people who filled all the land, had only two midwives to attend them. The believers may also wonder why God made houses for those midwives to live in, when if the Israelites were so exceedingly fruitful and numerous, the midwives could have but little time to live in their own houses, but must have been always employed in their professional avocations. Admirers of God's truthfulness may likewise wonder why he rewarded the midwives for telling Pharaoh a lie, when by his power he might have saved them the necessity.

Chapter ii., vv. 16, 17, 18. From these verses it would seem that the name of the father-in-law of Moses was Reuel, but according to chap. iii., v. 1, chap. iv., v. 18, chap. xviii., vv. 1, 2, 5, 6, and 12, his name was not Reuel, but Jethro, while according to Numbers, chap. x., v. 29, his name was neither Reuel nor Jethro, but was Raguel. On reference to the Hebrew text, I find the same word [—] is carelessly anglicised as Reuel and Raguel; this will not, however, explain the third name, Jethro, and if we treat Moses as the author, it will be difficult to understand how he could be mistaken in the correct name of his own father-in-law.

Verses 23 and 24. These verses imply that until the cries and groanings came up to God, he had forgotten his chosen Israelites, and his solemn covenant, oath, and promise. This view is confirmed by the Douay translation of verse 25, which adds, 'And the Lord looked upon the children of Israel, and he knew them.' As though he had refreshed his memory by so looking on them.

Chapter iii., v. 2. The Douay says that 'the Lord appeared,' instead of the angel. The picture of the Omnipotent and: Eternal God appearing as a flame of fire in the middle of a bush, which burns, but is not burnt, and desiring Moses to take his shoes off, is scarcely calculated to arouse a reverential feeling in our minds.

Verse 6. In Genesis, chap. xxxv., v. 10, God said of Jacob, 'Thy name shall not be any more called Jacob, Israel is thy name,' yet we find he calls himself 'the God of Jacob,' and uses the name 'Jacob' no fewer than eight times in the book of Exodus alone. Verse 22. This mode of 'borrowing' seems very much like stealing, [\(pg50\)](#) and the translators of the Breeches Bible in a note say that this example is not to be followed generally.

Chapter iv., v. 14. The anger of the Lord kindled, and why? Because Moses tells him that he is not a good speaker, and that he (Moses) therefore desired the Lord to choose somebody else to represent his wishes to

Pharaoh and the Jews. But why should the Lord be angry? he must have himself foreknown and foreordained that Moses should be reluctant to go.

Verse 21. What are the miracles which are previously mentioned but so many incidents in a solemn farce, if God had already determined that Pharaoh should pay no attention to them? The serpent, rod, and the leprous hand, not being intended by God to move Pharaoh, of what use are they? In the third chapter, God tells Moses to use subterfuge to Pharaoh, by pretending that the Jewish nation only wanted to go three days' journey to sacrifice in the wilderness, and at the same time God says that he is 'sure the King of Egypt will not let you go.' If God is the ruler and ordainer of all things, he must have ruled and ordained that his chosen people should be ill-treated by Pharaoh, whom God must have created for that very purpose. Can anything be more inconsistent and less calculated to enable us to admire the character of a just and merciful Deity?

Verse 26. What does this mean? If the Lord sought to kill Moses, what hindered him from carrying out his desire? It is strange that he should seek to kill the very man whom he had selected to lead his chosen people out of Egypt. The circumcision of the son of Moses seems connected with the story, but not very clearly. The abrupt transition from the message to Pharaoh, to the seeking to kill Moses, shows that something has been lost from the original text. The verses 22 to 27 read as they stand are absurd. In our version we are told that *after* the Lord let Moses go, Zipporah said 'A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.' In the Douay we find that Zipporah used these words *before* the Lord let Moses go.

Verses 28, 29, and 30. Aaron who wrought the signs, and spoke the words to the people, did so without any direct communication from God. He must have been more credulous than Moses, for he seems to have readily undertaken, upon the mere representation of his brother, that which his brother had hesitated to do, although personally commanded by God.

In chap, v, we find that Moses complains to God that the Jews are worse off since his message, and he expresses himself in a manner which implies doubt as to whether God really intend to deliver his people.

Chapter vi., v. 3 (see also page 38 of this work), Here is a positive statement that God was known unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name [—] (Bal Shadi, translated, God Almighty), but not by the name [—] (yeue, anglicised as Jehovah). This statement, professedly from the lips of God himself, is absolutely contradicted by the book of Genesis, in which the name [—] occurs no less than 130 times. In the Douay it [\(pg51\)](#) reads, 'and my name Adonai I did not show them,' and in a foot-note we are told that the name Adonai is substituted for the four letters [—], because the Jews out of reverence never pronounce "this word. This is not true: the Jews simply do not pronounce the word, because without points it is unpronounceable. 'The nearest approach to the exact utterance or pronunciation of this word will be produced by suspending the action of all the organs of articulation, and making only that convulsive heave of the larynx, by which the bronchial vessels discharge the accumulated phlegm; it is enunciated with the most eloquent propriety in the act of *vomiting?* (Vide Taylor's 'Diegesis,' chap. 22.)

Verses 12 and 30. The fear expressed by Moses that Pharaoh will not listen to him, because he (Moses) has not been circumcised, is strongly corroborative of Voltaire's criticism given on page 35 of this work.

Verses 26 and 27 could never have been written by Moses, but must have been written long after, by some one who wished to identify the Aaron and Moses of the genealogy with the Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord spoke.

Chapter vii., v. 1. What is meant by the words 'I have made thee a God to Pharaoh?' In what sense could Moses be considered as Pharaoh's God? He was not worshipped by Pharaoh, nor did he rule Pharaoh.

Verses 10, 11, and 12. Is it necessary to argue in the middle of the nineteenth century that the whole account of these miracles are unreasonable as well as impossible? unreasonable, because even the most pious Theist, if he claimed for God the power to turn a rod into a serpent, would hardly concede the same power to the sorcerers and magicians of Egypt. The throwing down the rod by Aaron, its change into a serpent, and the swallowing the other rods, form a display without purpose or utility, because God has already predestined that they should produce no effect whatever upon Pharaoh.

Verses 19, 20, and 21. These verses, if they mean anything, mean that the *whole of the water* in Egypt was turned to blood; if so, the twenty-second verse would be incorrect in stating that the magicians did the same, because, *if all the water* were already turned to blood by Aaron, there would not be any left for the magicians to operate upon. We are told that this plague was throughout the whole of the land of Egypt; if so, the Jews must have suffered equally with the Egyptians. This for seven days in a warm country would have been a terrible plague. The same remarks apply to the following plague of frogs.

Chapter viii., w. 17 and 18. It is scarcely a matter for wonder that the magicians could not turn the dust into lice, when we are told that *all the dust* had been previously changed by Aaron.

Verses 22 and 23. It is evident from these verses that the Jews had been equal participators in all the evils attaching to the previous plagues.

Chapter ix., v. 10. What beasts could the boils break out on, when all were killed by murrain in verse 6? [\(pg52\)](#) Verses 19, 20, 21, and 25. Either the cattle which were dead in verse 6 had been restored to life, of which we have no account, or these verses are positively absurd as well as false.

Chapter xi., v. 3. 'And the Lord *gave* the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.' The Douay reads, 'And the Lord *will give* favour to his people.' Our version is evidently incorrect, because the Egyptians afterwards suffered another plague, which would have been unnecessary. 'And the man Moses was very great in the land.' Moses can scarcely be supposed to have written this.

Chapter xii., v. 29. In this verse is related the horrible consummation of a series of plagues which God had caused to fall on the Egyptians. And why all this punishment? Was it because the Egyptians as a nation had oppressed the Israelites? If so, the cattle, the trees, and the green herbs were sharers in the punishment although not in the offence, and the Egyptians could never have oppressed the Israelites if it had not been permitted by the Omnipotent Deity who had sworn to protect and cherish them. Was the punishment because Pharaoh would not let the Children of Israel go? If so, what had the first-born of the 'maid-servant in the mill

and of the captive in the dungeon' to do with his offence? But even Pharaoh was specially controlled by God; in chap. iv., v. 21, chap. vii., v. 3, chap. ix., v. 12, chap. x., vv. 1, 20, and 27, chap. xi., v. 10, and chap. xiv., v. 4, we have distinct repetitions of the statement that God himself hardened Pharaoh's heart and prevented him from allowing the Children of Israel to go. Then, why all this punishment? In chap. ix., v. 16, chap. x., v. 2, and chap. xiv. v. 4, we are told that God raised Pharaoh up for the very purpose of smiting him and his people, so that the name of God might be declared throughout all the earth, that the Israelites might worship the Lord, and that the name of God might be honoured amongst the Egyptians; and to attain this result, God plagues and torments the Egyptian nation with most painful and destructive plagues, killing the first-born in every family, from him that sat on the throne to the captive in the dungeon, and ending by drowning Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. The religious thinker who attempts to contemplate this horrible picture, and who might, perhaps, be tempted to blaspheme by questioning God's justice and goodness, will be saved from this dilemma by a consciousness of the falsity of the whole tale, which is manifested in a most ridiculous manner. According to chap. ix., vv. 3 and 6, all the cattle of the Egyptians, their horses, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep, were killed by the murrain; by verse 10 of the same chapter, a boil breaking forth with blains is sent upon the same cattle; by verse 19 the Egyptians are cautioned to gather in *their already dead cattle* lest they should again die from the effects of the hail, and those who feared the Lord amongst the servants of Pharaoh made his *dead* cattle flee into the house lest they should be killed again, and those who did not fear the Lord had their cattle killed a second time by the hail; in chap. x., v. 25, Moses asks Pharaoh to give him some of his *twice killed* cattle that he may kill them a third time as sacrifices to the Lord; in chap. xii., v. 29, [pg53](#) God, in the night, kills the first-born of all the cattle, some of which must have been *thrice* killed; yet, despite all this (notwithstanding they had all been killed by the murrain, nearly killed over again by the boils and blains, killed another time by the hail, and the first-born destroyed in the night-time by the Lord) we find Pharaoh with an army of chariots, horses, and Horsemen, who are finally and irreversibly got rid of by being drowned in the Red Sea. In Thomas Paine's 'Essay on Dreams,' he makes some very severe remarks upon the contemptible picture which Old Testament writers give of their God in relation to these plagues upon the Egyptians.

Chapter xii., vv. 35 and 36. This is clearly nothing but robbery. The Egyptians simply lent because they could not avoid doing so; it was quite a Russian loan, raised by force. After saying that the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, the expression, 'And they spoiled the Egyptians,' reads with a curious meaning.

Verses 40 and 41 have been noticed on page 32 of this work. Stephen, in Acts, chap. vii., v. 6, says it was four hundred years. Dr. John Pye Smith, with all his orthodoxy, felt that there was a great difficulty to encounter, and writes as follows:—

'Many comprehend in this reckoning the time from the communication to Abraham (Genesis, chap. xv., v. 13) or his entrance into Canaan ten years earlier. This will leave only two hundred and fifteen years for the sojourn in Egypt. Yet, during that period, the population increased to what would give 603,550 *warriors*, men above twenty years old, not including the tribe of Levi (Numbers, chap. i., v. 46). Hence, it is scarcely imaginable that the whole number of the nation could be less than two millions; an increase from seventy-two, which is quite impossible. Supposing that they doubled themselves every fourteen years, the number would have been less than half a million. But if four hundred and thirty years be taken, the increase is probable. We see, also, that the males of the whole family of Kohath were 8,600 (Numbers, chap. iii., v. 28); yet Kohath had only four sons (Exodus, chap. vi., v. 18), from whom the grandsons mentioned are eight in number, none being mentioned from Hebron, who, perhaps, died childless. Also, that the father of Moses should have married the daughter of Levi, appears impossible. Surely, then, one or more generations have fallen out from the table (Exodus, chap. vi., vv. 17 and 18).'

By this extract from Dr. John Pye Smith's 'First Lines of Christian Theology,' my reader will see the manner in which orthodox divines overcome difficulties in the text. Finding that it is impossible to receive this part as true, it is suggested that one or more generations may have fallen out of the table, and that it was impossible that the father of Moses could have married the daughter of Levi. Exodus, chap. vi., v. 20, is precise on this point; but taking Dr. Smith's explanation, how can we place reliance on a revelation from God, which is admitted to be imperfect and untruthful in any part? If fallible in matter of detail, it is probably the [pg54](#) same in matters of doctrine.

Verse 44. This is one of the verses on which the slaveholders of America rely. I shall deal with the question more fully hereafter.

Chapter xiii., v. 2. By this and several other texts, it appears that the first-born, both of man and beast, were devoted to the Lord. It is quite clear that the beasts were slaughtered as sacrifices, but it is not so clear as to the fate of the human beings. There are special regulations for their redemption, by the payment of cattle, but the unredeemed are not mentioned. It is apparent from Leviticus, chap. xxvii, w. 27 and 28, the history of Jephtha's daughter, Judges, chap. xii., that human sacrifices were parcel of the Jewish religious rites; a portion of their prisoners seem to have been sacrificed to the Lord after each victory, as in other idolatrous nations; and in Jephtha's case, we find these remarkable words after the account of the sacrifice, 'And it was a custom in Israel.'

Verses 17 and 18. Even a devout believer might be sadly puzzled by these verses. Was God afraid lest the people should repent? and did he express that fear to his confidant, Moses, or in what manner, and to whom did God speak? Did God lead his chosen people into Egypt to avoid all wars? if so, how comes it that we almost immediately hear of the battle with the Amalekites? (*vide* chap. 17). God's fears seem ill-founded, for the Jews although they had a very hard fight with the Amalekites, even with God's aid, never talked of returning to Egypt, in consequence of that fight.

Chapter xiv., vv. 24 and 25. Our authorised translation reads, 'The Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels that they drave them heavily.' In the Douay it is, 'The Lord, looking upon the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, slew their host and overthrew the wheels of their chariots, and they

were carried into the deep.'

Verse 31. The Israelites' belief in the Lord and in his servant Moses was of a very unstable nature, notwithstanding all the mighty miracles alleged to have been wrought in their presence. If the Israelites doubted Moses and disbelieved in God, with the terrible series of plagues fresh in their recollection, can it be wondered that we, to whom they are related in so incoherent a style, at this distance of time, should also have misgivings as to their truth?

Chapter xv., v. 3. This expression, 'The Lord is a man of war,' is hardly calculated to inspire us with that love of God it is alleged to be so necessary to our salvation.

Verse 8. 'Nostrils.' This, we are told, is to be read as figurative. How unfortunate that in a revelation words are used which are to be understood as meaning something different from the real signification.

Verse 11. Who are the Gods? In the Douay the phrase is translated, 'Who is like unto thee amongst the strong, O Lord?' The Roman Catholics wished to avoid the suspicion of polytheism. Verse 12. Poetic licence is used here; it was not the earth, but the water, which swallowed the Egyptians. [\(pg55\)](#)

Chanter xvi., v. 3. If we may judge by the Israelites' own account, starvation was not one of the phases of oppression suffered by them in Egypt.

Verse 4. It is clear that the Deity of Moses was not an Omniscient Deity, for he says, 'I will rain bread from heaven for you, etc., that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no;' so that God did not know until he had proved them whether they would obey or disobey, and yet we are taught that he is the Infinite and Omnipotent ordainer of all things.

Verse 8. This verse must be misplaced, as Moses had not yet been informed that God intended to give the Israelites flesh. See verses 4 and 12.

Verse 15. The children of Israel did not call the bread from heaven manna, but they said when they saw it, [—] (Man eua), i.e., What is this?

Verses 20 to 24. By these verses it appears that while the manna invariably putrefied if kept till the second day on six days of the week, yet, if the second day happened to be the seventh, then no putrefaction took place. This corresponds with what I have heard as to some Scotch cities, in which the Sabbath is so strictly observed, that if salts or jalap happened to be taken as medicine on Saturday night, they refused to work during the whole of Sunday.

Verse 35 has been noticed on page 6.

Verse 36 must have been written when the omer had become obsolete as a measure amongst the Jews, or the verse would be unnecessary.

Chapter xvii., w. 5 and 6. This striking the rock for water is a miracle; a devout man may believe in it; I confess I do not understand the process, although I admit it would be very useful in the desert, if practicable.

Verses 9 to 13. Can any man believe that if Napoleon had stood on an eminence near the scene at Waterloo, and had held up his hand, this would have influenced the success of either party? Why should a man believe that in relation to Moses to which he would refuse credence in the present day? and if God was really on the side of the Israelites, why did he allow his aid to depend upon whether Moses could hold up his hand?

Verses 14 and 16. Why was Amalek to be so punished? God the Creator must have created both Amalekites and Israelites, yet he favours the latter and declares war against the former from generation to generation. What a strange idea to convey in relation to an Omnipotent Deity—strife between the Infinite God and his weak and puny creature. By the expression 'the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation,' true believers may learn that God predetermined to make war upon unborn generations of Amalekites, whom he created for the purpose of exterminating.

Chapter xviii., vv. 1 to 6. Some part of the previous history must be lost, as we have no account of Moses sending his wife back; on the contrary, in chap. iv., v. 20, we are told that he took both her and his two sons into Egypt. [\(pg56\)](#)

Jethro gave his son-in-law very sensible advice, and the only matter of surprise is that Moses listened to it. Usually, priests of different religions snarl at one another like angry, half-fed curs, growling over a solitary bone, and if a priest of one sect (out of the ordinary course) offered good advice to another sect, it would probably be treated with neglect and contempt.

Chapter xix., w. 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, and 19. In these verses we have an account of the meeting of Moses and God. If this had been in the book of Mormon or in the Koran, some Christian critic would have at once exclaimed, 'Why, this is all imposture! for these reasons—the man who led the people, and who wished to pretend that he was to have an interview with God, took very great pains to keep the people at a sufficient distance to prevent detection of his schemes; the trumpet sounding, the darkness, the thunder and lightning, are so many scenic appliances to give effect to the delusion. Perhaps the mount was a volcanic one, in which case the addition of the trumpet soundings completed the scene; and the secrecy observed as to all the transactions on the mount protected the man from exposure. How careful are the directions given to prevent any inquisitive straggler from getting sufficiently near to make a fatal discovery! But no man in his senses will believe that God blew a trumpet, or caused a trumpet to be blown, to announce his coming, and that he descended upon Sinai surrounded by fire and smoke. In all fabulous relations we find such things, but it is absurd to suppose that this refers to an Almighty and Infinite Deity. We are told in verse 20, 'The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mount, and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up.' Can you require stronger evidence of the mythological character of your book? Your Omnipresent and Infinite Deity is pictured as standing on the top of a mountain, and calling to Moses, who was down below, to come up to him.

Verse 15. This is one of the verses which no amount of commentary can make intelligible: 'Come not at your wives.' Why not?

Chapter xx. The second verse of this chapter begins in the first person, 'I am the Lord,' and continues in the first person to verse 6, where it merges into the third person. Verse 5 is contradicted by Ezekiel, chap.

xviii., v. 20, 2 Kings, chap, xiv., v. 6, and Deuteronomy, chap, xxiv., v. 16. This is as positive and distinct a specimen of contradiction as can be found anywhere. In the third commandment we are told that God is a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. In the other three texts, we are told that the child shall not be put to death for the father, but every man for his own sin. By the following contrast of the Fourth Commandment, as given in the second and fifth books of the Pentateuch, biblical students may judge how far they may rely on the reasons for closing the museums, mechanics' institutes and crystal palaces, and opening churches, chapels, and gin palaces on the seventh day, [\(pg57\)](#)
Chap. xx., vv. 8, 9, 10, 11.

8.—Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

9.—Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10.—But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates:

11. 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 seventh day, and hallowed it.

DEUT. Chap, v., w. 12, 13, 14, 15.

12.—Keep the Sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

13.—Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:

14.—But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.

15.—And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.

Which is the correct reason for sanctifying the Sabbath-day?

Was it because the Lord rested, or because the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt on that day? The true believer will devoutly answer, 'The Lord only knows.'

Chapter xxi., vv. 2 to 6. Leviticus, chap, xxv., vv. 44 to 46. In these verses we find slavery acknowledged, and its continuance provided for by the law of God. The offering a slave his liberty on condition that he abandoned his wife whom he loved, and his children who are of his flesh and blood, is a piece of refined cruelty. Perhaps God did not know that a slave was capable of love, perhaps God was not aware that the slave in his hovel may have as true and as warm an affection for his wife and children as the king in his palace, or the noble in his fine mansion. Is a slave a man with a man's passions and feelings, or is he an inferior animal? If the Bible is to be examined before replying to the question, and if we are to govern our mode of answering by the words we find there, it ceases to be a matter for wonder that there are slave States in Christian countries.

It is a beautiful theory this, and worthy of a place in a revelation from an all-wise and all-good God—i. e., that a man may be a religious man and yet keep his brother and sister as male and female slaves, breeding and begetting other slaves. How did this slavery originate? before the flood slaves are not mentioned. If God made all men originally free, how did any become slaves? Verse 6 is contradicted in Leviticus, chap, xxv., w. [\(pg58\)](#)
39 to 42.

Verses 7 to 11. These verses contain a provision for the sale by a man of his own daughter. And for what purpose? Our translators have endeavoured to hide the real meaning of the text. Verse 7 reads, 'And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the *men servants* do.'

In the Douay it is, 'If a man sell his daughter to be a servant, she shall not go out as *bondwomen* are wont to go out.'

The 8th verse in our translation reads—'If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed to sell her to a strange nation; he shall have no power seeing *he hath dealt deceitfully with her.*' In the Douay, 'If she displease the eyes of her master to whom she was delivered, he shall let her go, but he shall have no power to sell her to a foreign nation *if he despise her?* In the Breeches Bible the whole truth is revealed, for we find the last words of the 8th verse translated, '*seeing he hath deflowered her.*'

Lest there should be a mistake, I will further contrast the translation of verse 10. In our version it is, 'If he take him another *wife* her food, her raiment, and her *duty of marriage* he shall not diminish.'

In the Douay, 'If he take another wife for him, he shall provide her a marriage, and raiment, neither shall he refuse the *price of her chastity.*'

In the Breeches Bible, 'If he take him another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her raiment, and *recompense of her virginity?*

Can any man doubt as to the real meaning of these verses? Is it not clear and beyond contradiction that here is a law professedly from a God of truth and purity, rendering it lawful for a man to prostitute his own daughter. Our translators have cleverly glossed the text, partially hiding its disgusting meaning, but still enough was left to excite suspicion. I have investigated it, and now lay the result before you, and ask you one and all is this the Book from which you let your little girls read, and from which you expect them to acquire that knowledge which shall render them happy and virtuous?

I have already remarked upon the recognition of slavery by God. We have seen how Ishmael was not allowed to participate in the promised land, because he was born a slave. But it remained for us to read more of this Bible before we discovered that a just God, who is no respecter of persons, who is the father of us all, who loves the whole world, and who looks alike upon king and peasant, could make such a regulation as the following:—

Verses 20 and 21. 'And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue for a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money.' We are here told that if one of God's children, whom God caused to be born free, kills another of God's children, whom God has caused to be born a slave, the murderer shall escape punishment, if (as the Douay quaintly expresses it) the party remain alive a day or two after the infliction of the punishment, which was the primary cause of death. Why is this mercy? is it because God so loves all the world that he does not wish to shed the blood of any man? No: but because the slave killed is the murderer's money. He (the murderer) bought and paid for that slave with bright gold and the power of gold is recognised even in the kingdom of God. To-day

the Society for Suppression of Cruelty to Animals would prosecute and obtain the committal to prison of any man, who, on such prosecution, should be found guilty of beating his horse or his dog, so that it died on the second or third day. It would be no defence to urge on the part of the prisoner that he had paid for the ill-used animal. The whole auditory would hiss the advocate who raised such a defence. But in a trial at the last day before the Supreme Judge, when a 'Legree' is accused of the murder of an 'Uncle Tom,' may raise a valid defence with the words, 'He was my money.' The power of gold will open the gates of heaven to the murderer, who can look complacently down into hell upon the murderers who had no money.

Chapter xxii., v. ll. Here oaths are commanded; in Matthew, chap. v., w. 34 to 37, and James, chap. v., v. 12, they are forbidden.

Verse 18. 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' In the Douay, 'Wizards thou shalt not suffer to live.' Can we wonder that our criminal courts occasionally reveal a scene of life in which we see one man parting with his hard-earned pence to propitiate another man, whom he believes to possess some supernatural power? It is customary on such occasions, for the presiding magistrate to deplore the ignorance of the labouring classes, and to exclaim against the folly of believing in witches and wizards, yet he swears the complainant on the Bible, containing this verse, and would refuse to receive his evidence, if, after hearing the magistrate's opinion on the folly of believing in witchcraft, he should happen to remark, 'Then I cannot believe in the Bible.'

Verses 20 and 28, and chap. xxiii., v. 13. Who and what are these Gods, and why these commands? The sole end of this religion is the worship of one God, yet here are other Gods referred to. If I sacrifice to them, I hazard destruction, and if I revile them, I shall fare no better. As for cursing the ruler of my people, I am one of those who deem curses to be vain words, which a man had far better leave unuttered; if the ruler does wrong, let him rule no longer, but let the people place another in his stead.

Chapter xxiv., vv. 9 to 14, are contradicted in chap. xxxiii., v. 20, John, chap. i., v. 18, 1st Epistle of John, chap. iv., v. 12, 1st Epistle to Timothy, chap. i., v. 17, Colossians, chap. i. vv. 15. It cannot be urged that this is figurative, because the evident intention is to give a literal account of seventy-four persons going up to see God. To what place they went up is not clear, it was not the mount, or but a short distance on it, for Moses and Joshua left them, and went up from them into the mount.

In the Hindoo mythology we shall find several instances of Gods, under whose feet paved work may be seen; but these Gods are neither omnipotent, infinite, nor omniscient. All enlightened Christians admit that the whole list of Indian deities is fabulous, and while they gaze on the curious pictures given in the 'Asiatic Researches,' and other works, they feel convinced of the superiority of their own system, which is free from such ridiculous absurdities. But how do these enlightened Christians deal with this chapter, which tells them their 'invisible' God was seen by seventy-four men in a fiery mount, with as it were, a paved work under his feet?

Dr. John Pye Smith, never at a loss, easily reconciles these apparent discrepancies by asserting that they refer to the different persons of the Father and the Messiah, but this is only 'confusion worse confounded,' for it is quite clear that it was not the Messiah who is referred to, either here or in the many other texts speaking of the appearance of the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it is also clear that Jesus was not invisible; so we are left without aid from the Reverend Dr.'s comment, and must still wonder how an 'invisible' God ever appeared to anybody.

Chapter xxv., v. 30. Here is an absurd and useless regulation. God could not and did not eat this bread.

Verse 40. What patterns were these, and is not Moses supposed to be in the mount when these words were spoken? This verse either refers to a previous interview, of which we have no account, or else this did not take place in the mount at all.

Chapter xxviii., w. 40, 41, and 42. Can anything be more puerile than to imagine the God of the universe giving directions for the particular description of girdle, bonnet, and breeches to be worn by some insignificant puny creatures, crawling on the outside of a little planet called the earth?

Chapter xxix., v. 44. At the very time that God was thus intimating that he would sanctify Aaron, the latter must have been engaged in the manufacture of the calf. Did God know this? If he did, it is hard to understand how he chose an idolator for his priest. If otherwise, God is not omniscient. The family of Levi, who were so severely cursed by Jacob, seem the most favoured by Jacob's God.

Chapter xxx., v. 6. It is not quite clear where this altar was to be placed; but from the text it appears to have been placed in the 'holiest of holies,' which creates a doubt as to how an altar in daily use could be situate in a place only entered once a year. The text is, however, rather complex in its description, and I may be mistaken in my reading.

Verse 15. The words 'when they gave an offering unto the Lord to make atonement for your souls,' are totally omitted in the Douay version.

Verses 22 to 38. God, who is a God of love and full of mercy and loving kindness, here ordains that every man who shall manufacture a particular kind of scented pomatum, shall be put to death. Christian Theist, you tell me that yours is the 'eternal, immortal, and only wise God' (*vide* 1st Timothy, chap. i., v. 17)—do you in truth believe that he would order me to be utterly cut off because I might perhaps unconsciously make a

scented ointment of a particular character? Do you believe if I take a certain description of perfumed pomatum, and 'smell thereto,' previous to rubbing some on the hair of my head, that I shall be put to death? Perhaps these enactments were only meant for the Jews, who seem to have required some strange laws; if so, it is a pity God has allowed the Book to come to us in its present state, as we find it hard to conceive (without any fact to reason upon) that one verse is intended only for the Jews, and the following one intended for the whole world.

Chapter xxxi., v. 15. Moses would never have joined the 'Society for Abolition of Capital Punishment,' if it had been established in his day. This verse must have since become a dead letter, an obsolete statute which God does not enforce in the present age. But if this verse is a dead letter, how much more of the Bible is affected in the same manner? Who is to tell which enactments may be safely disobeyed, and which carry with them the terrible penalty?

V. 17. 'He rested and was refreshed.' Although even the most faithful and pious believer must have great difficulty in attempting to contemplate that stupendous work, the creation of the universe out of nothing, yet this great difficulty sinks into utter insignificance beside the greater one of endeavouring to imagine the omnipotent and immutable Deity resting after his labour, and being refreshed.

V. 18. The expression 'finger of God' is evidently intended to be understood literally here, but the question then arises as to the nature of an infinite spirit without body, parts, or passions (*vide* thirty-nine articles), yet having fingers, hands, face, and back parts. Dr. Pye Smith says, on the [— — — —] (anthropopatheia) of the Scriptures (treatment of God as if possessing a human shape and nature)—'This is very remarkable and very extensive, but it is manifested by comparison with many other parts of the Scriptures, that the terms employed are terms of *condescending comparison* with the acts and effects of the thus mentioned organs of the human body, to convey, especially to unpolished men a conception of those properties and actions of God, which to our feeble ideas have a resemblance, and that they were so understood. Language had not then terms for the expression of abstract conceptions.'

The Christian theologian tells me that God created man and all the circumstances that surrounded him, yet speaks of 'human incapacity, and infirmity,' and of 'the language of the Scriptures being formed in condescension thereto.'

Is it not remarkable that the all-wise Creator should have not foreseen the time when the language of his revelation should have sunken below the level of the human capacity? But it is worse than folly to put forward hypotheses as to God's condescension in using such language. The Book itself nowhere suggests such an idea, and I ask to what mind (however 'unpolished' he may be) can the following words convey any other conception of the properties and actions of God than that of the literal reading?—

'And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen.' Dr. Smith [\(pg62\)](#) says that 'metaphysical or philosophical preciseness is not in the character of Scriptural composition,' yet upon our precise conception of the true meaning of that composition, hangs the penalty of eternal torment.

Chapter xxxii. During the absence of Moses, the Jewish people applied to Aaron to make them other Gods; they used very disrespectful language, saying 'As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.' Aaron, who had been specially chosen by God to be his priest and Prophet, instead of reminding the people of the miracles God had just performed on their behalf, instead of reproving them for the slighting manner in which they had spoken of his brother Moses, instead even of appealing to Nadab and Abhu, and the seventy elders who had personally seen God so shortly before, and who must all have been impressed with the awful majesty of the Deity, forgetting the first and second commandment contained in chapter xx., w. 3, 4, and 5, and that their God is a jealous God, forgetting also the repetition contained in v. 23 of the same chapter, Aaron (who alone had been nominated to enter the holy of holies), without the slightest attempt at reason or remonstrance, asked the people for their golden earrings, and made a molten calf, and built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast; and the people said, 'These be thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'

God was very unfortunate in his choice; his chosen people are the first to forget him, or to doubt and deny his power. The miracles performed by Moses and Aaron in Egypt—events any one of which should have been sufficient to have struck terror into the Israelites for the remainder of their lives—the interview between God and the seventy-four, only a few days before, were all forgotten. God having permitted all this to happen, informed Moses thereof, and then uses this remarkable phrase—'Let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation.' Is this the language of an infinite and immutable Deity?

Moses reasoned with God, and endeavoured to persuade him not to allow his wrath to wax hot, and ultimately the unchangeable changed his mind, and 'repented of the evil he thought to do his people.' The mode of expostulation adopted by Moses is very remarkable (see vv. 11, 12, and 13); one of the chief arguments used is not as to the merits of the case, but as to what the Egyptians will say when they hear about it.

Vv. 15 to 19. Moses, considering that he was so meek a man, soon lost his temper, and the act of throwing down the tables, betrays rather the character of a hasty petulant man.

V. 20. Gold is a metal distinguished by its extreme permanence in air and fire, by its malleability and ductility; it might have been melted by the action of fire, but could not be burnt—i.e., consumed by fire. The Douay says that Moses 'beat it to powder;' this would be impossible, as it is so malleable, that it may be beaten into leaves not more than the 280,000th part of an inch in thickness. Our version says, 'ground it to [\(pg63\)](#) powder;' this would be a difficult task, unless Moses had other aids than we are aware of. The Golden Calf being reduced to powder, Moses strewed it upon the water, and made the Israelites drink of it. Unless a chloride of gold had been formed by the use of chlorine and nitro-muriatic acid, and of which we have no account, the gold would not be soluble in water, but would sink to the bottom, leaving the water entirely unaffected. After this Moses collected the tribe of Levi, who had been equally guilty with their brethren in the worship of the calf, and set them to slaughter every man his neighbour. In this slaughter there fell, according to our version, 3,000 men, but according to the Douay, 23,000 men were slain. Whichever version is right, it

is evident that Aaron, who deserved the most punishment, escaped scot-free. The Lord's vengeance was not satisfied with even this terrible sacrifice of human life; and we are told, in the unique phraseology of the Bible, that 'the Lord plagued the people because *they made* the calf which *Aaron made*.'

Chapter xxxiii., vv. 1 to 3, and chap. xxxiv., v. 11. Judea was not a land flowing with milk and honey, and the Lord did not drive out the Canaanite and the other nations mentioned (*vide* Joshua, chap. xvii., v. 12 and 13; Judges chap. i., vv. 19, and 27 to 35; chap. ii., vv. 20 to 23, and chap. iii., vv. 1 to 6).

Vv. 4, 5, and 6. Why did the Lord want the children of Israel to put off their ornaments? If in any other book than the Bible some shrewd Christians would shake their heads and say, We are afraid Moses and Aaron were not quite honest—first, they deprive the people of their gold earrings under one pretext, and now they defraud them of their remaining trinkets, under the pretence that the Lord commands them to put them off.

Vv. 9 and 10. This 'pillar of cloud' is a favourite shape, and if the whole were an imposture, it would have been an easy matter for Moses by artificial means to have raised a 'pillar of cloud' when he pleased, especially as such precautions were taken to prevent too close an examination by the Israelites.

V. 11. Apart from any question of contradiction (which has been noticed on page 59), is not this verse condemned by itself? Its purpose and meaning is to raise Moses in the estimation of its readers, and to effect this object it degrades the Deity by the very terms it uses, the conversation contained in verses 12 to 20 has all the same tendency, making it appear that Moses was God's favourite, and that God *knew his name*.

In verse 13, instead of 'show me thy way,' the Douay has 'show me thy face;' this accounts for the expression in v. 20, 'Thou canst not see my face,' but it distinctly contradicts the 'face to face' of verse 11.

V. 23 needs no comment; but I defy any man to read this verse thoughtfully, and yet be filled with awe and admiration for a Deity, who only allows his favoured Prophet to see his 'back parts.' The absurdity is [\(pg64\)](#) heightened by the remembrance of the many distinct appearances of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and shortly before to Moses himself, and seventy-three other persons who all saw God.

Chapter xxxiv., v. 3. The same precaution to prevent detection, if imposture was really being perpetrated.

Verse 6. 'The Lord God merciful and gracious.' When? where? and how? Was it when cursing the first man and woman, and the very ground on which they stood (Genesis, chap. iii.); or when he determined to destroy both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air (Genesis, chap. vi., v. 7); or when he rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis, chap. xix., v. 24); or when he slew the firstborn in every family throughout Egypt (Exodus, chap. xii., v. 29); or when he drowned all Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (Exodus, chap. xiv., v. 27); or when he swore to have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Exodus, chap. xvii., v. 16); or when he killed Nadab and Abihu with fire (Leviticus, chap. x., v. 2); or when he repeatedly attached the penalty of death to the infringement of almost any article of the ceremonial law; or when his fire consumed the people because they complained (Numbers, chap. xi, v. 1); or when he smote them with a great plague (verse 33); or when he ordered the man to be stoned to death who was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers, chap. xv., v. 36); or when he causes the earth to swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that appertained to them, and afterwards slew 250 more by fire, and 14,700 more by plague (Numbers, chap. xvi., vv. 31 to 35, and 49); or when he sent fiery serpents to bite his people, so that they died (Numbers, chap. xxi., v. 6); or when he sent the plague, and killed 24,000 of his people (Numbers, chap. xxv., v. 9); or when he directed the terrible slaughter of the Midianites (Numbers, chap. 31)? I might multiply these texts, but have confined myself to the same Pentateuch in which 'God's mercy, graciousness, and long suffering' are proclaimed by himself. Any reader who wishes further to pursue the subject, is referred to a pamphlet, written in answer to Bishop Watson's 'Apology for the Bible,' and entitled 'The God of the Jews.'

Verse 14. 'The Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.' My dictionary tells me that to be jealous is to be 'suspiciously vigilant,' 'suspiciously fearful.' The omniscient, omnipotent, and infinite Deity, of what can he be jealous? Perhaps this phrase also is figurative.

Verses 29 and 30. The Douay says that after Moses had talked to the Lord, his face was horned, and that the children of Israel, seeing the horns, were afraid to come near him.

In concluding the comments on the Book of Exodus, I ask what is the result of our investigation? We have found the Book to be thoroughly worthless as a relation of actual occurrences, even when tested under the most favourable auspices; it repeatedly and in important particulars contradicts itself. It cannot be a revelation from God, because it pictures an all-wise God choosing a man with an impediment in his speech, to be a preacher, and relates that when the man hesitated on account of his infirmity, God became angry at a [\(pg65\)](#) difficulty of his own creation, and which Moses could not help. It represents a just God as seeking to kill (apparently without the slightest cause) the very man whom he had just entrusted with the important mission of releasing his chosen people from bondage; it speaks of an invisible God as becoming visible; of an immutable God as being jealous; of a loving God declaring war against unborn generations of his own creatures; of a just God as punishing the people for following (the teachings of the priest whom he had appointed, and yet allowing the criminal priest not only to escape unpunished, but actually rewarded for his misconduct.) It pictures a merciful and good God as tormenting and murdering the Egyptians, solely for the purpose of convincing the Jews that he is really the Lord God of Israel, and afterwards plaguing and slaughtering those *very* Israelites, because all the former cruelties practised on their neighbours had not produced sufficient convincing effect on them. It teaches monotheism in one verse, and polytheism in another.

It ought not to be used as an educational book amongst the children of *men*, because it contains doctrines and precepts only fitted for the offspring of *tyrants* and *slaves*. It teaches that children may be born slaves, and that their parents may sell them as slaves, and it places money at a higher value than life, virtue, honour, or liberty.

BOOK III. LEVITICUS

In dealing with the laws of the Jews, I feel compelled to avoid very many texts on account of their disgusting nature; but generally I may remark that it is evident the Jews must have been an ignorant, viciously-inclined, unintellectual, and thoroughly-depraved people, or such laws would never have been required. If God chose the best people on the earth, the state of the whole of the human family must have been very bad indeed. My reason for avoiding the above-mentioned class of texts is twofold; first, although I think them fair matter for comment, I have no wish to offend or insult any reader who, from his or her mode of education, has been taught to regard such subjects as unfit for discussion; second, I am not quite certain that the 'Society for Suppression of Vice,' or some kindred society, may not be induced to again attack works of this class, in which case I have no wish to afford the counsel for the prosecution an opportunity of declaiming against my obscene style, but wish, if possible, to compel my most severe critics to admit that I have been more choice in my phraseology than the writers of the Book they defend.

Chapter v. 3. The Douay reads—'If his offering be a holocaust, and of the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish at the door of the testimony *to make the Lord favourable to him.*' It will be perceived that the words italicised are not contained in, our version at all. The holocaust, or whole burnt offering, is so called because the whole victim was consumed with fire, and ascended, as we are told in verse 9, 'with a sweet savour to the Lord.' What elevated conceptions of the Deity are here conveyed; an infinite God, whose favour [\[pg66\]](#) is granted to the man who burns the most sheep or oxen; a just and immutable God, to whom the sweet savour of roast mutton is an acceptable expiatory equivalent on behalf of a murderer, a robber, or other criminal.

Chapter ii., vv. 3 and 10. The priests are not neglected in this revelation.

Verse 13. Without salt the sacrifice would be incomplete. Query. Was not the salt rather required by the priests than by God? It is easy to understand why a man wishes for salt to season his meat, but it is not so easy to comprehend the same requisition on the part of a God.

Chapter vi., v. 13. This fire must have been out several times, especially since the last conquest of Jerusalem. Where is it burning at the present time? By reference to chap. ix., v. 24, and chap. x., vv. 1 and 2, it would seem that this fire came from God himself.

Chapter vii., vv. 23 to 27. Those are cruel and useless laws. The punishment of death is strangely disproportioned to the offence; and unless the law has become obsolete, we must wonder that God allows the manufacturers and consumers of articles of food, made from the blood and fat of animals, to escape unpunished in the present day.

Chapter xi. It is difficult to conceive the reason why, in the list of articles fit for food, eels should be forbidden as having no scales, and classed as unclean with hares and swans, while locusts, grasshoppers, and beetles are permitted. The Douay gives entirely different names to some of the prohibited animals, mentioning, amongst others, the griffin, an animal whose existence is much doubted. No naturalist has ever yet described it to us, it is only mentioned in a few old fables.

Chapter xvi., vv. 21 and 22. 'And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away, by the hand of a fit man, into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inherited, and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness.' Is not this supremely ridiculous? and the absurdity is only heightened by the inutility, for I do not find that the Israelites were ever let off from any punishment by reason of the scapegoat. The doctrine of the scapegoat has gained considerably of late; and it is the custom when an outcry is raised against the actors in any public grievance, to offer up some person (who generally is innocent of all participation in the offence) as a scapegoat.

'The Egyptians had a similar custom, as we learn from Herodotus, Book 2, chap. 39, who relates it in these words:—

"After they have killed the goat, they cut off its head, but they flay the animal's body, after which, having pronounced many imprecations on the head, those who have a market and Grecian merchants dwelling among them, carry it thither and sell it to them; but those who have no Grecian residents to sell it to, throw the head into the fire, pronouncing over it the following imprecations:—'If any evil is about to befall either those that now sacrifice, or Egypt in general, may it be averted on this head!'" 'The two customs, though not [\[pg67\]](#) perfectly the same, are so far similar that the one appears to have been derived from the other. The import of both is certainly the same; for in both the goat is made use of as a substitute to draw away calamity from the party sacrificing; in the one case being sent into the wilderness, and in the other consumed by fire.'

Chapter xvii., vv. 3 and 4. The absurdity of this command will be apparent upon the slightest examination. If the Jews were as numerous as is represented when in Egypt, and continued to increase and multiply in the same ratio, they would have filled a very large portion of the earth's surface; but even allowing for biblical exaggeration, it would have been impossible for a people, amounting to several hundreds of thousands, to have all slaughtered their cattle at one spot (the door of the Tabernacle); and if they had done so, judging from the appearance and odour of modern slaughterhouses, I can scarcely think that the 'holiest of holies' would have been at the same time 'the sweetest of sweets.' It would have been still more impossible for each individual to have brought (perhaps from a distance of several miles) each an ox, lamb, or goat killed. It is not at all probable, in a nation so ignorant as the Jews, that the people possessed carts and waggons for the purpose of transporting the dead cattle to and fro, and if they had, the waste of labour would have been enormous. The severe penalty of death is all that is required to make this essentially one of 'God's laws.' What would be said if all the slaughtered cattle in England were, by Act of Parliament, compelled, under penalty of death, to be brought to the door of St. Paul's Cathedral to have the fat and blood taken from them?

Verse 7, chap. xix., w. 26 and 31, chap. xx., vv. 6 and 27. What are devils? If God is the Creator of all things, did he create devils? If so, it is scarcely just to punish us for falling victims to devils, whom God must have made sufficiently powerful to tempt us to the commission of crime. If otherwise, are devils independent existences, because in that case the Deity is not omnipotent. They are neither; devils, angels, gods, familiar spirits and demons, all stand in the same mythological position. They belong to the past, not to the present. They belong to the age of ignorance, not of inquiry. We find in such verses as these the clue to the superstitious fear with which the inhabitants of some little villages still regard certain old men and women; we find in them also the clue to the persecutions for witchcraft in the reign of King James, etc. Strong objections have been urged against the doctrine of devils, demons, and familiar spirits. It is said by Theists that it is contrary to all natural conceptions of the benevolence and mercy of the Deity; that he should have created, and should sustain in existence, beings of the highest intellectual order to be the subjects of eternal misery, not only to themselves, but to all humanity. It is further urged that the doctrine detracts from the power of God by holding forth an almost omnipotent chief of a legion of powerful and mischievous devils, all bent on the destruction of mankind. It is further, and very reasonably, urged that the Jews, especially after [pg68](#) their connection with the Chaldean and Persian nations, had imbibed very extended, and, at the same time, very puerile ideas with regard to the operations of both good and bad spirits. The properties of plants, of mineral waters, of minerals, of certain climatic conditions, the existence of any remarkable phenomena, the insanity of men, or animals, were all attributed to the presence and influence of good and bad spirits. Sound science has exploded these errors; and why should not the whole mass of demonology be rejected as exploded also (*vide* Farmer on the 'Demoniacs,' and Pye Smith's 'Christian Theology')?

Chapter xxvi. It is worthy of notice that in this chapter, which professes

to describe the reward for obedience to God's laws, and the punishment for disobedience, no reference whatever is made to a future state. The rewards are temporal—viz., good harvests, and easy victory over enemies, etc. The punishments are also temporal—viz., painful defeat in battle, sterile land, captivity, starvation, etc. Not a word about the soul, or about heaven, or hell; yet a chapter like this seems a place in which, if such a doctrine had been held by the writer, we should expect to find some traces of it; temporal punishment of a very severe kind is threatened, but nothing occurs which can in any way lead us to a spiritual punishment; death seems to be the highest penalty, and the author of the Pentateuch did not contemplate the possibility of tormenting men after they were dead—this was reserved for more enlightened ages.

Chapter xxvii., vv. 28 and 29, has been noticed on page 54.

Verses 30 to 33. The clergy are very zealous in conserving their claims under these verses (which of course apply to the whole world). They act as the Lord's representatives, and take the Lord's share to themselves.

The Book of Leviticus only claims our attention under two phases—first, as a revelation from God: and second, as a code of laws. It cannot be a revelation from an immutable God, because it alleges that God is influenced in his conduct by particular kinds of sacrifice: it cannot be a revelation from an all-wise and just God, because it contains trifling and absurd commands enforced by severe penalties; it cannot be a revelation from an all-powerful and infinitely good Creator, because it treats of devils and bad spirits, either having independent or permitted power to commit evil. As a code of laws, it is utterly inapplicable to the present state of society; and, in fact, seems mainly intended to support and benefit the priests (placing the government in their hands), but is utterly without utility as regards the people, the punishments are mostly very disproportionate, and for breaches of the ceremonial law unnecessarily severe. [pg69](#)

BOOK IV. NUMBERS

Chapter i., v. 14, chap. ii., v. 14. In one we find Eliasaph the son of Reul, in the other Eliasaph the son of Deuel. In chap. vii., vv. 42 and 47, and in chap. x., v. 20, it is also Eliasaph son of Deuel. Which is right?

Verse 46. By this verse we learn that the number of Jews, warriors (not including the Levites), capable of bearing arms, was 603,550; and taking old and young into consideration, you can hardly compute these at more than three out of each ten, which would leave a total of about 2,000,000 males, the proportion of females would be upwards of 2,000,000 more; these, together with male and female slaves, and the tribe of Levi, must have made upwards of 5,000,000 people. This would be an immense number to pass through a desert, where water and food were deficient.

Verse 49, see chap. iii., v. 15. The Lord must have changed his original intention.

Chapter iii., v. 39. 22,000 is incorrect, it should be 22,300—viz., Gershonites 7,500, Kohathites 8,600, Meranites 6,200. This may seem a trifling error, but in a revelation from God we are not prepared to expect errors at all; and in this case it is a grave error, and not a mere slip of the copyist, or transcriber, for in verse 46 we are told that the first-born were 273 more in number than the male Levites, when in feet they were twenty-seven less. It is very extraordinary that the Levites should be comparatively so few in number, especially when we consider them as the most favoured by God. The whole of the Levites, male and female, could not be much over 50,000, while the other tribes averaged 350,000 each.

Chapter iv., v. 20. The same mystery as before observed, coupled with the usual threat of death to deter the uninitiated from too closely examining the things of God.

Verse 23. By this the Levites are to serve from thirty to fifty; in chap. viii., v. 24, it is from twenty-five to fifty.

Chapter v., w. 8, 9, and 10. Here is a complete identification of the rights of the Lord with those of the priest, 'Let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even unto the priest.' Whether this Book be a revelation from God or not, it is quite clear that it is the interest of the priesthood to support it.

Verses 17 to 27. We have read of various ordeals amongst savage nations, and it is customary to deplore the ignorance and barbarity of the nations amongst whom these customs are allowed to prevail. If we abide by this style of criticism, what must we say of the legislator who established the ordeal of the waters of jealousy?

Chapter vii., v. 89. 'And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony,^[pg70] from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.' This voice is uttered in the hearing of no one but Moses. The Douay reads, 'And when Moses entered into the tabernacle of the covenant to consult the oracle, he heard the voice of one speaking to him from the propitiary that was over the ark, between the two cherubims, and from this place he spake to him.' Is not this similar to the oracle-consulting of other nations? It is admitted now, by all intelligent men, that the oracles of Delphos, of Ammon, and of Dodona, were only instances of jugglery and cunning, practised by the priest on the people. In what respects are the oracles of the Jews superior? In an able article on the word 'oracle,' in Brande's Dictionary is the following quotation:—

'The general characteristics of oracles were ambiguity, obscurity, and convertability; so that one answer would agree with several various, and sometimes directly opposite events. Thus when Croesus was on the point of invading the Medes, he consulted the oracle of Delphi as to the success of the enterprise, and received for answer, "That by passing the River Halys, he would ruin a mighty empire." But whether it was his own empire, or that of his enemies, that was destined to be ruined, was not intimated, and in either case the oracle could not fail to be right. The answer of the oracle to 'Pyrrhus is another well-known instance of this sort of ambiguity. "*Aio, te Æacida, Romanos vincere posse*"—as it might either be interpreted in favour of, or against, Pyrrhus. This ambiguity and equivocation was not, however, the worst feature that characterised the oracles of antiquity. They were at once ambiguous and venal. A rich or a powerful individual seldom found much difficulty in obtaining a response favourable to his projects, how unjust or objectionable soever. But such and so powerful is the influence of superstition, that this system of fraud and imposture maintained a lengthened ascendancy, and interested responses of the oracles frequently sufficed to excite bloody wars, and to spread desolation through extensive States.'

Chapter ix., vv. 15 to 17. The 'cloud and appearance of fire' might have been easily produced by Moses himself, and, judging by the context, it is a fair presumption, they being always rendered subordinate to his plans.

Chapter x., v. 9. Is it intended to be implied that the blowing the alarm with trumpets, will the more readily bring God to the aid of the Jews? If not, what is the meaning of this verse?

Chapter xi., v. 4. It is not easy to understand how the Israelites could be without flesh food, when we are told in Exodus, chap. xii., v. 38, that they took with them out of Egypt 'flocks and herds, even very much cattle.'

Verse 16. If Moses had no assistance in the government of the Jews, he must have entirely neglected the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, referred to on page 56.

Chapter xii., v. 1. The following is from Dr. Giles's 'Hebrew Records':—'The country to which the wife of Moses belonged, here called Ethiopia, is Cush in the original Hebrew, and may fairly be interpreted in a very^[pg71] wide sense. Ethiopia, also, in Grecian history, designated not only the modern Ethiopia, but parts of Egypt, Arabia, and, perhaps, other neighbouring countries. We may then freely admit that the Ethiopian woman here mentioned was the same person elsewhere described as Jethro's daughter, but the manner in which her name is here introduced, is perfectly incompatible with her having been already described, and that so fully, in Exodus ii., as the daughter to the priest of Midian, and married to Moses, possibly several years before the strife, which Miriam and Aaron now stirred up on her account. This leads to the following conclusion, either that the two accounts of the wife of Moses were written by two distinct authors, or that the Ethiopian woman whom Moses married was not the same as the daughter of Jethro priest of Midian. In the former case the whole Pentateuch, as it now is, cannot be considered as the work of Moses; in the latter case, the mixture of the Israelites with other tribes would appear to have begun very early after the Exodus, and to have been carried to a very great extreme.'

Chapter xiii., vv. 2 to 17. Why were these people sent to spy out the land? God could have told his people all the particulars without this. In ordering them to be sent, he must have foreknown and foreordained that they should report falsely, and that the Israelites should believe their report, in which case it is difficult to justify the forty years wandering in the wilderness.

Verse 22. 'Hebron' has been noticed on page 5.

Verses 23 and 24. Bishop Patrick's note on this verse is highly sensible and becoming:—'*The place was called the Brook Eschol*. That is, when the Israelites got possession of the land, they called this brook or valley "Eschol" in memory of this bunch of grapes, for so Eschol signifies.' But the book, which relates that the place was called Eschol, cannot have been written until the act of naming had taken place.

Verse 33 is meant figuratively, otherwise the sons of Anak would be of tremendous height and size.

Chapter xiv., w. 1 to 4. This murmuring displeases God, but grave consideration is required to understand why God was so displeased, Twelve men, all equally trustworthy (as far as we can glean their characters from the Book), are sent to view the promised land; ten report unfavourably, and two, on the contrary, give a favourable account. The balance of evidence is therefore very strong, and yet God is displeased, because the Israelites put faith in the unfavourable report. The case is even stronger than this. One of the two favourable witnesses (Joshua) was a servant and partisan of Moses, and might well be suspected of giving a highly coloured account of the country, according to the wishes of his leader. Later historians have even rendered more unfavourable the account given by the ten, rather than corroborate that of Joshua and Caleb. Voltaire quotes a letter from St. Jerome, in which he speaks of the land of promise as being about 160 miles long, and about fifty broad, all beyond being desert, that from Jerusalem to Bethlehem there is nothing but pebbles, and scarce any water to drink during the summer season. Verses 11 to 37,^[pg72] There is here a repetition of the mode in which Moses reasoned and expostulated with God, pointed out on

page sixty-two, the same fear lest the Egyptians should hear of God's wrath against the Israelites, and ultimately the same change is effected. In verse 20, the Lord says: 'I have pardoned according to thy word,' and immediately notified that instead of pardoning the people, he intended them all to die on their journey to the promised land.

Verses 43 to 45. In Exodus, chap. 17, vv. 14 and 16, God swore to utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, and to have war with them from generation to generation. In this chapter he aids and assists them to destroy the Israelites.

Verse 45. 'Hormah.' This verse could not have been written by Moses, as the city of Zephath was not called Hormah until after the death of Joshua (*vide* Judges, chap. i., v. 17): in chap. xxi., vv. 1 to 3, we find an account of the destruction of a city, and the naming it Hormah 'This' (says Dr. Shuckford, as quoted in the Family Bible) 'was effected in the days of Joshua (Joshua, chap. xii., v. 14), or a little after his death' (Judges, chap. i., v. 17). Yet Dr. Shuckford did not perceive that the relation of an event, which happened in the days of Joshua, could not have come from the pen of Moses. The second of the above-mentioned texts—namely, the first three verses of Numbers xxi., describe the fulfilment of Israel's vow—not in a mere word or short sentence, such as others—which the commentators explain by saying that they are interpolations. The present text is too full for us to suppose so: it is evidently an integral part of the main narrative, and cannot be separated from it. The whole of this part of the history, therefore, is liable to the same observation which has been so often made, that it was written by some one who lived long after the time of Moses (*vide* Dr. Giles's 'Hebrew Records').

Chapter xv., vv. 32 to 36. These verses are the species upon which fanatics ground their opposition to a free Sunday. The organ blower may work in the organ loft of his parish church till the perspiration streams from his brow—no serious voice checks his labour, but should he dare take his accordion into the green fields, and there, with lighter labour, beguile away his Sunday morning or afternoon, immediately the reverend pastor, the pious churchwarden, the devout and stately beadle, the meek and humble pew opener, with a thunder-like chorus-voice shout after him, 'Sabbath-breaker, thy doom is hell.' This sentence is printed in small capitals on a little tract—this tract does great good. John Phillips, of Hare Street, Spitalfields, weaver, having been at work at his loom from early on the previous Monday morning until late on the Saturday evening, and feeling tired thereby, determines to take Mrs. Phillips and his three children into Victoria Park; and, preparatory to this, John Phillips hammers at a small piece of leather in the endeavour to fix it to the sole of his boot, which is out of repair, suddenly his room door opens, and a Scripture-reader enters, who solemnly hands John the above-mentioned tract, and the following dialogue takes place:— S. R.—[\[pg73\]](#) You are now breaking the Sabbath-day.

John P.—This is a work of necessity; the boot must be mended before I can go out.

S. R.—If you read Numbers, you will find that a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath-day was put to death; and although you will not probably die to-day, you will go to hell by-and-by. You should go to church.

John P.—If I did go there, every one would shrink from the mean dresses of myself and family. If the free seats were full, we should have to stand in the centre aisle, while those who paid to go to heaven comfortably reclined on the cushions of their half-empty pews, or knelt on their comfortable hassocks. In the green fields it is different, the daisy is as bright, the grass as green, and the clover as sweet to me as to the richest man in England; the sun shines on me although my dress is corduroy. I feel better and happier to be free for a few hours from the dense and smoky atmosphere of this house, and I cannot believe I shall go to hell for that.

The Scripture Reader departs, and wends his way to Ebenezer Chapel. This chapel is situate in a narrow street, between a sugar-baker's and a soap-boiler's premises, and he cannot help regretting, as he smells the foul exhalations from the sewer-grating, and the overcrowded grave-yard, that it is unlawful to stroll into the green fields on the Lord's-day.

The bell-ringer, the grave-digger, the priest, the sexton, the choristers, the organist, the organ-blower, the beadle, the pew-opener, the bishop, the bishop's coachman, and groom, all ply on the Sunday their several avocations without fear or threat of punishment; but if John Thomas on that day, instead of driving my lord bishop to church, and afterwards retiring to a neighbouring mews, to smoke his pipe in an orthodox manner, until service is over, were to drive into the green fields, or wander by the river side, he would most assuredly bring upon himself denunciations of future damnation. By the fruit ye shall judge of the tree. The fruit of this Sunday tree has been hypocritical, outside show, a false and empty parade of Bibles and gilt-edged prayer-books, grim faces, and constrained manners—this some people call religion.

Chapter xvi. contains the history of a rebellion on the part of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On, against the authority of Moses, connected with which there are several curious features; the rebels are swallowed up and consumed by an explosion and fire, which of course is sent by the Lord; but as Moses took a whole day to make the necessary preparations, it is quite possible to account for the destruction of Korah and his party in a more comprehensible manner. It is apparent that Moses had a direct interest in the destruction of these men, who wished to share the power he had arrogated to himself.

By verses 29 and 30 it is clear that the manner of their destruction was pre-arranged by Moses; and it is also clear that the Israelites themselves took this view of the matter, for in verse 41 we find them charging Moses and Aaron with having killed the people of the Lord. [\[pg74\]](#)

Chapter xvii., w. 1 to 8. This miracle of Aaron's rod budding amongst the other rods was easy of accomplishment, when we remember how carefully the tabernacle was guarded by Moses and his priests, who had every facility for changing one rod for a branch from a fruit bearing tree. The rod, according to this account, budded, blossomed, and bore fruit, all within twenty-four hours.

Verse 6 says, there were 'twelve rods, and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.' The Douay says, 'there were twelve rods, beside the rod of Aaron.'

Verses 12 and 13. These verses are a sufficient evidence of the care taken by Moses to prevent the people inspecting too closely his thaumaturgic tabernacle.

Chapter xviii., v. 15. See chap. iii., vv. 12 and 41. There is some confusion in these texts, as by the latter

it was only the surplus number, beyond the number of the Levites, who were to be redeemed with money—here all are to pay the five shekels.

Verses 20 to 24. It is much to be regretted that our priests never imagined that this part of the revelation had any personal relation to them; great attention has been paid to the tithing part of the Book, but our reverend pastors have most wonderfully overlooked the part which says, 'Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land.' This, they say, only applies to the Jews. On what principle, then, does any part of the Book apply to the Gentiles?

Chapter xix. contains a direction to the priest to burn a red heifer, the ashes of which heifer become water, by a process not described; or rather if the writer had condescended to be explicit, I suppose he means that the ashes are to be mixed with water, this water is a kind of holy water, with which every unclean person is to be sprinkled, under pain of death. Amongst a people numbering 5,000,000, some must have had great difficulty in getting access to this water, especially those residing at a great distance from the place where the ashes were kept.

Chapter xx. In the Douay translation of v. 6, Moses and Aaron say, 'O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that being satisfied, they may cease to murmur.' These words are entirely omitted in our version, and it would seem that some other portion of the original account must be lost, as we find the Lord reproaching Moses and Aaron for their exhibition of unbelief, of which we have no account here.

Verses 10 and 11. This is a miracle. Voltaire says:—

'A miracle, according to the true meaning of the word, is something admirable; and agreeably to this all is miracle. The stupendous order of nature, the revolution of a hundred millions of worlds round a million of suns, the activity of light, the life of animals, all are grand and perpetual miracles.

'According to common acceptation, we call a miracle the violation of these divine and eternal laws. A solar eclipse, at the time of the full moon, or a dead man walking two leagues, and carrying his head in his arms, we denominate a miracle.

'Many natural philosophers maintain that in this sense there are no miracles, and advance the following arguments:— 'A miracle is the violation of mathematical, divine, immutable, eternal laws. By the very [\(pg75\)](#) exposition itself a miracle is a contradiction in terms: a law cannot at the same time be immutable and violated. But they are asked, cannot a law, established by God himself be suspended by its author?

'They have the hardihood to reply that it cannot; and that it is impossible a being, infinitely wise, can have made laws to violate them. He could not, they say, derange the machine, but with a view of making it work better; but it is evident that God, all-wise and omnipotent, originally made this immense machine, the universe, as good and perfect as he was able; if he saw that some imperfections would arise from the nature of matter, he provided for that in the beginning; and accordingly he will never change anything in it.

'Moreover God can do nothing without reason; but what reason could induce him to disfigure, for a time, his own work?

'It is done, they are told, in favour of mankind. They reply, we must presume, then, that it is in favour of all mankind; for it is impossible to conceive that the divine nature should occupy itself only about a few men in particular, and not for the whole human race; and even the whole human race itself is a very small concern; it is less than a small ant-hill, in comparison with all the beings inhabiting immensity. But is it not the most absurd of all extravagances to imagine that the Infinite Supreme should, in favour of three or four hundred emmets on this little heap of earth, derange the operation of the vast machinery that moves the universe?

'But, admitting that God chose to distinguish a small number of men by particular favours, is there any necessity that in order to accomplish this object he should change what he established for all periods and for all places? He certainly can have no need of this inconsistency, in order to bestow favours on any of his creatures: his favours consist in his laws themselves: he has foreseen all, and arranged all, with a view to them. All invariably obey the force which he has impressed for ever on nature.

'For what purpose would God perform a miracle? To accomplish some particular design upon living beings? He would, then, in reality, be supposed to say—I have not been able to effect, by my construction of the universe, by my divine decrees, by my eternal laws, a particular object. I am now going to change my eternal ideas and immutable laws, to endeavour to accomplish what I have not been able to do by means of them. This would be an avowal of his weakness, not of his power; it would appear in such a being an inconceivable contradiction. Accordingly, therefore, to dare to ascribe miracles to God, is, if man can in reality insult God, actually offering him that insult. It is saying to him, You are a weak and inconsistent being. It is therefore absurd to believe in miracles; it is, in fact, dishonouring the divinity.'

Verses 23 to 29. Aaron's death is rather curiously related; it was certainly a sudden death, and the account almost conveys the idea that Moses and Eleazer killed Aaron in the mount. [\(pg76\)](#)

Chapter xxi., vv. 1 to 3, have been before noticed; in addition it is only necessary to observe, that the Israelites could scarcely have destroyed the cities of the Canaanites, until they had entered the land of Canaan, into which it is alleged they did not go in the lifetime of Moses.

Verses 8 and 9. See Exodus, chap, xx., v. 4. Dr. Giles observes:—

'The reason why God commanded Moses to adopt this course has not been recorded; but the fact would probably be susceptible of a satisfactory explanation, if we were acquainted more fully with the serpent-worship which existed among the ancient people of Egypt. In the absence of certain information, it may be supposed that the Israelites had been taught to hold serpents in great respect whilst they were in Egypt, and that Moses availed himself of their superstition to bend them the better to his will.'

In our version, verse 8, Moses is told to make a 'fiery serpent:' in the Douay, he is told to make a 'brazen serpent'—fiery serpents are very rare animals.

Verse 14. 'The Book of the wars of the Lord.' What book is this? Who was the author of it? What has become of it? Was it inspired? Was it more ancient than the Pentateuch? In answer to all these questions, we can say

but little, except this, that the book referred to is one of several books quoted from in our Bible, and now lost; the authorship is unknown; it must have been a well-known book at the time Numbers was written, and, consequently, more ancient than Numbers. There are many other books quoted from, which are also lost.

The following is from the 'Hebrew Records,' in reference to this subject:—

'In St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, ix., 19, we read thus:—

"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people."

'The writer of this epistle must also have had more sources of information than we now possess; for the account which he gives in the verse before us does not exactly tally with any of the various verses in the Levitical Law, where the subject is related. Nothing is said of the "book" being sprinkled with the blood, even if the other parts of the description are allowed to bear a sufficient resemblance.

'Another remarkable instance bearing upon my present argument, is the account which St. Jude gives of a contest between Michael and the Devil:—

"Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the Devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'Lord rebuke thee!'"

'It is not known to what St. Jude alludes in this verse; nothing is said in the Old Testament of any contest between the Devil and the archangel Michael.

'In St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, chap, iii., v. 8, are found the names of two of the magicians who competed with Moses in magical arts in the presence of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. [\(pg77\)](#)

"Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

'It is presumed that the names, "Jannes" and "Jambres," not found in the Books of Moses, became known to St. Paul through the medium of other writings, in which many particulars of Jewish history were recorded, but now no longer in existence.

Several circumstances of the life and acts of Moses are known to us, only because they are noticed in the New Testament, no mention being made of them in the old Jewish Scriptures. For instance, in Acts vii., v. 22, etc., we are told that—

"Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren of Israel, etc."

'But in the Book of Exodus the account of these things is much shorter, and nothing is said of the age of Moses at the time referred to.

'Neither is there any authority in the Pentateuch for the remark which occurs in Hebrews xi., 24:—

"By faith Moses, when he came to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

'These circumstances make it probable that there were other original records in the time of St. Paul, which have since perished.

'This conclusion is supported by the admitted fact that many books which have perished are quoted in the Old Testament itself. Such are the books of Jasher, Enoch, the Wars of the Lord, and many others.

A perplexing train of argument opens to us from a consideration of these facts. If the books which have perished were of value, why have they perished? If they were of no value, why have valuable writers, like St. Paul, quoted them? It is supposed that they were of inferior authority, but this point has not been proved. If the existing books are genuine relics of a high antiquity, yet some of the lost books were more ancient still. The same Providence which has preserved the one has suffered the others to sink, even though those which have floated down the stream of time are imperfect on many points, which the others would have supplied.

Chapter xxii., v. 1. 'On this side Jordan:' the Douay has it 'beyond the Jordan:' the Hebrew is [—] (beyond, across, over, or on the other side), see also page 6. It is evident in this case either that the translators must have falsified the text to support their theory that Moses was the writer of the book, or that there is a very extraordinary coincidence of error. The whole of this subject has been carefully examined in Dr. Giles's 'Hebrew Records,' pp. 284 to 289.

Chapter's xxii., xxiii., and xxiv. It is not at all wonderful that the barbarous Midianites and Moabites should have looked upon Balaam as a prophet, whose curse or blessing would affect the success of the Jews. [\(pg78\)](#) In the dark ages we have many instances of persons revered by the people of their countries, because they were believed to possess supernatural powers; but is an inexplicable matter when we find the superstitions of the ignorant people shared by God himself. God communicated with Balaam. God said, 'Thou shalt not curse this people.' God came to Balaam repeatedly; at first he forbade him to go to Balak, and afterwards gave him permission; and then God's anger is kindled because Balaam, in consequence of such permission, went with Balak's messengers, and the angel of the Lord is sent to stand in Balaam's way. I have remarked upon angels in pages 33 and 34; those who wish to read more orthodox comments are referred to Dr. Pye Smith's 'Christian Theology,' p. 327. This angel is invisible to the wise man, Balaam, but is at once perceived by his ass. Is this intended as a covert sneer? Did the writer mean that asses are always the first to perceive invisible angels? The angel has 'his sword drawn in his hand'—this sword (being also only visible to the ass), must have been (like Macbeth's dagger) manufactured from different material from the swords commonly in use. The ass obstinately refusing to go forward (and asses very often do refuse to go forward, rather staying because a church, an angel, or a Bible stops the way, than progressing with Freethinking searchers toward the truth), is beaten by Balaam. The ass indignantly remonstrates, inquiring why he is beaten; and as Balaam manifested no surprise whatever when his ass spoke, we must conclude that the phenomenon was not entirely new to him. The fable concludes by relating that Balaam blessed the Jews, instead of cursing them.

Chapter xxiii., v. 19. According to the Bible account, God has repented several times (Genesis, chap, vi., vv. 6 and 7; Exodus, chap. xxxii., v. 14; 1 Samuel, chap, xv., v. xi.; 2 Samuel, chap. xxiv., v. 16).

In chap, xxiv., v. 15, our version reads, 'The man whose eyes are open hath said: 'the Douay has it,' The man

whose eye is stopped up hath said: 'the Breeches Bible renders it, 'The man whose eyes were shut up hath said.'

Chapter xxv., v. 4. See Deuteronomy, chap, iv., v. 31, 'The Lord thy God is a merciful God.'

Verse 9. '24,000.' In 1 Corinthians, chap, x., v. 8, the number is given as '23,000.'

Chapter xxvi., vv. 10 and 11. The Douay says, 'And there was a great miracle wrought; that when Core (Korah) perished, his sons did not perish.' Our version omits the miracle, out says, that 'the children of Korah died not:' yet in chap, xvi., vv. 32 and 33, we are told that 'the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods, they and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.'

Verse 12. 'Nemuel' is called 'Jemuel' in Genesis, chap, xlvi, v. 10.

Verse 13. 'Zerah' is called 'Zohar' in Genesis, chap, xlvi., v. 10.

Verse 16. 'Ozni' is called 'Ezbon' in Genesis, chap, xliv., v. 16. Verse 23. 'Pua' is called 'Phuvah' in Genesis, [pg79](#) chap, xlvi., v. 13.

Verse 24. 'Jashub' is called 'Job' in Genesis, chap, xlvi., v. 13.

Verses 64 and 65. Phinehas and Eleazar at least were left, if no more than they entered the promised land (*vide* Joshua, chap, xiv., v. 1, and chap, xxii., v. 13).

Chapter xxvii., v. 14. We have no account whatever of any rebellion by Moses. In Exodus, chap, xvii., it is the people who rebel against Moses.

Chapter xxxi. gives an account of the slaughter of the Midianites, and the destruction of their 'cities' and 'goodly castles' by 12,000 Jews, and the capture of 32,000 virgins, 675,000 sheep, 72,000 oxen, and 61,000 asses. The number or slain is not given; but it is easy to ascertain a minimum, if we reckon to each virgin for father, mother, brother, married sisters and their husbands, and other married females and their husbands, an average of four persons—which I conceive will be an estimate much under the true amount—we shall find 128,000 to have been slaughtered by 12,000 Jews, which is a statement rather difficult to believe. This difficulty is increased when we remember that the Midianites dwelt in 'cities' and 'goodly castles,' under shelter of which they could have contended against the attacks of the Jews. After all this fighting, the tired warriors must have had considerable trouble (especially if the captives resisted) in bringing back the spoil, which averaged to each man (supposing that all the Jewish soldiers had escaped unhurt) three virgins, fifty-six sheep, six oxen, and five asses, besides gold, silver, lead, iron, tin, brass, jewels, and other spoil. The Jews, however, were mighty warriors; and it has been previously noticed how two men slaughtered the whole of the inhabitants of a city, (see page 41). I am compelled to add, that verse 7, which says that the Jews slew 'all the males,' must be positively untrue, because if all were killed except the 32,000 virgins taken captive, there would be an end to the Midianitish nation; while in Judges, chap, vi., we actually find the Midianites more powerful than the Israelites.

Verse 16. This 'counsel of Balaam' is never mentioned before.

Verse 18. Is not this command likely to produce a repetition of the offence mentioned in chap, xxv., and for which the Israelites were so heavily punished?

Chapter xxxii., v. 40. 'Machir' must be a mistake, as he must have been dead long since (*vide* Genesis, chap. 1., v. 23); he could hardly have lived long enough to see his own progeny number 52,700 (*vide* chap, xxvi., v. 34).

Chapter xxxiii., v. 4. 'Upon their Gods also the Lord executed judgments.'. What judgments were these? and, if there is only one true God, were these judgments executed upon the mock gods of the Egyptians? If this be so, the whole is a farce upon the face of it, without deeper investigation.

Chapter xxxv., v. 14. 'On this side Jordan:' the Douay reads, 'beyond the Jordan:' the remarks on page 77 apply equally to this text.

Numbers is presented to us as a history of the wanderings of the Israelites during nearly forty years, with [pg80](#) an account of some of the wars in which they were engaged. It professes to be the work of the same writer as the Book of Genesis; and in this respect its pretensions at once fail, for it is not at all probable that one man would make such strange variations in writing the names of the persons referred to on page 78. It cannot be revelation from God—1st. Because it contains a variety of errors, as in the names just alluded to, or in the times of service of the Levites; or in the destruction of the children of Korah, etc., etc. 2nd. Because it pictures a God of great mercy and long suffering, ordering an indiscriminate and merciless slaughter, as in the case of the Midianites. 3rd. Because it assumes that the curse or blessing of Balaam would affect the welfare of the Israelites, and represents an omniscient and immutable Deity as forgiving or punishing sinners according as they sprinkled, or neglected to sprinkle, themselves with water, in which had been mixed the ashes of a burnt red cow. 4th. Because it is wholly, or in some part, compiled from other and earlier writings, and, therefore, was not an original. As a narration of events, it must be regarded with extreme suspicion. The numberings of the Jews in chapter i., I cannot help considering as suppositious; and the account of the wholesale slaughter of the Midianites is evidently untrue. As an educational book, it is entirely without merit, and affords neither instruction nor amusement to its reader, unless, indeed, he be of a sufficiently depraved character to enable him to find amusement in adding together the thousands of Israelites slaughtered by God, or in calculating the probable number of the Midianites slain by the children of Israel.

Chapter i., vv. 1 and 5 (see page 6), 'On this side Jordan:' the Douay has i beyond the Jordan' in each instance.

Verse 10. 'Ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.' Yet we are told in chap, vii., v. 7, that God chose the Jews because they were the 'fewest of all people.'

Chapter ii., v. 30. 'The Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate.' The 'hardening of heart' has been remarked upon in pages 50 and 52, in the case of Pharaoh. It is useless to fill the work with mere repetitions; but I feel bound to draw attention again to such texts as this, which clearly demonstrate, to even the most obtuse mind, that the Book cannot be a revelation from an immutable Deity. That a merciful and loving God should harden any man's heart is unreasonable in the extreme; and that he should do it for the purpose of affording an excuse for slaughter, is a blasphemous proposition, which every Theist ought to deny. Can men wonder that Atheists grow in number, when the character of the Deity is delineated in such a contradictory and absurd manner? A just God grossly unjust, a merciful God cruel in the extreme, an immutable God constantly changing; in fact, a God consistent only in the attribute of incomprehensibility! [\[pg81\]](#)

Chapter iii., v. 11. "'For only Og, King of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man."

'Dr. Pyle (in the Family Bible) remarks on this passage:—

"It is probable that either Og conveyed his iron bedstead, with other furniture of his palace, into the country of the Ammonites, to prevent their falling into the hands of the Israelites; or else the Ammonites had taken it from him in some former conquest, and kept it as a monument of their victory."

'Either of these cases would be probable, if it could be first proved that Moses wrote this verse, and that he knew of Og's bed being kept in Rabbath. But as Rabbath was not taken by the Israelites until the time of David, as we read in 2 Samuel, xii., 26, "'And Joab fought against Rabbah, of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city."

'It is very unlikely that the Israelites knew anything about the bedstead of King Og until then. In the reign of David, five hundred years had passed since Og lived, and his bedstead had consequently become an object of curiosity; like the great bed of Ware, which is still shown in that town, though only three hundred years old. It is hardly possible that Moses knew anything about this bedstead of King Og, afterwards so famous.'

Verse 11. 'Is it not in Rabbath, of the children of Ammon?' This could scarcely have been written by Moses, for the reasons just stated.

Verse 24. 'What God is there in heaven, or in earth, that can do according to thy work?' This is a strange phrase from the lips of a man who only believed in one God.

Chapter iv., vv. 21 and 22. The Lord said, that not one of the Israelites, except Caleb, and his seed, should enter the promised land (*vide* Numbers, chap, xiv., v. 24). Yet here Moses says, 'I must not go over Jordan, but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.'

Verse 40. 'The earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever.' The earth, I suppose, means Judea only, and this has not been held by the Jews to the present day, much less for ever.

Verses 41 and 46. 'On this side Jordan,' the Douay reads, 'Beyond the Jordan.'

Chapter v., vv. 12 to 15 (see page 57).

Verse 22. 'These words the Lord spake.... with a great voice, and he added no more,' Yet in Exodus, chap, xx., vv. 22 to 26, and in the following chapters, he adds a great deal more.

Chapter vi., v. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' Is it possible that the Jews could love a Deity, whom they had only seen amongst smoke and fire, as a pillar of cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night; who had led them from the flesh-pots of Egypt into the sterile sandy desert of sin? If love is a necessary consequence of punishment, the Israelites would, of course, love very strongly; but I submit it is utterly impossible they could love a God who told them he was a [\[pg82\]](#) jealous God, whose anger might be kindled against them, and who might destroy them from off the face of the earth; who had tormented them with various plagues, for uttering complaints which they could scarce avoid. Hunger and thirst would tempt the most contented men to murmur; and yet for these murmurings they had been terribly dealt with.

Chapter vii., v. 2. See Exodus, chap, xxxiv., v. 6., Deuteronomy, chap. iv., v. 31, Psalms, xxxiii., v. 5, ii., v. 1, cxvi., v. 5, cxiv., v. 8, 2 Chronicles, chap, xxx., v. 9, Nehemiah, chap, ix., v. 31, 9 Micah, chap, vii., v. 18, 1 Corinthians, chap, xiv., v. 33. I will make no further comment than this, that it is utterly impossible a God of mercy, long suffering, gracious kindness, and goodness, could have given such a command as this to his people: 'Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, or show mercy unto them.'

Chapter viii., v. 4. 'Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee.... these forty years.' So that during that time a continual miracle must have been worked with respect to the clothing of the Jews, although, if we admit any one miracle, of course we, to a great extent, if not altogether, lose our right to object to any other. I am not aware whether it was from wearing their clothes for so lengthy a period that the Jews obtained the epithet of 'old clothesmen of the world.' Perhaps the editor of *Notes and Queries* may deem the point worthy of investigation.

Verses 7, 8, and 9. This description cannot apply to Judea, and there must be some error, as the digging 'brass.' Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc; the proportions varying, according to the required colour. It is made by heating copper plates in a mixture of native oxide of zinc. It is not true that Judea was 'a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness,' as various famines are mentioned. See Ruth, chap, i., v. 1, 2 Samuel, chap, xxi., v. 1, 1 Kings, chap, xviii., v. 2, 2 Kings, chap, vi., v. 25, 2 Kings, chap, viii., v. 1, and 2 Kings, chap, xxv., v. 3.

Verses 19 and 20. 'If thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods, ye shall surely

perish.' The Jews were often idolatrous, and yet have not perished.

Chaps. viii. and ix. By these chapters it is certain that the bulk of the Israelites, who were to pass over Jordan into Canaan, had resided in Egypt, and provoked the wrath of the Lord on many occasions. The Lord must, therefore, have changed his mind, and rescinded the decree made by him in Numbers, chap. xiv., v. 23.

Chapter ix., v. 1. 'Fenced up to heaven.' These fences must have been very high; the carpenters built tall fences, and archers drew long bows, in the time of Moses.

Verse 16. On page 62, I omitted to notice that casting a metal calf is not a very easy operation to be performed by a wandering and ignorant people, in a desert without furnaces or mechanical aid.

Verses 9 and 18. The pretension here made by Moses is, that he fasted continuously eighty days and eighty nights, and 'neither ate bread nor drank water,' during that period. This is a very long fast, especially when we consider that Moses preserved his usual strength and activity, walked down the mountain, carrying two tables of stone, dashed them under his feet, etc There are several cases on record, in which human beings, affected by disease, have preserved life during a forced abstinence; the teeth, in one instance, being quite closed for a

very considerable period; but in all the cases I have read, some nutriment was administered in a fluid form, with a quill, or feather, or otherwise; in some, the patient has been in an almost cataleptic state, and I do not think that, in any case, the person fasting has been known to retain all his powers of mind and body unimpaired. There is nothing said about this fast in Exodus.

Verse 20. Neither is there any mention whatever of this in the Book of Exodus.

Chapter x., v. 6. 'Moser. There Aaron died, and there he was buried.' According to Numbers, chap. xx., v. 28, Aaron died and was buried on Mount Hor.

Verses 6 to 9. These verses seem to have been inserted without regard to the context; they have no connexion with the rest of the chapter, which would read more coherently if read from v. 5 to v. 10, omitting the four intermediate verses. In v. 8, the words 'until this present day,' would denote a considerable lapse of time from the death of Aaron.

Chapter xi., w. 23, 24, and 25. This has never been fulfilled, and the Christian will urge that it is not fulfilled because the Israelites have been disobedient. But this can scarcely be admitted, as neither blessing nor curse has been accomplished.

Chapter xii., v. 15. This is a contradiction of Leviticus, chap. xvii., vv. 3 and 4.

Verses 18 and 27. Here the people are allowed to eat a portion of the tithes and burnt offerings. While by Numbers, chap. xviii., v. 24, they are confined to the Levites.

Chapter xiii. Here Moses says, if 'a prophet' arise, and his prophecy come to pass, 'that prophet shall be put to death.' Can we, therefore, wonder that the Jews put Jesus to death, the more especially as he endeavoured to introduce a new form of worship, and new doctrines amongst them.

Chapter xv., v. 4, contradicts v. 11. The former stating that there shall be a time when 'there shall be no poor amongst you;' while the latter declares that 'the poor shall never cease out of the land.'

Chapter xviii., v. 8. What is a Levite's patrimony? In Numbers, chap. xviii., w. 20 to 24, it is expressly stated that the Levites should have no inheritance in the land.

Verses 10 and 11. On page 59, I have remarked upon the subject of witches and wizards, and now ask, can we have a stronger argument against this book than is contained in these verses? Voltaire writes thus upon enchantments:—

'Is not a large portion of the absurd superstitions which have prevailed, to be ascribed to very natural causes? There are scarcely any animals that may not be accustomed to approach at the sound of a bagpipe, or a single horn, to take their food. Orpheus, or some one of his predecessors, played the bagpipe better than other shepherds, or employed singing. All the domestic animals flocked together at the sound of his voice. It was soon supposed that bears and tigers were among the number collected. This first step accomplished, there was no difficulty in believing that Orpheus made stones and trees dance.

'If rocks and pine trees can be thus made to dance a ballet, it will cost little more to build cities by harmony, and the stones will easily arrange themselves at Amphion's song. A violin only will be wanting to build a city, and a ram's horn to destroy it.

'The charming of serpents may be attributed to a still more plausible cause. The serpent is neither a voracious nor a ferocious animal. Every reptile is timid. The first thing a reptile does, at least in Europe, on seeing a man, is to hide itself in a hole, like a rabbit, or a lizard. The instinct of man is to pursue everything that flies from him, and to fly from all that pursue him, except when he is armed, when he feels his strength; and, above all, when he is in the presence of many observers.

'The charming of serpents was considered as a thing regular and constant. The sacred Scripture itself, which always enters into our weaknesses, deigned to conform itself to this vulgar idea.

"The deaf adder, which shuts its ears that it may not hear the voice of the charmer."

"I will send among you which will resist enchantments."

"The slanderer is like the serpent, which yields not to the enchanter."

'To enchant a dead person, to resuscitate him, or barely to evoke his shade to speak to him, was the most simple thing in the world. It is very common to see the dead in dreams; in which they are spoken with, and return answers. If any one has seen them during sleep, why may he not see them when awake? It is only necessary to have a spirit like the Pythoness; and to bring this spirit of Pythonism into successful operation; it is only necessary that one party should be a knave, and the other a fool; and no one can deny that such rencontres very frequently occur.

'The famous Witch of Endor has always been a subject of great dispute among the fathers of the Church. The sage Theodoret, in his sixty-second question on the Book of Kings, asserts, that it is universally the

practice for the dead to appear with the head downwards; and that what terrified the witch was Samuel being upon his legs.

'St. Augustin, when interrogated by Simplicion, replies in the second book of his questions, that there is nothing more extraordinary in witches invoking a shade, than in the Devil transporting Jesus Christ through the air, to the pinnacle of the temple, on the top of a mountain.'

Chapter xix., vv. 2, 7, and 10. Here three cities of refuge are directed with a condition that three more may afterwards be added; while in Numbers, chap, xxxv., vv. 13 and 14, six are directed unconditionally. [\[pg85\]](#)

Chapter ix., vv. 16, 17, and 18. By this command to 'save alive nothing that breatheth,' we may judge of the mercy and loving kindness of the God of the Jews. Why were the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Ferrizites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to be mercilessly slaughtered? I am answered that they were idolaters. So were the Jews. And even if they were idolaters, the Omnipotent Deity had permitted them to become so, without giving them the benefit of any revelation from himself or the chance of listening to any of his prophets; in fact, by preferring the Jews, he must, to some extent, have neglected these unfortunate nations; and can it be wondered that such barbarous nations worshipped false Gods in those dark ages, when in the enlightened latter moiety of the nineteenth century, in the highly civilised country of England, there are more sects than there are books in the Bible; each drawing from that Book entirely different doctrines as to the Deity, and each declaring that theirs only is the true faith, and that all the others merit damnation (*vide* the Reverend preachers of Surrey Gardens on the one hand, and of Exeter Hall on the other)?

Chapter xxi., w. 10 to 14. According to this highly moral Book, if one of the Jewish warriors perceived a beautiful woman amongst the captives, he could take her home, keep her until he grew tired of her, and then desert her; he was only prohibited from selling her.

Verse 15. Polygamy is evidently a recognised institution amongst the Jews. In the present day, we are told that polygamy amongst the Mormons is an evidence of the grossly sensual character of Mor-monism.

Chapter xxii., w. 9, 10, 11. These verses seem to me to be too trifling and absurd to have a place amongst the ordinances of the infinite Deity.

Chapter xxiii., v. 3. An Ammonite, or a Moabite, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even unto their tenth generation. Yet David was only the third, and Solomon the fourth, generation, from the Moabitish woman Ruth (see Ruth, chap, iv., w. 21 and 22). Verses 1 to 6 seem positively unjust. Why should ten generations suffer; they did not choose their birth-place—whether Ammon or Judea.

Verses 13 and 14. I should not notice these verses, were it not for the gross absurdity of the 14th. The 13th contains a very useful sanitary regulation, although hardly worthy of a place in a revelation from the infinite and eternal ruler of the universe; but to suppose that God would perceive the 'unclean thing, and turn away,' is really too ridiculous to need further remark.

Verse 18. Why is a dog an abomination to the Lord? Dogs are of all animals the least likely to be an abomination to any one. They are more faithful to man than any animal except, perhaps, the horse. They possess better organisations than the majority of the brute family, and one is at a loss to understand the reason for this dislike to a dog on the part of the Deity, especially when we remember that the same Deity is [\[pg86\]](#) alleged to be the creator of the dog, and of all other animals.

Verses 19 and 20. All men ought to be considered as brethren. These verses are further evidence, if any were needed, that this is not a revelation from 'one God and Father of us all;' if it were, he surely would teach that all are brethren, and that none should be treated as strangers. Until we can call each man brother, and can set aside class distinctions, we shall never be able to realise a good state of society.

Chapter xxiv., v. 2. In Leviticus, chap, xxi., v. 7, it is said, 'Neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband.' These contradictory precepts can scarcely be from the same man; still less can they be from the same God.

Verse 16 has been referred to on page 56.

Chapter xvii., vv. 2 to 8. Here is a command for the elders to write 'all the words of this law,' and it is very clear that whether Moses, or any one else wrote, that it would be utterly impossible for a few men to carry the ark about, if it were filled with as many stones as would be required to contain the whole of the Pentateuch. The plastered stones would only suffice for a stationary people. Dr. Giles observes:—

'That the Hebrew legislator should deliver to his countrymen two tables of stone on which the principal heads of the law were engraved, is consistent with all the information which history supplies concerning those early times and the practice of other nations. But if we suppose, a book of such length and bulk as the Pentateuch to have been given at the same time to the Israelites, what becomes of the two tables of stone? Where was the necessity that these, also, should be given? It was not that they might be set up as monuments visible to the whole people, and as exponents of the heads of a law, which the written books would develop more fully, for the two tables of stone were never set up at all; they were kept in the ark of the covenant, and there is no mention made of their ever being taken out, not even when the temple of Solomon was built, when they might, with propriety, have been set up in some public place if this had been the use for which they were originally designed. But no such use is hinted at by the writer, nor were they originally given by God for such a purpose, as is manifest from their size, for when Moses came down from the Mount, he held the two tables in his hand, which he could not have done if they were of the usual size of monuments made to be set up in public.

'But the supposition that the two tables of stone were intended to be set up as monuments is refuted by the fact that other stones were actually set by Joshua, according to a command given by Moses, and that on them was inscribed a copy of the law of Moses. The original injunction of Moses is found in the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy, vv. 1-8.

'"And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, 'Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord [\[pg87\]](#) thy God giveth thee that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt

write upon them all the words of this law when thou art passed over, that thou mayst go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee—a land that floweth with milk and honey, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore, it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up an iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God on whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God: and thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there and rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly."

'The fulfilment of the command is related in the 8th chapter of Joshua, vv. 30-32:—

"Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well as the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal; as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterwards he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."

'This narrative is remarkable, for it commemorates a public solemnity held for no other purpose than that the laws of Moses might be impressed on the minds of the Jewish people. The writer also tells us that it was held in accordance with the book of Moses, and yet he does not tell us that the book of Moses was produced on that occasion, though we are to suppose that it was in existence. Yet something is then done which seems to prove by implication that there was no such book at all at that time. Joshua is said to have engraved on certain stones a copy of the law of Moses, and afterwards to have read all the words of the law, and the concluding paragraph relates that "there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel." Must we, then, suppose that the whole of the Pentateuch was inscribed on those stones by Joshua? What could be the use of inscribing the historical parts of the [\(pg88\)](#) Pentateuch on those stones, or reading them afterwards to the people if the object was simply to admonish them that they should observe the law of Moses? It is more probable that an inscription, much shorter than the whole of the Pentateuch, was carved upon those stones, and as no mention is made of any book at all on the same occasion, we have a negative proof that no such book was in existence at that time.

'The delivery of the two tables renders it unlikely that any other writing was bequeathed by Moses to the Israelitish people, particularly as the age in which Moses lived precedes by many centuries the times in which books, as far as we know of them, can be proved to have been written.'

Chapter xxviii. The remarks on page 61 apply more forcibly here. In this chapter Moses exerts himself to the utmost to depict the blessings attendant upon obedience to the laws; he uses the most expressive words he can command to define the rewards which God will give his chosen people, but he never dreams of a crown in heaven, or of an eternal life of happiness after death. If man possessed an immortal soul in the days of Moses, it is certain that Moses was ignorant of its existence. When threatening the people with terrible punishments if they disobeyed the laws, when using terms which would degrade the Deity into a cruel and horrible monster, when speaking of events which, if they had occurred, would have made life a burthen, when using the most vindictive and diabolical curses, Moses never hinted at a hell fire in which men were burned 'for ever and ever,' by the fire which is never quenched, and, at the same time, further tormented by the worm that never dieth. The doctrines of the existence of a soul, and of its punishment or reward in a future state, were entirely unknown to the Jewish lawgiver.

Verse 23. Here the heaven is to be 'brass,' and the earth 'iron.' In Leviticus, chap, xxvi., v. 19, the heaven is to be 'iron,' and the earth 'brass.'

Verse 58. Is evidently written long after the time of Moses, because at the commencement of his oration, Moses tells the elders to write 'the words' after they have crossed the Jordan, and this verse, therefore, could have formed no part of the original speech of Moses.

Verse 61. The same applies here.

Chapter xxix., v. 23. 'Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger.' We have no account of this anywhere in the Pentateuch. It has been assumed (but I am unable to learn on what ground) that these cities were destroyed at the same time with Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verses 25 and 28. Dr. Giles observes that in these verses 'are described the evils that should happen to the Israelites in case of their not observing the law which had been given by Moses:—

"Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt For they went and served other gods, [\(pg89\)](#) whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this Book. And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day."

'Here is an allusion to the great downfall of the first Israelitish monarchy, too plain to be interpreted as a supposed case, merely of a misfortune which only *might* befall them if they should be disobedient to God's commandments. The impression which the words irresistibly leave on the mind is, that the calamity of defeat and transportation into a strange country, had actually befallen them when those words were written.'

Chapter xxxi., w. 9, 19, 22, 24, and 26. These verses are, I believe, sometimes quoted as evidence of the authorship of the Pentateuch; but it has been urged in opposition, that it is idle to quote a work, while its authenticity is denied (*vide* Watson's 'Apology for the Bible,' p. 183); and that the terms 'book' and 'volume'

are not applicable to the age in which Moses lived (when the mode of writing was on thin slabs of plastered stone). Papyrus is not once spoken of, or alluded to, in the Pentateuch, and could not have been known to Moses. It is also asserted, that the 'book of the law' cannot possibly be identified with the Pentateuch, or even with the Book of Deuteronomy. (See remarks on page 7, and also Dr. Cooper's letter to Professor Silliman, pp. 29 and 38.)

Chapter xxxii. This is a song full of Oriental hyperboles. The language attributed to the Deity is absurd in the extreme, if read literally.

Verse 4. The words 'He is the rock,' are omitted, both in the Douay and Breeches Bible.

Verse 8. '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.' This verse is not very explicit; but if it means that God had apportioned the promised land to the Israelites, it then becomes a curious question as to how the Canaanites ever became possessed thereof. In a marginal note to my Breeches Bible, I find these words:—'When God by his providence divided the world, he lent for a time that portion to the Canaanites, which should after be an inheritance for all his people Israel.' If this be true, I can only add, that when God reclaimed his loan, he, like a modern Shylock, took a great quantity of blood as interest for his 'pound of flesh.' It does not appear, anywhere, that the Canaanites ever were informed of this strange tenure. Instead of holding the land as a loan, they looked upon it as their country, but suddenly found (if the Bible be correct) that God had 'sent them a strong delusion, that they might believe a lie.' (*Vide* 2 Thessaloni-ans, chap. ii., v. 11.)

Verses 12 to 15. The Israelites, according to the Pentateuch, never had much of the 'honey, oil, butter of kine, milk of sheep, fat of lambs, and rams, and goats, and fat of kidneys of wheat,' during the life of Moses;[\(pg90\)](#) on the contrary, it is alleged that they had no bread, but fed on manna in lieu of it; that they were short of water, and were without flesh meat, having to substitute a diet of quails.

Verses 15 and 17. These verses are remarkable as containing the singular of the plural word [—] (Aleim, or Elohim), and have given rise to much controversy amongst the learned Divines, because it is apparent to even the most prejudiced, that if the singular word [—] or [—] (Aloe, or Ale), signifies 'God,' the plural must mean more Gods than one.

Verses 18, 30, and 31. For the word 'rock,' in these verses, the Douay and Breeches Bible each have the word 'God.' The Hebrew word is [—] (tsorem), which, Parkhurst tells me, is a plural noun, and 'a name of certain idols, representative of the heavens, under the attributes of compressors, givers of strength or firmness.' This would convey an impression that the Jewish religion was strongly connected with Tsabaism.

Verses 20 to 43. I shall not attempt to comment on the language attributed in these verses to the 'infinite, immutable, and merciful Father of us all;' it is quite sufficient for me to repeat the terrible threat from a God of love, 'to devour flesh with his sword, and to make his arrows drunk with blood;' and that 'the sword without and the terror within shall destroy the young man, and the virgin, the suckling, and the old man with grey hairs.

Verses 48 to 52. It is impossible to ascertain what offence was committed by Moses. In Numbers, chap. xx., we find that the Lord threatened to punish Moses and Aaron on account of their unbelief; but it is evident some portion of the Book must be lost, as the particular instance of unbelief is not mentioned.

Chapter xxxiii., v. i., has been noticed on page 6.

Verse 2. 'He shined forth from Mount Paran.' This is an expression more applicable to the sun, in a Tsabaistic form of worship; so also is verse 26. 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven, in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' The Douay reads, 'There is no other God like the God of the lightest; he that is mounted upon the heaven is thy helper. By his magnificence, the clouds run hither and thither; his dwelling is above, and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

Verse 5. In our version are these words: 'And he was King in Jeshurun.' The Douay reads, 'He shall be king with the most right.' The Breeches Bible has it—'Then he was amongst the righteous people as king.'

Simeon is altogether forgotten in this chapter. Although it is headed 'The blessings of the twelve tribes,' only eleven are mentioned.

Chapter xxxiv., vv. 1 to 4, identifies the land which God swore he would give (but which he did not give) to the Jews for ever.

Verse 2. Which was the 'sea' mentioned here; it would have required good powers of vision to have seen the Mediterranean.

The following is from the pen of Dr. Giles:— 'As it is impossible for a writer to relate his own death, those[\(pg91\)](#) who maintain that the Pentateuch is the work of Moses, make an exception in favour of the last chapter. Dr. Gray has the following remarks upon this subject:—

"The account of the death and burial of Moses, and some other seemingly posthumous particulars described in this chapter, have been reduced to prove that it could not have been written by Moses; and, in all probability, these circumstances may have been inserted by Joshua, to complete the history of this illustrious prophet; or were afterwards added by Samuel, or some prophet who succeeded him. They were admitted by Ezra as authentic, and we have no reason to question the fidelity of the account."

'This language is authoritative and dictatorial. Truth, when questioned, comes out purer and brighter for the ideal through which it has passed: whereas error is scorched and withered by the touch of criticism. The chapter before us is admitted by all not to have been written by Moses. Why, then, was it ever attached to the Book of Moses, without some strong mark, to denote that it was only an appendix? It cannot be allowed that Joshua, Samuel, or Ezra, could connive at such a deception. There is internal evidence that neither Joshua nor Samuel made this addition to the Pentateuch; for the word Nabi, rendered in English prophet, indicates an age later than that of Samuel. We learn from the 1st Book of Samuel, chap. ix., v. 9, which was written after Samuel's death, that he who

'Is now called a prophet was before time a seer.

'If, therefore, the xxxiv. chapter of Deuteronomy had been written before, or in the time of Samuel, Moses would have been designated as a seer [in Hebrew, Roech], and not Nabi, a prophet. This exculpates both Joshua and Samuel from having added to the Book of Moses without mark of such addition. There are also other indications in the same chapter that Joshua could not have written it; for he would hardly have written of himself that Joshua the son of Nun was "full of the spirit of wisdom;" neither would he have said, "There arose not a prophet *since* in Israel like unto Moses;" for there was no other prophet to whom Moses could be compared except Joshua himself. The word *since* implies that many years had passed since the death of Moses, and that many prophets had arisen, none of whom could be placed in comparison with him who led them out of Egypt. Moreover, the words, "no man knoweth of his sepulchre"—i.e., the sepulchre of Moses—"unto this day," are another proof that the chapter was not added by Joshua, for they imply that a considerable space of time had elapsed, during which the sepulchre of Moses remained unknown. As Joshua died only twenty-five years after Moses, these words coming from his mouth would lose half their force, and would, probably, also convey an untruth; for we cannot believe that the great Hebrew legislator was buried clandestinely; or that Joshua, the next in command, and almost his equal, could be ignorant where his body was laid.' The Book we have last examined professes in part to be a repetition by Moses, of various events [\[pg92\]](#) mentioned in the previous Books; but as there are omissions of former statements, and additions of statements, before left unnoticed, as well as positive disagreements between some portions of the various texts, we are placed in the position of being compelled to deem one or the other as less worthy of our credence. This is at the best an embarrassing position; but our embarrassment is increased when we are gravely assured that both statements are from the pen of the same writer. We are tempted to doubt whether in an age when writing was a task of great difficulty (both from the inferiority of the materials then used, and the general ignorance of the people), any man would be likely to indulge in such long repetitions as those here found, and our inquietude is nowise allayed by the additional assurance that the Book is a revelation from God, especially when we read the list of terrible curses threatened in his name, but we feel that it is impossible a revelation from a loving God could include the directions for wholesale slaughterings of the human family, such as contained in this Book; or that an immutable God could have revealed that he had repented or changed his mind towards his people. There is no feature connected with the Book of Deuteronomy which enables us to place it in a better position than the four 'Books previously examined; its historical and educational character stands on the same basis. In quitting the Pentateuch, I must ask several questions of my readers. 1st. Are you satisfied that Moses is not its author? I have come with you carefully through every verse, and nowhere have we round anything which should induce us to regard Moses as the author of the first four books; with regard to a portion of the fifth Book, it is possible that a few scattered phrases may lead some to conclude that Moses might have been its author. But this supposition is dissipated when we ascertain that whatever books of the law the Jews possessed, were burnt either prior to, or during their captivity under the Persians. (See 2 Esdras, chap, xiv., v. 21.) 'For thy law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the works that shall be done.' I submit, therefore, that there is no evidence whatever to support the hypothesis that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch; against the proposition the evidence assumes a very strong character.

There are numerous verses which I have specially noticed, which it is utterly impossible Moses could have written, as they relate to events which transpired after his death; and there are other passages which are very unlikely to have been the product of his pen, from the mode of reference to himself.

There are numerous passages directly contradictory one of the other, and which compel the belief that more than one man must have been concerned in writing the Books.

The incoherency of many portions of the Books betrays the fact, that they have been compiled from various manuscripts, and that in some passages due attention was not paid by the compiler to the manner in which he joined the different documents. The reference to the book of the wars of the Lord admits the existence of [\[pg93\]](#) other documents at the time Numbers was written; and the passages referred to on pages 76 and 77, are evidence that documents have existed containing more complete accounts of the life and times of Moses, than those we are commenting on.

Bishop Watson says:—

'It appears incredible to many that God Almighty should have had colloquial intercourse with our first parents; that he should have contracted a kind of friendship for the patriarchs, and entered into covenants with them; that he should have suspended the laws of nature in Egypt: should have been so apparently partial as to become the God and governor of one particular nation; and should have so far demeaned himself as to give to that people a burthensome ritual of worship, statutes, and ordinances, many of which seem to be beneath the dignity of his attention, unimportant, and impolitic. I have conversed with many Deists, and have always found that the strangeness of these things was the only reason for their disbelief of them: nothing similar has happened in their time; they will not therefore admit that these events have really taken place at any time. As well might a child, when arrived at a state of manhood, contend that he had never either stood in need, or experienced the fostering care of a mother's kindness, the wearisome attention of his nurse, or the instruction and discipline of his schoolmaster. The Supreme Being selected one family from an idolatrous world; nursed it up by various acts of his providence into a great nation: communicated to that nation a knowledge of his holiness, justice, mercy, power, and wisdom; disseminated them, at various times, through every part of the earth, that they might be a "leaven to leaven the whole lump;" that they might assure all other nations of the existence of one Supreme God, the creator and preserver of the world, the only proper object of adoration.'

As an Atheist, I cannot quite appreciate the analogical character of the argument, when I find Bishop Watson comparing the Deity with a mother, a nurse, and a schoolmaster. I cannot understand the maternal care for the children of Abraham, who were oppressed in Egypt, starved, plagued, and slaughtered in the desert of Sin, and who never enjoyed a tract of country so large as Great Britain in the whole course of their history. The bishop speaks of the Jews as nursed into a great nation. When was this? If God has communicated to the Jews his 'power and wisdom,' where are the effects shown? What is the common

estimate of the Jews? That they are powerful only as usurers, wise only in estimating the value of the money which they lend, and the security they take for it. I do not endorse this estimate, because I know they have produced a few wonderful musicians, and one or two men who deserve to be in the front rank of the world's Freethinkers, but even I confess that the Jews do not seem to me to be (or ever to have been) a great, powerful, and wise nation. Bishop Watson says that it is an article of faith among the Jews that the law was given by Moses, and that it is well known that the Jews gave the name of the law to the first five books of the Old Testament; if so, the 'law' was burnt and forgotten at the time Ezra wrote, and no man knew anything about it. But whether the books were written by Moses, or by Ezra, or whether they were compiled from Hindoo or Egyptian originals, would matter but little to us if they were of the slightest utility to mankind. I will not further object as to the impossibility of their being revealed by God. I think I have said enough on that point. I now simply ask, Why have we Bible societies for the distribution of Bibles all over the world? Members of the Peace Society, when you subscribe your guineas, remember the 'Book of the Wars of the Lord,' remember the command of the Jewish warriors to 'save alive nothing that breatheth.' Fathers who wish for truthful sons, remember the reward of the false and cunning Jacob, who cheated the dying Isaac. Daughters, remember the regulation made for your sale by your parents, and the careful provision of a pecuniary compensation for your lost virtue, if the man who buys you becomes weary of his purchase. Anti-slavery men, forget not the godlike text which places a man's liberty on one side, and his wife and children on the other, and (with a refinement of cruelty worthy rather to be from a devil than from a god) bids him desert his family, or be a slave for ever; bear in mind, also, the wise protection of the rights of property, and do not ignore the fact that the servant man or maid is a chattel, 'the money' of his or her master. Astronomers, recollect that the sun was created after the earth, and that light existed, and morning and evening, day and night, were determined prior to the creation of either sun, moon, or stars. Geologists, what shall I say to you, except to bid you shut up your stone books when you open your Bibles?

We have examined five books; the following is an analysis of their contents:—Genesis relates the history of the world from its creation until the time of Abraham. This, according to some Biblical chronologists, takes in about 2,000 years, but these people do not reckon the seven days (?) in which the earth was made. After the time of Abraham, it confines itself to the Israelitish nation, whose history it continues to the time of Joseph, which, according to the same chronology, would bring us down to about a.m. 2369. From this history of the world, we can learn but little, except that religion must have commenced its tyrannical reign very early. This is proved by the general depravity of the people—a depravity often resulting from habits of superstition and ignorance. We gather the characters of the founders of the Jewish nation from Genesis, and we then wonder most profoundly. Incomprehensibility seems the proper attribute of Deity; the preference shown for the descendants of Abraham is, undoubtedly, a matter far beyond our comprehension. We can hardly understand in what points Abraham was superior to other human beings. His grandson, Jacob, seems to have been decidedly a great rascal, and his great grandchildren appear much worse than their father, but it might be that God chose them on account of their bad qualities so that the mystery might be more complete. Exodus continues the history of the Jews, leaving the other nations unnoticed, except the unfortunate Egyptian nation, who suffered a series of terrible punishments at the hands of the Deity. We may here admire the mercy and loving kindness of the omnipotent and immutable Ruler of the universe, as shown in the history of the plagues and drownings of the Egyptians. This book brings down the history to about a.m. 2550. The chronologists slightly differ as to the exact date.

Leviticus is limited almost wholly to legislative enactments. The purpose of many of the laws is not at all clear. No moral or physical evil is apparently likely to result from eating an eel, yet eels are prohibited as articles of food. The whole of Leviticus may be disregarded without loss in an historical point of view, and of its statutes we can but say, that many of them are better honoured by neglect than by observance.

Numbers professes to contain the history of the Jews during about thirty-nine years, taking in that period of the wanderings in the wilderness, from about b.c. 1451 to b.c. 1490. These dates, as the former ones, are purely hypothetical, and have their chief foundation in the credulity of the people and the holiness of the priests. From this book we may learn, very decidedly, that 'God's ways are not as our ways.' *Now*, a thirsty man would ask for water, and if he were placed in a position where water was inaccessible, he would complain, and most men would hold that his complaints were just, and it would be regarded as a case of considerable hardship if the man should happen to be punished by the civil magistrate merely because he complained. *Then*, a thirsty people asked for water, and were severely punished by their merciful and immutable Father. *Now*, a wizard at Leeds is imprisoned for eighteen months, with hard labour, because the laws, the Church, the jury, and the judge all disbelieve in his power to work miracles. *Then*, the omniscient and omnipotent Deity acknowledged the power of the wizard of Pethor to work miracles, and, wishing to prevent a curse from falling on the Israelites, the angel of the Lord was sent, who made himself known to the wizard's donkey, and stopped the wizard's journey. The wizard lost his temper, and then, like many other enraged men, became as complete an ass as the animal he rode, and also perceived the angel. Numbers contains some ceremonial laws which I think have been already sufficiently adverted to.

Deuteronomy carries the history of the Jews on to the death of Moses, but only includes a very short period of time—viz., about twelve months. Its length is caused by the repetitions of many parts of the previous books. Its chief merit is, that it disagrees where it professes to reiterate, and as of two contradictory statements, one must be false, it requires considerable stretching of the mental faculties to accept both as true. The following chronological table of the chief events in the Pentateuch may prove interesting to my readers. Its accuracy is not vouched, but it is acknowledged by many Biblical scholars:— B.C. 4004. The world created—Adam made.

3417. *Methusalem born.*

3074. *Adam died.*

3048. *Noah born.*

2448. *The Flood.*

2093. Noah died.

1921. Abraham went down into Egypt.

1706. Jacob's family settled in Egypt.

1491. The Israelites were led out of Egypt.

1452. Moses died.

There are many other matters in the Pentateuch to which attention might be usefully drawn, but my space is limited; and even with the present mode of treatment, it will be difficult to compress the whole of my work so as to present it as a cheap volume. I am aware that some of my readers will not approve of those criticisms which serve to make apparent the many absurdities of the text, still, I trust that all will admit that in no case have I misquoted or misconstrued a passage for the purpose of gaining a temporary effect. I have written as I have thought, and my fervent wish is, that my writing may be examined, and if proved true, that each word may have power, like an axe, to hew down the Upas tree, which, while it poisons the mind and destroys the freethought of the child, yet claims to be the guide and educator of the man. [\[pg97\]](#)

BOOK VI. JOSHUA

It is alleged by many that this book was written by Joshua, and that there is internal evidence of that fact. Dr. Giles has very fully discussed this subject in pages 153 to 164 of his 'Hebrew Records,' to which I refer my readers. It is clear that the book, as a whole, was not written by Joshua; and, as I cannot find anything enabling me to discover the author, it must be criticised in the same manner as other anonymous writings.

Chapter ii., v. 14. The command to save alive nothing that breatheth is soon set at naught. Here is a covenant made by the spies with a Canaanitish woman; this covenant is afterwards confirmed by Joshua in direct opposition to the commands of God, given through Moses. (See chap. vi., vv. 22 and 23, and Deuteronomy, chap. vii., vv. 2 and 3.) By Matthew, chap. L, v. 5, it would appear that Rahab was married to Salmon, so that three of God's ordinances are here broken; first, in sparing the lives of herself and family, second, in making a covenant with her, third, in marrying her. From this lady we derive David and all the succeeding kings.

Chapter iv., v. 7. 'These stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.' Where are they now? It would be some evidence in support of the genuineness of this pretended history of the Jews if these twelve stones could be shown. It is no answer that the ravages of time, or other adverse circumstances, may have removed them. These stones were to be a memorial 'for ever.'

Verse 9. 'And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood, *and they are there unto this day!*

If the stones had not been there a long time, the writer of the book would not have used such an expression. It would have been in no wise remarkable that the twelve stones, or pillar, should have stood forty or fifty years, but the writer means that they had stood 500, or perhaps 1000 years.

Verse 13. If this means that the whole of the fighting men of the Jews numbered only 40,000, they must have sadly dwindled away, as in Numbers, chap. i., vv. 3 and 46, they are stated at 603,550.

Verse 23. 'For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from *before us until we were passed over,*' yet in chap. v., v. 4, we are told that all the people that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness.

Chapter v., v. 1. 'Until we were passed over.' Bishop Tomline remarks on this passage:—

'The use of the word "we" proves that this book was written by Joshua, or by some one else alive at the time.

'This inference is obvious, and cannot be objected to if it can be shown that the words of the text, *until WE were passed over,* are a correct translation of the corresponding words in the original Hebrew Bible. This, [\[pg98\]](#) however, is not the case. The passage before us is one of the parts of the Bible which has been corrupted by time, and the error has arisen in the present instance from the great similarity between the Hebrew words, [—] Aberanoo, "we passed over," and [—] Abekoom, "he caused them to pass over." These words are very similar, and though the common text of the Hebrew Bible now reads Aberanoo, which gives the sense of "we passed over," yet this was not the old reading of the passage, but Aberoom, "he [i.e., God] caused them to pass over," and among the various readings of the text Aberoom actually is found: but the Hebrew letter [—] has been carelessly divided into two letters, [—] vau and [—] nun, by the copyist, and the translators of the Bible, not perceiving the error, and perhaps tempted to make a choice which tended to attach to the book the value of a contemporary record, have given the passage that interpretation which has misled so many critics and on which is built so fallacious a theory.

'That the error is such as I described it, and consequently that the theory built upon it is fallacious, must inevitably result from the accuracy of our present statement, which becomes almost a matter of certainty from the concurrence of the Septuagint and Vulgate translations.

'In the German translations of the Bible the error has been corrected, and the proper reading of the word restored.

'It appears, then, that this passage, which has been made the basis for the belief that the Book of Joshua is a contemporary writing, has been incorrectly translated in our common English Bibles, and consequently the opinion "built upon it must fall to the ground".'

Verse 9. On page 35 is quoted Voltaire's criticism on this text, 'I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.' It is evident that it refers to the circumcision, which was an established ceremony amongst the Egyptians from the earliest ages.

Verses 13 to 15. In what manner shall I comment on these verses? Shall I gravely reason upon the improbability of 'a man with a drawn sword' being the 'captain of the Lord's host?' Shall I venture to doubt whether the captain of the Lord's host would come to Joshua for the mere purpose of telling him to take off his shoes, or ought I not rather at once to class these verses with such tales as 'Aladdin's Lamp,' and others of a like character, dismissing them as unworthy of further criticism?

Chapter vi. relates the miraculous falling down of the walls of the city of Jericho. One of two courses must be pursued when reading it; either the reader must discard the evidence presented by his senses, and, without reasoning, blindly accept the story, or he will be compelled at once to reject it as absurd. I have read of the destruction of a suspension bridge, or bridge of boats, in consequence of vibration, produced by the marching across, in regular time, of a large body of men, but I am inclined to think that all the Jews in the world might march round Jericho until they were sorely fatigued, and yet have but little effect on its walls. [\[pg99\]](#) Walls are more likely to tumble down by pushing against them than by shouting at them. It is almost to be regretted that our Christian friends did not try the experiment at Sebastopol; if it had succeeded, it would have struck all the world with astonishment.

'Chap, vii., v. 1 to end. Among many nations in their rude infancy, and while gross and barbarous ideas prevailed, it has been held that sin or offence, particularly if of an aggravated kind, against the gods or the nearest relationships amongst men could never be pardoned. The Nemesis must be satisfied; but satisfaction was often obtained from the innocent, who were made the objects of vengeance instead of the guilty. The ancient Hebrews participated in these notions of other uncultivated nations, hence their ideas of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, of the Israelitish army defeated on account of Achan, etc. This idea was greatly encouraged by the Levitical priests, whose interests were promoted by it, and by the practice of sacrifices, which was founded upon the assumption of vicariousness and expiation. This idea also became thoroughly interwoven with the theocratical institution of the Jews, the worship of their sanctuary, their hymns, and the poetry of their prophets.

'Verse 26. And they raised over him [Achan] a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger Wherefore the name of that place was called the valley of Achor unto this day.

'Chap, viii., vv. 28, 29. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. And the King of Ai he [Joshua] hanged on a tree until eventide. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.'

'The words, *that remaineth*, do not occur in the original Hebrew; they have been added by the translators to make the sense complete. The only inference which both these last quoted passages carry with them concerning the age when they were written is that it was a very long time after the death of Achan in the first text, and of the King of Ai in the second. A similar inference is deduced from the verse which follows:—

'Chap, ix., v. 27. "And Joshua made them [the Gibeonites] that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, *even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.*"

'The "place which the Lord should choose" was finally Jerusalem, and, if the words were written in the later period of the Israelitish government, the Lord had already chosen Jerusalem to be the site of his temple and the place of his worship.

'Chap, x., v. 1. "Now it came to pass when Adonizedec, King of Jerusalem, had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it," etc.

'This chapter is full of names that did not exist until many years afterwards, some more, some less. [\[pg100\]](#) Bethhoron, mentioned at verse 10, was built by an Israelitish lady after the conquest, as we learn from 1 Chron. vii., 23, 24:—

"And when he [Ephraim] went in to his wife, she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house. And his daughter was Sherah, who built Bethhoron the nether and the upper, and Uzen-Sherah."

'The comparison of these texts involves an anachronism. Sherah was only the fourth in descent from Jacob, thus:—Joseph, Ephraim, Beriah, Sherah. If the Israelites remained 430 years in Egypt, as appears from several texts of Scripture, it is impossible that only one generation, Beriah, could have intervened between Ephraim, who was a child when Jacob went down into Egypt, and Sherah, who built Bethhoron.

'Chap, x., vv. 13, 14. "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."

'Here we obtain a fact that bears with great force upon our present argument. The writer of the Book of Joshua quotes an earlier work, to which he refers his readers, for a more full account of the miracle which he records—namely, the arresting the sun and moon in their flight that the Israelites might be avenged on their enemies. It is impossible to conceive that Joshua himself, who wrought that miracle, could have referred his readers to another book, in which a better account of it was to be found. It is far more likely that a compiler in a later age finding this miraculous event well described in a book still popular in his time, called the Book of Jasher, should have referred his readers to that book for further information.

'But this is not the only observation elicited by the mention made of the Book of Jasher in this place. The same work is quoted in 2 Sam. i., 17, 18:—

"And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan, his son. Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow; behold it is written in the Book of Jasher."

'Here we learn that the Book of Jasher contains the narrative of King David teaching his subjects the use of archery in war. The Book of Jasher was, therefore, written in or after the reign of David; and the Book of

Joshua, which quotes the Book of Jasher, must have been written later still.'

Whether these verses were written by Joshua, or Jasher, or by some other equally reliable personage, nothing can save them from condemnation as being absurd in the extreme. Paine observes:—

'This tale of the sun standing still upon Mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, is one of those fables that detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened without being known all over the world. One half would have wondered why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set, and the tradition of it would be universal, whereas there is not a nation in the world that knows anything about it. But why must the moon stand still? What occasion could there be for moonlight in the day time, and that, too, whilst the sun shined? As a poetical figure the whole is well enough; it is akin to that in the song of Deborah and Barah. *The stars in their courses, fought against Sisera*; but it is inferior to the figurative declaration of Mahomet to the person who came to expostulate with him on his goings on:—*Wert thou, said he, to come to me with the sun in thy right hand and the moon in thy left, it should not alter my career*. For Joshua to have exceeded Mahomet, he should have put the sun and moon one in each pocket, and carried them as Guy Fawkes carried his dark lanthorn, and taken them out to shine as he might happen to want them.

'The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again; the account, however, abstracted from the poetical fancy shows the ignorance of Joshua, for he should have commanded the earth to have stood still.'

Verse 14. 'The time implied by the expression *after it*, that is, after that day being put in comparison with all the time that passed *before it*, must, in order to give any expressive signification to the passage, mean a *great length of time*. For example, it would have been ridiculous to have said to the next day, or the next week, or the next month, or the next year; to give, therefore, meaning to the passage comparative to the wonder it relates, and the prior time it alludes to it, must mean centuries of years; less, however, than one would be trifling, and less than two would be barely admissible.'

It is not true, as stated in verse 14, that there was no day before or after that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man. The Lord *before* hearkened unto Abraham (*vide* Genesis, chap, xviii., vv. 23 to 32), and unto Moses (Exodus, chap, xxxii., vv. 11 to 14; Numbers, chap, xi., vv. 11 to 23; chap, xiv., vv. 13 to 20). *After*, the Lord hearkened unto Samson (Judges, chap, xvi., v. 28), to David (1 Samuel, ehap. xxiii., vv. 2 to 12).

Verse 26. The King of Hebron is slain and hanged in this verse, and afterwards slain again in verse 37. In the foot note to the Douay it is alleged that this was a second king, but the explanation is not correct, as only one King of Hebron was slain by Joshua (*vide* chap. xii., v. 10).

'The burial place of the five kings was marked out to posterity by a lasting monument—a heap of stones which Joshua caused to be placed over the cave where they were buried.

"Verse 27. 'And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain *until this very day*?'

Chapter xi., v. 6. 'Thou shalt hough (or hamstring) their horses and burn their chariots with fire.' Will any man attempt to defend this as a command from the Deity to Joshua? Is it consistent that the eternal omnipotent and merciful Creator of all things should order harmless and unoffending animals to be cruelly and inhumanly maltreated? We are sometimes told that the Canaanites were murdered because they were idolaters, but surely their horses took no part in the worship of Moloch or of Baal.

Chapter xiv., 14. 'Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, *unto this day*, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-Arba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims; and the land had rest from war. (See chap, xv., 13 to 19.) 'Every part of this verse shows a later writer and a later age. The city had lost its ancient name of Kirjath-Arba, and was known by the name of Hebron: it had become the inheritance of Caleb, by which is implied that Caleb was dead, and his descendants were in possession of it, *until this day*—i.e., for a great length of time. And this is further confirmed by the concluding words, "And the land had rest from war." The war of the invasion was over, and the children of Israel had quiet possession of the country when the Book of Joshua was written.

'Chap, xv., 8—10. And the border went up the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; *the same is Jerusalem*: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward: and the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, *which is Kirjath-jearim*: and the border compassed from Baalah westward unto Mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of Mount Jearim, *which is Chesalon*, on the north side, and went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed onto Timnah.

'The observations concerning the anachronisms which occur in the names of places, apply in all their force to this passage; we have three distinct places here mentioned, each of them designated both by its ancient and modern appellation, Jebusi, Jerusalem—Baalah, Kirjath-jearim—Mount Jearim, Chesalon. We know, also, that Jebusi did not receive the name of Jerusalem until the reign of David, proving that the book in which the word Jerusalem occurs was not written until the reign of David, or that, if written before that time, it has since been interpolated. Of these two probabilities the former is the stronger: because we find it confirmed by the last verse of the same chapter:—

'Chap, xv., 63. As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

'It has been asserted that these words can apply only to the few years which immediately followed the death of Joshua; for, say the commentators, the Jebusites *were* then driven out, as we read the account in Judges i., 7, 8. We shall find, on inquiry, that they were *not* then driven out; at least, it is not so stated in Judges i., 7, 8, nor can any such meaning be inferred from the narrative there contained.'

'In the 1st chapter of Judges, the writer, after announcing the death of Joshua, proceeds to tell what

happened between the children of Judah and the native inhabitants of the land of Canaan. In this statement, the writer, having abruptly mentioned Jerusalem in the seventh verse, says immediately after, in the eighth verse, by way of explanation, "Now the children of Judah *had* fought against Jerusalem, and had *taken* it:" consequently, this book could not have been written before Jerusalem had been taken. In the quotation just made from the 15th chapter of Joshua, verse 63, it is said, that *the Jebusitea dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day*, meaning the time when the Book of Joshua was written.

'The evidence I have already produced, to prove that the books I have hitherto treated of were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, nor till many years after their death, if such persons ever lived, is already so abundant, that I can afford to admit this passage with less weight than I am entitled to draw from it. For the case is, that so far as the Bible can be credited as a history, the city of Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David; and consequently, that the Books of Joshua and of Judges were not written till after the commencement of the reign of David, which was 370 years after the death of Joshua.

'The name of the city that was afterwards called Jerusalem, was originally Jebus or Jebusi, and was the capital of the Jebusites. The account of David's taking this city is given in 2 Samuel, chap, v., v. 4, etc; also in 1 Chron., chap, xiv., v. 4, etc. There is no mention in any part of the Bible that it was ever taken before, nor any account that favours such an opinion. It is not said, either in Samuel or in the Chronicles, that they *utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*, as is said of their other conquests; and the silence here observed implies that it was taken by capitulation, and that the Jebusites, the native inhabitants, continued to live in the place after it was taken. The account, therefore, given in Joshua, that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day*, corresponds to no other time than after the taking the city by David.'

'Chap, xix., 47. And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them; therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem [called Laish in Judges, chap, xviii., v. 29], and took it and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it and dwelt therein! and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan, their father.

'This is the same affair which is related in detail in the 18th chapter of Judges. According to the chronology given in the margin of our Bibles, and generally received by the learned, this happened about thirty years after the death of Joshua. The anachronism is explained in the following manner by the editors of the "Family Bible," quoting from Bishop Patrick and Shuckford:—

"It is supposed that Ezra, or some other, thought good in aftertimes to insert this verse here, in order to complete the account of the Danites' possession." [t6pg104](#)

'If this be received as sound criticism, history will truly be brought down to a level with the most worthless pastimes that man can choose for his amusement: it will be, literally, no better than an almanack, which is altered year by year to adapt it to the existing state of things. If the Book of Joshua were indeed the work of the great man whose name it bears, no later historian would have ventured to impair its value by adding to or detracting from its contents. (*Vide* "Hebrew Records" and "Age of Reason")

Chapter xxi., v. 36. In the Douay another city, 'Misor,' is named, but as this would make *five* cities instead of *four*, as mentioned in verse 37, our orthodox translators have discreetly omitted 'Misor' from the list.

Verses 43-5. 'And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.' These verses are decidedly incorrect. The Israelites did not get all the promised land, they did not have rest round about, their enemies did stand before them, and in many places defeated them; the Lord did not deliver all their enemies into their hands, and much failed which the Lord had promised.

Chapter xxii., v. 8. According to chap, vi., Achan was stoned to death for the very act now recommended by Joshua to the whole of the people—i.e., preserving and keeping raiment, etc., taken from the enemy.

Verse 22. 'The Lord God of Gods.' Lord of what Gods? Is not this similar to the mythology with Jove as the chief of Gods? The Jews, as has been before observed, were clearly Polytheists, recognising a variety of gods, but claiming the chief place for the God of Israel.

Chapter xxiii., v. 6. 'Book of the law of Moses.' See remarks on page 86.

Verse 12. Although Joshua is here cautioning the people against the consequences which will result from intermarrying with the Canaanites, yet he allowed Rahab and her family to marry and settle amongst the Israelites.

Verse 14. 'Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth.' Not one word is said about heaven or hell, not a hint that after his death he expects to live again, no expression of hope that he may reach heaven, and there enjoy eternal happiness, no thought about his soul. He does not refer to it in any way, so that it is quite evident that if there be a future state of happiness and misery, Joshua knew nothing of it, yet Joshua was a favoured individual; he had personally seen the 'Captain of the Lord's host,' and ought to have known much about heavenly things. Our translators felt the want of this spiritual feeling, and have put into Joshua's mouth [t6pg105](#) the words, 'Your souls.' Joshua, however, never uttered these words. The verse reads, 'Ye shall know, in all your hearts and in all your souls;' the Douay more correctly translates the same passage, 'You shall know with all your mind.' It simply means, 'Ye shall be in no doubt; but shall thoroughly know and understand.' None of the books we have examined contain the slightest reference to an immortal soul outliving the body, and responsible for the acts committed during the body's life. (See pages 68 and 88).

Chapter xxiv., vv. 2 and 3. What flood is this? In verse 3, the Douay, instead of saying that Abraham came from the 'other side of the flood,' substitutes the words, 'from the borders of Mesopotamia.' We are here informed, for the first time, that Terah, the father of Abraham, was an idolator; but we cannot ascertain how Joshua obtained his knowledge. If from other books they are lost, together with 'Jasher,' and the 'Book of the Wars of the Lord.'

Verses 12 and 13. If these verses are true, all the preceding accounts of the wars of the Israelites must be

false, as we are repeatedly told of their battles, and hard labours, and struggles, to obtain the land.

Verse 19. Moses said, that God kept 'mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.' Joshua says of God: 'He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.'

Verses 29 and 30. Dr. Giles thus comments:—

'If Joshua died at the age of 110 years, and his death is recorded in the Book which passes by his name, we need no further proof, that this book could not have been written until after Joshua was dead. But this limitation of its origin, to some period after the death of Joshua, must be still further qualified; for in the next verse of the same chapter we read as follows:—

"Chap, xxiv., v. 31. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel."

'How could Joshua write, that Israel served the Lord a long time after he was dead, nay, after all those who out-lived him were dead also? If some later writer, as Samuel or Ezra, inserted all these additions to the original work of Joshua, he would certainly have not done so in a clandestine or covert manner; but with a note attached, that "so far is the work of Joshua, and the continuation is by a later hand." Even the monkish chroniclers have displayed this species of common honesty; for we always, or nearly always, find a mark attached to those passages, which begin the writing of a new author:

"Hactenus dominus Radulfus scripsit Chronica, etc."

"So far is the Chronicle of Master Ralph, etc."

'Or, "Explicit dominus Rogerus, incipit dominus Matthaeus, etc."

"Here ends Master Rogers, of Wendover, and Master Matthew Paris begins." 'Even the supposition of these additions, made by later writers, goes far towards a concession of the fact, which I would establish—namely, that we have not the Hebrew writings in their original state; but that they are a compilation, put together after the nation had returned with fresh lights, and a fresh intellectual impetus from Babylon.'

Verse 33. Phineas was a Levite, and the Levites were forbidden to have any inheritance in the land; in what manner, therefore, did Phineas become entitled to this hill?

This Book of Joshua simply claims to be a relation of the adventures of the Jews under the leadership of Joshua. It has evidently been written very long after the occurrences it alleges to have taken place; and the writer must have either compiled from other writings, or from oral tradition; if from the latter, which is the more probable hypothesis, it will, perhaps, account for the anti-astronomical phenomenon, related in chapter x., and for the falling down of the walls of Jericho, and similar absurdities. By tradition, facts are exaggerated and distorted, especially where the people are uneducated and superstitious. As a history it is of little value, as a romance it is of less; it affords but poor amusement, and nought of instruction to peruse the account of the wars of the Jews. A man of martial disposition may feel a degree of interest and pleasure in reading the accounts of the struggles for freedom of a Tell, a Washington, a Hampden, or even of the terrific battles under a Napoleon or a Wellington; but of these Jews, whose best fighting was but a sham, who were cowards at heart; who only fought well when the Lord had paralysed the arms of their enemies; who took credit for victories, which the 'hornet' had won for them; who were merciless scoundrels when victorious, and pitiable poltroons when defeated; who fought not in defence of their own land, but to rob their fellow men of their native homes; I say, reading of these, a true man feels disgust and sorrow; disgust at the horrible cruelties related; sorrow that men should have been so ignorant as to imagine that the butcheries took place under the supervision of a God of love.

Bishop Watson, in his fourth letter, in reply to Paine's remarks on Joshua, writes as follows:—

'You make yourself merry with what you call the tale of the sun standing still upon Mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon; and you say, that "the story detects itself; because there is not a nation in the world that knows anything about it." How can you expect that there should, when there is not a nation in the world whose annals reach this era by many hundred years? It happens, however, that you are probably mistaken as to the fact: a confused tradition concerning this miracle and a similar one in the time of Ahaz, when the sun went back ten degrees, had been preserved among one of the most ancient nations, as we are informed by one of the most ancient historians. Herodotus, in his Euterpe, speaking of the Egyptian priests, says:—"They told me, that the sun four times deviated from his course; having twice risen where he uniformly goes down, and twice gone down where he uniformly rises." The Bishop is somewhat incorrect in his criticism. "There is not (he says) a nation in the world whose annals reach this era by many hundred years.' This is simply untrue. The alleged date of this pretended miracle is variously stated; but it may be taken at the outside at about 3,500 years ago. The Hindus claim to carry their annals back millions of years, and Sir William Jones, after a fair criticism, confesses that he traces back the Indian monarchy to a period upwards of 3,800 years from the present time, and admits an age of 3,000 years for the Vedas, or sacred writings. The age of the xajur Veda, one of the sacred Hindu books, is carried to a period prior to the alleged date of the birth of Moses. The chronicles of Iran (Persia) claim at least an equal antiquity; in fact, the same learned and careful author, speaking on this subject, says:—"If we can rely on evidence, which appears unexceptionable, the Iranian monarchy must have been the oldest in the world." The Tartar's 'genuine traditional history' commences 4,700 years ago. The Arabian monarchy is traceable back 3,600 years. We have a book of the Chinese, entitled 'Shuking,' containing the annals of that empire, commencing upwards of 4,100 years from this date. Foh, or Foni, is alleged to have given laws to the Chinese 4,300 years ago. We have their poetry admittedly 3,000 years of age, and professedly of a much more ancient date. A very learned member of the Asiatic Society, who investigated the astronomical computations of the Hindus, as given in an ancient treatise (the Surya Siddhanta), allows it to contain astronomical observations extending over 7,200 years, a period of upwards of 4,800 years of which has passed since the birth of one of their most famous astronomers. This will be sufficient to dispose of the Bishop's first assertion. His second, as to the quotation from Herodotus, fares no better. The four deviations spoken of, by the Egyptian priests, do not correspond to the two alleged miracles, and Paine's argument as quoted on page 100 of this work, remains unanswered.

BOOK VII. JUDGES

'The Book of Judges is anonymous on the face of it; and therefore, even the pretence is wanting to call it the word of God; it has not so much as a nominal voucher: it is altogether fatherless.

'This book begins with the same expression as the Book of Joshua. That of Joshua begins (chap. i., v. 1) —*Now after the death of Moses*, etc.; and this of Judges begins—*Now after the death of Joshua*, etc. This, and the similarity of style between the two books, indicate that they are the work of the same author; but who he was is altogether unknown; the only point that the book proves is, that the author lived long after the time of Joshua; for though it begins as if it followed immediately after his death, the second chapter is an epitome, or abstract, of the whole book, which, according to the Bible chronology, extends its history through a space of [pg108](#) 306 years—that is, from the death of Joshua, 1426 years before Christ, to the death of Sampson, 1120 years before Christ, and only twenty-five years before Saul went to *seek his father's asses, and was made king* (the chronology of this book has been a matter of much debate; and it is stated by various chronologers with very serious difference). But there is good reason to believe, that it was not written till the time of David at least; and that the Book of Joshua was not written before the same time.' (*Vide* 'Age of Reason').

Chapter i., w. 7 and 8, have been noticed on page 103.

Verses 9 to 15. These verses are a mere repetition of Joshua, chap. xv., w. 13 to 19.

Verse 16. Who were the Kenites? We read in Exodus, that the father-in-law of Moses was a priest of Midian, and by Numbers we learn, that Moses had an Ethiopian (query Egyptian) wife. A Kenite may be a Midianite, or an Ethiopian, or, as in the case of the Trinity, all three may be one. By this verse they appear to be settled in Judah, south of Arad, while by chap. iv., vv. 11 and 17, they are in the north by Naphtali.

Verse 17 has been noticed on page 72.

Verse 19. As the verse stands, it is flatly contradicted in Mark, chap. x., v. 27. A devout believer in the omnipotence of the Deity would doubtless wonder how chariots of iron could form serious obstacles to the attainment of any object by Judah, when the Lord was fighting for Judah. The Septuagint renders the verse somewhat differently.

Chapter ii., vv. 1 to 5. This visit of the angel of the Lord from his residence at Gilgal does not seem to have been attended with any good result; the Jews wept, but they must have shed what are commonly known as crocodiles' tears.

Verses 6 to 10 These verses are simply repetitions of verses 28 to 31, of the last chapter of Joshua, and are inserted here in a confused manner, having no connection with the earlier or later verses of the chapter. The whole of this chapter is confused and incoherent.

Verse 22 contradicts the attribute of foreknowledge, commonly ascribed to Deity.

Chapter iii., v. 1. 'These are the nations which the Lord had left.' That is, we are told, that the Lord spared the Canaanites, or rather a portion of them, 'to prove the Israelites.' The omniscient Deity could hardly have needed to prove his people, as he must have known what course of conduct they would pursue. To ordinary readers the matter is surrounded with difficulty. God had originally issued a series of loving commands with reference to these Canaanites; one was, 'Spare alive nothing that breatheth.' The Jews might well imagine that, as God had abandoned this portion of the commandments without special directions as to the others, that they (the Jews) were at liberty to make treaties with the Canaanites, and marry amongst them. Verse 3. 'All the Canaanites.' This is not true. The inhabitants of Jericho and Ai were Canaanites, and [pg109](#) these were 'utterly destroyed.'

Verses 15 to 26. The Douay says, that 'what Ehud, who was judge and chief magistrate of Israel, did on this occasion, was by a special inspiration from God; but such things are not to be imitated by private men.' There is no statement in the Book that God specially inspired Ehud to kill Eglon; yet if Eglon was a tyrant who deserved death, and if the act of Ehud was a praiseworthy act in him, why should it not be so in another? Verger doubtless was equally inspired when he killed the Archbishop of Paris, Felton when he killed the Duke of Buckingham, and Pianori when he tried to kill Louis Napoleon. The question is two-fold—1st. Is it lawful to destroy tyrants? 2nd. If a man is almost unanimously accursed, and accused as a tyrant (as Louis Napoleon for example), is it lawful for one man to constitute himself judge, jury, and executioner?

Verses 29 and 31. These round numbers betray the fallibility of the writer. A revelation from Deity would have been more precise. Shamgar must have been an extremely valiant warrior. To kill 600 men with only an ox-goad is no trifle. The record does not say whether or not they were all killed in one day, or during a lone period; or whether in a mass together, or separately. They could scarcely have been all killed in one day, and the probability is, that Shamgar did not attack the 600 men in a mass. I can only hope that Shamgar did not waylay the Philistines, simply killing them unawares. The Douay says, that the weapon used was a 'plough-share,' not an 'ox-goad.'

Chapter iv. Voltaire thus comments on this chapter:—

'We have no intention here to inquire at what time Baruch was chief of the Jewish people; why, being chief, he allowed his army to be commanded by a woman; whether this woman, named Deborah, had married Lapidoth; whether she was the friend or relative of Baruch, or, perhaps, his daughter, or his mother; nor on what day the battle of Thabor, in Galilee, was fought between this Deborah and Sisera, Captain-General of the armies of King Jabin, which Sisera commanded in Galilee, an army of three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and three thousand chariots of war, according to the historian Josephus.

'We shall at present leave out of the question this Jabin, King of a village called Hazor, who had more troops than the Grand Turk. We very much pity the fate of his grand vizier Sisera, who, having lost the battle of Galilee, leaped from his chariot and four that he might fly more swiftly on foot. He went and begged the hospitality of a holy Jewish woman, who gave him some milk, and drove a great cart-nail through his head

while he was asleep. We are very sorry for it; but this is not the matter to be discussed. We wish to speak of chariots of war.

'The battle was fought at the foot of Mount Thabor, near the river Kishon. Mount Thabor is a steep mountain, the branches of which, somewhat less in height, extend over a great part of Galilee. Betwixt this [pg110](#) mountain and the neighbouring rocks there is a small plain covered with great flint stones, and impracticable for cavalry. The extent of this plain is four or five hundred paces. We may venture to believe that Sisera did not here draw up his three hundred thousand men in order of battle; his three thousand chariots would have found it difficult to manoeuvre on such a field.

'We may believe that the Hebrews had no chariots of war in a country renowned only for asses; but the Asiatics made use of them in great plains.

'Confucius, or rather Confutze, says positively that from time immemorial each of the viceroys of the provinces was expected to furnish to the emperor a thousand war chariots drawn by four horses.

'Chariots must have been in use long before the Trojan war, for Homer does not speak of them as a new invention: but those chariots were not armed like those of Babylon; neither the wheels nor the axles were furnished with steel blades.

'This invention must at first have been very formidable, in large plains especially, when the chariots were numerous, driven with impetuosity and armed with long pikes and scythes; but when they became familiar it seemed so easy to avoid their shock, that they fell into general disuse.'

Chapter iv., v. 2. Hazor was burnt and thoroughly destroyed by Joshua.

Verse 4. We have no account of any of the prophecies of Deborah.

Verse 11. 'Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses.' This is an error. Hobab is described in Numbers as the son of Raguel, the latter being the father-in-law of Moses. (See page 49).

Verses 17 to 22. After reading these verses, Professor Newman wrote as follows:—

'In various attempts at compromise—such as conceding the scriptural fallibility in human science but maintaining its spiritual perfection—I always found the division impracticable. At last it pressed on me that I admitted morals to rest on an independent basis, it was dishonest to shut my eyes to any apparent collisions of morality with the Scriptures. A very notorious and decisive instance is that of Jael. Sisera when beaten in battle fled to the tent of his friend Heber, and was there warmly welcomed by Jael, Heber's wife. After she had refreshed him with food and lulled him to sleep, she killed him, by driving a nail into his temples, and for this deed (which now-a-days would be called a perfidious murder), the prophetess Deborah, in an inspired psalm, pronounces Jael to be "blessed above women," and glorifies her act by an elaborate description of its atrocity. As soon as I felt that I was bound to pass a moral judgment on this, I saw that as regards the Old Testament the battle was already lost.'

Chapter v. This Song of Deborah, like other oriental songs, is strongly figurative.

Verse 8. Instead of 'They chose new gods, then was war in the gates,' the Douay has it, 'The Lord chose new wars and himself overthrew the gates of his enemies.' Verse 12. There were no captives to lead—all were [pg111](#) killed. (See. chap, iv., v. 16.)

Verse. 23. Where and what was Meroz? Was it a city or a country? Were its inhabitants Israelites or Canaanites? No one knows. It is the only time it is mentioned throughout the whole of the Bible.

Verse 26. The Douay in this Verse says nothing about smiting off Sisera's head, neither does chap, iv., v. 21.

Chapter vi. On page 79 I remarked on the account of the total destruction of the Midianitish nation, and I have now to submit that one of the accounts must be positively untrue. If 'every male' was killed by the Israelites, there can be no foundation for the statement that the Midianites 'came as grasshoppers for multitude, for both they and their camels were without number.'

Verses 8 to 10. This prophet was a shrewd fellow; he only related the past, but did not attempt to foretell the future. Why is he called a prophet? The whole of this chapter is very confused. In vv. 11 and 12 the 'angel of the Lord' appears, but in vv. 14 and 16 it is 'the Lord,' and in vv. 20 and 21 the 'angel of the Lord' again, and this is rendered still more confused by vv. 22 and 23, as it is nowhere said to be death to see an angel.

Verse 21. This is quite a type of modern conjuring—to set on fire the flesh and cakes by touching them with a magic wand. The Douay, to make the matter more complete, says that the angel 'vanished.'

Gideon seems to have been very unbelieving, and to have required many miracles before he would accept God's message.

Chapter vii., v. 3. This fact speaks volumes in favour of the Israelites. They must have been a noble race, when more than two-thirds of an army in the face of an enemy pleaded guilty to the suggestion of cowardice, and ran away.

Verses 13 and 14. This is scarcely probable. If Gideon was an unknown and mean man amongst his own people (see chap, vi., v. 15), it is unlikely that he would be so famous amongst the Midianites; beside which the Midianites worshipped a different God from the Israelites, and the man would not have used the kind of language here attributed to him. The words are not the words of a Midianite at all, but such as a Jew would be more apt to utter.

Verses 16 to 22. This battle of the 'trumpets, lamps, and pitchers,' is a most glorious one. The Midianites and Amalekites are 'as the sand by the sea shore for multitude.' 300 men surrounded their camp unobserved by the sentinels, who ought to have been more than ordinarily wakeful, having only just been relieved. These three hundred men, who have each a lamp concealed in a pitcher, suddenly break all their pitchers with a great crash, blow their trumpets, and shout out loudly. The Midianites and Amalekites, who must have been timid and nervous people, are much frightened, and begin to kill one another, and to run away as fast as possible. This is the more remarkable, as the 300 men all held their lamps up, so that it would have been easy [pg112](#) to have distinguished friends from enemies.

The 300, not satisfied with their easy victory, pursued the flying enemy, and slew 120,000 of them, being

400 to each man, then attacked their two Princes, Zebah and Zalmunna, who were at the head of an army of 15,000 men. These the 300 Israelites of course routed easily, after which they returned, and on their way back, tore the elders of Succoth (who refused to aid them in their pursuit) with thorns and briars, and cut the men in pieces. (Vide Douay translation, chap, viii., v. 16). After this they beat down the fortified tower of Penuel, and slew the inhabitants of that city. The 300 did not neglect the plunder, but brought back 1700 shekels of gold, beside the golden chains which were about the camels' necks, and ornaments and jewels, and I do not find that they were stoned to death like Achan for so doing. Although Gideon and his 300 followers were so valiant, yet his first-born son, Jether, did not inherit the bravery of his father (Vide chap, viii., v. 20). I have, in several places, discussed the commands to extirpate the Canaanites given in the previous books, and in noticing this terrible slaughter, I cannot help quoting a few words in defence from Dr. J. Pye Smith:—

'The extreme cruelty and abominable crimes of those nations were undoubtedly just and sufficient causes, under the righteous government of God, for their being cut off, as they were (not by pestilence or earthquake, but) by a people sent, and avowedly coming, with this executive commission from the only Sovereign of all men and all nations. Yet there was also another and a weighty reason in the case. It was the universal belief that the greatness and honour of a Deity were to be judged of by the standard of great and signal victories which he gave to the nation which he had taken under his protection. The conquest of Canaan, therefore, was a demonstration to the Canaanites of the feebleness, and even nothingness, of their own gods, and of the superior power of the God of Israel. And this impression would be strengthened by the fact of success and reverses occurring in exact proportion to the faithfulness or the disobedience of the Israelites towards their God, their natural leader, protector, and king.'

Where is the record of the 'extreme cruelty' and 'abominable crimes' of these nations? Were they more cruel than the Israelites, or did they commit more abominable and cruel crimes than those of Lot, of Onan, of Jacob, of Judah, of Reuben, of Simeon, and Levi, of the people of Benjamin, or of the many other Israelitish men and women whose names we fortunately cannot pollute our pages with, but the record of whose horrible and detestable enormities are still to be found in the legislative enactments which the Deity found it necessary to make for the guidance of his chosen people? And why did the Deity give way to the 'universal belief' of an ignorant and vicious people? Cannot the great Jehovah win men by his mighty and irresistible will rather than by sword and fire? 'The conquests,' says Dr. Smith, 'were a demonstration to the conquered of the power of the Deity.' Not so, for in a wholesale massacre, they took away from the Canaanites the capability [pg113](#) for appreciating any demonstration however clear; logic has little effect on a man whose throat is cut from ear to ear.

Chapter ix., v. 5. By chap, viii., verses 30 and 31, we find that Gideon had seventy sons, besides Abimelech; yet here are seventy killed by order of Abimelech, and the youngest escapes, and this youngest son makes the confusion worse confounded, when speaking against Abimelech; for he mentions his seventy brethren slain on one stone (verse 18); and the number is again repeated in verses 24 and 56.

It is evident that Jotham entertained very different ideas of the Deity from those held by John the Evangelist, for he speaks of the olive, of whose fatness both gods and men make use (*vide* Douay), and of wine which cheereth God and man.

Verse 23. 'God sent an evil spirit.' Out of perfect good, evil cannot come, yet perfection is alleged to be an attribute of the Deity, who sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.

Chapter xi., v. 1. According to Deuteronomy, chap, xxiii., v. 2, Jephtha was debarred from entering into the congregation of the Lord.

Verse 15. 'Thus saith Jephtha, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon;' yet according to Joshua, chap, xiii., v. xxv., Moses gave to the tribe of Gad 'half the land of the children of Ammon.'

Verse 24. Here we have the fact revealed, that each tribe or nation had a God peculiar to itself: one worshipped Chemosh, another Baal, another Jehovah, and each tribe believed that its particular Deity fought its battles, and that when a battle was lost, then the God was displeased, and a sacrifice was wanting to restore favour.

Verses 30 to 40. Voltaire says:—

'It is evident from the text, that Jephtha promised to sacrifice the first person that should come out of his house to congratulate him on his victory over the Ammonites. His only daughter presented herself before him for that purpose; he tore his garments, and immolated her, after having permitted her to go and deplore, in the recesses of the mountains, the calamity of her dying a virgin. The daughters of Israel long continued to celebrate this painful event, and devoted four days in the year to lamentation for the daughter of Jephtha.

'In whatever period this history was written, whether it was imitated from the Greek history of Agamemnon and Idomeneus, or was the model from which that history was taken; whether it might be anterior or posterior to similar narratives in Assyrian history, is not the point I am now examining. I keep strictly to the text. Jephtha vowed to make his daughter a burnt offering, and fulfilled his vow.

'It was expressly commanded by the Jewish law to sacrifice men devoted to the Lord:—"Every man that shall be devoted shall not be redeemed; but shall be put to death without remission." The Vulgate translates it: "He shall not be redeemed but shall die the death."

'It was in virtue of this law that Samuel hewed in pieces King Agag, whom, as we have already seen, Saul [pg114](#) had pardoned. In fact, it was for sparing Agag that Saul was rebuked by the Lord, and lost his kingdom.

'Thus, then, we perceive sacrifices of human blood clearly established; there is no point of history more incontestable: we can only judge of a nation by its own archives, and by what it relates concerning itself.

'What is the natural meaning of the phrase, "he did to her as he had vowed."

'What had Jephtha vowed? What had he promised by an oath to perform? To kill his daughter; to offer her up as a burnt offering; and he did kill her.

'Read Calmet's dissertation on the rashness of Jephtha's vow, and its fulfilment; read the law which he cites, that terrible law of Leviticus, in the twenty-seventh chapter, which commands, that all which shall be

devoted to the Lord shall not be ransomed, but shall die the death. *Non redimetur, sed morte morietur.*

'Observe the multitude of examples by which this most astonishing truth is attested. Look at the Amalekites and Canaanites; look at the King of Arad and all his family, subjected to the law of devotion; look at the priest Samuel slaying King Agag with his own hands, and cutting him into pieces as a butcher cuts up an ox in his slaughterhouse?

Verse 39. 'And it was a custom in Israel.' What meaning can we attach to these words? Our translators have prefixed the word '*That*' to the next verse, to make people believe the custom to refer to the weeping for Jephtha's daughter; if this were the correct reading, then the phrase is incorrect; it is in the past tense, and after relating the fulfilment of Jephtha's vow, adds 'it was a custom.' What? The only answer is, that human sacrifice was a custom. In feet, if it had not been an established custom, the whole nation would have cried out as one man against the murder of Jephtha's daughter. (See also page 54.)

Chapter xiii., v. 5. 'No razor shall touch his head;' yet despite this imperative command of the Omnipotent Deity, a razor did touch Samson's head. (*Vide* chap. xvi. v. 19.)

Verse 9. God hearkened to the voice of Manoah. (See Joshua, ehap. x., v. 14, which contradicts this.)

Verse 19. This is a repetition of the conjuring referred to on page 111; here the angel vanishes in the flame.

Chapter xiv., vv. 8 and 9. Bees do not usually rest on carrion at all, much less store honey in a rotting carcass; but it is not more surprising that this should happen, than that Samson should tear a young lion asunder with nothing to aid him but his naked hands.

Chapter xv., v. 4. Foxes must have been very plentiful in the country, where Samson then was; but they must have taken some time to catch. The following is a foot-note to the Douay, 'Being judge of the people, he might have many to assist him to catch with nets or otherwise a number of these animals.' It is difficult to conceive why the Philistines so neglected their own interests, and quietly allowed Samson to capture and turn loose these 300 foxes amongst their crops; and I confess that I cannot quite discover the utility and morality of the course pursued by Samson in burning the corn fields. Verses 14 and 15. Shamgar's feat, commented on in page 109, sinks into utter insignificance beside this. 1000 men all killed with the jaw-bone of an ass—these evidently slain at one time as they fell in 'heaps upon heaps.' If Samson killed the Philistines at the rapid rate of one per minute, which would be good work considering the weapon employed, the slaughter, if conducted without cessation, would then occupy nearly seventeen hours; and we cannot wonder that Samson was 'sore athirst.' The water flowing from the jaw-bone is a miracle. As to miracles, see pages 74 and 75.

Chapter xvi., v. 1. If the rulers of the Israelites were so immoral, the Israelitish people must have been similar in character.

Verses 7 and 11. Truthfulness does not seem to have been one of Samson's qualifications.

Verse 27. I should like to have seen the house which Samson threw down; it must have been a curious specimen of ancient architecture. We are informed that it had an immense roof, supported by two pillars, rather close together, between which Samson stood, and we are also informed, that 3,000 men and women were on that roof 'beholding Samson's play' (*vide* Douay translation), although, unless the 3,000 could see through the roof, this must have been another miracle, as Samson would be entirely hidden from their sight by the roof and pillars.

I cannot discover the most remote moral connected with the history of Samson; nothing but robbery, wanton destruction of property, immorality, and murder. 1st. He enters into a wager with his wife's friends; having lost his wager, he robs and murders thirty men, to enable him to pay his loss. This career of useless crime and bloodshed is continued, but his own profligacy is ultimately the cause of his being taken prisoner, and punished by the Philistines; yet this is a judge of God's chosen people.

Chapter xix. The number 'nineteen' is badly connected in this book. The remarks on page 36 apply here, but I cannot pass the matter thus. These are God's chosen people, men of the tribe of Benjamin, people whom God has visited personally, men for whom he has slaughtered the unfortunate Canaanites by thousands, and yet so horribly, basely depraved. Where was the fire from heaven this time? Fathers! do you place this book in the hands of your sons and daughters, and tell them that it is the Holy Bible? If you do, will they not learn the horrible state of society amongst God's own selected people? Will they be elevated and improved by the knowledge thus conferred? Will it make them better men and women? I say, no; and every man who devotes thought to the subject will be compelled to echo my denial.

Is it possible that events, so similar as those related in Genesis, chap. xix., vv. 7 and 8, and w. 23 and 24 of this chapter, could have twice happened in the world's history? It cannot be true. If it be true, surely there could never have been a God regulating the affairs of the universe, predestining and permitting such terribly disgusting obscenities and cruelties as those here detailed.

Verse 29. If the twelve pieces were intended for the twelve tribes, this would include the offending tribe of Benjamin, which does not seem to be the meaning of the text.

Chapter xx., v. 28. Phinehas, the grand-son of Aaron, could not have been alive at this period, if we suppose the occurrences related in chronological order. Divines overcome the difficulty by alleging that the last chapters of the book should be the first, as they refer to events immediately succeeding the death of Joshua. A devout believer would reverently admire the mysterious manner in which God revealed his Holy Word upside down; but a thinking man would recognise in this error conclusive evidence against the assertion that the book is a revelation from God.

'The name of this Book is taken from the title of the functionaries, whose actions and administration it principally relates. This name is [—] *shophetim*, plural of [—] *shophet*, a judge. This word designates the ordinary magistrates, properly called judges; and is here also applied to the chief rulers, perhaps because *ruling* and *judging* are so intimately connected in the East that sitting in judgment is one of the principal employments of an Oriental monarch.

'The book is easily divisible into two parts; one ending with chap. xvi., contains the history of the Judges,

from Othniel to Samson, and the other, which occupies the rest of the book, forms a sort of appendix, relating particular transactions, which the author seems to have reserved for the end. If these transactions had been placed in order of time, we should, probably, have found them in a much earlier portion of the work, as the incidents related seem to have occurred not long after the death of Joshua.

The author of the Book is unknown. Some ascribe it to Samuel, some to Hezekiah, and others to Ezra. The reason which has principally influenced the last determination of the authorship is found in chap. xviii., v. 30:—"He and his son were priests to the tribe of Dan, until the day of the captivity of the land." But this may have referred to the captivity of the ark among the Philistines, or to some particular captivity of the tribe of Dan; or rather of that part of the tribe settled in the north; or the reference may have been to both circumstances. It is also possible that the clause, "until the day of the captivity of the land," may actually have been added after the captivity. That the book itself was written after the establishment of the monarchical government, appears from the habit which the author has of saying, that the event he is relating happened in the time when "there was no king in Israel," which renders it evident that there was a king when he wrote.' (*Vide* 'Hebrew Records.')

The recital of the adventures of Samson, of Micah, etc., with so many slight particulars fully enlarged upon, is conclusive evidence against this Book as a history, for it is impossible to conceive such minute particularity of detail in individual cases, and yet such an utter neglect of even the most general dates in the history of the nation.

[\[pg117\]](#)

BOOK VIII. RUTH

In the Hebrew Bible this book, as mentioned on page 1 occupies a later place.

The Book of Ruth is properly part of the Book of Judges, from which it has been separated for no very obvious reason. From its brevity it is not likely to contain many passages to aid us in our present inquiry. Those which I have discovered are the following:—

"Chap. i., v. 1. Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled that there was a famine in the land."

This was written after the Judges had ceased to rule; and consequently the work is not contemporary with Ruth, who lived "when the Judges ruled."

"Chap. iv., v. 21, 22. And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David."

Bishop Patrick's note to this is worthy of notice:—

"Salmon married Rahab, and therefore lived at the time of the Israelites' first entrance into Canaan. Now between this period and the birth of David are computed 366 years. Thus, as only four generations are mentioned, we must either suppose that some names of persons who come between are omitted (for which we have no warrant), or that, as is more probable, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse all had their children born to them at a very advanced period of their lives."

I propose to adopt a different and more natural solution of the difficulty. In 1 Chronicles ii., 11, Salmon is named "Salma," which shows that there are some doubtful points in this genealogy. This was likely to be the case; for the book being compiled out of original papers, like all the rest of the Jewish History after the captivity of Babylon, the compilers were likely to be puzzled by many discrepancies of this nature, and choosing to preserve as much as possible the form of their original sources, they have retained even their errors also.' (*Vide* "Hebrew Records.")

Chapter i., v. 15. It seems unlikely that a Jewish woman would recommend her daughter-in-law to commit idolatry.

Verse 22. Ruth did not *return* to Bethlehem, never having been there before.

Chapter iv. v. 17. Obed was the son of Ruth, the Moabitish woman. He was the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David, and, by the law of Moses, the descendants of a Moabite for ten generations shall not enter the congregation of the Lord (see page 85), so that David, 'the man after God's own heart,' and Solomon, his son, and six of their succeeding generations, were barred out of the congregation. I wonder whether David knew this when he 'danced before the Lord;' or Solomon when about to erect the temple.

Paine spoke of the Book of Ruth as 'an idle bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country girl, creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz.' Bishop Watson thus comments on this:—

[\[pg118\]](#)

'As to Ruth, you do an injury to her character. She was not a strolling country girl. She had been married ten years; and being left a widow without children, she accompanied her mother-in-law returning into her native country, out of which with her husband and her two sons she had been driven by a famine. The disturbances in France have driven many men with their families to America; if, ten years hence, a woman, having lost her husband and her children, should return to France with a daughter-in-law, would you be justified in calling the daughter-in-law a strolling country girl? But she "crept slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz." I do not find it so in the history. As a person imploring protection, she laid herself down at the foot of an aged kinsman's bed, and she rose up with as much innocence as she had laid herself down. She was afterwards married to Boaz, and reputed by all her neighbours a virtuous woman; and they were more likely to know her character than you are. Whoever reads the Book of Ruth, bearing in mind the simplicity of ancient manners, will find it an interesting story of a poor young woman following in a strange land the advice, and affectionately attaching herself to the fortunes, of the mother of her deceased husband.'

The Bishop is apparently indignant that Ruth should be accused of 'creeping slyly to bed,' but the Bible account is certainly that without the knowledge of Boaz 'she came softly and uncovered his feet and laid her down.' I cannot find the Bishop's authority for the statement that Ruth lay down at the foot of 'an aged

kinsman's bed.' Boaz is not stated to be an old man. He evidently considered that it was necessary to keep Ruth's visit a secret, and appears to have been young enough to have children after his marriage. As for her neighbours reputed her 'a virtuous woman,' that is nothing, for they were not aware of her nocturnal visit to the bed-chamber of Boaz. This book scarcely needs further comment at my hands. It is ridiculous to suppose it to be a revelation from God, and with the exception of Ruth's devotedness to her mother-in-law, there are no points raised in it worthy of a prolonged notice.

BOOK IX. SAMUEL

'The two Books of Samuel form but one in the Hebrew Canon. In the Septuagint and Vulgate translations they are called the First and Second Books of Kings, and those which we call the First and Second Books of Kings are termed the Third and Fourth Books of Kings. This diversity is to be regretted; ancient histories should at far as is possible be kept in their original form. There seems to be no adequate reason for classifying these books, as they are classified in our Bibles; for they contain quite as much of the history of David as of Samuel. But the impression prevailed that Samuel was their author; and as Protestants in endeavouring to run counter to Roman Catholics, have magnified the importance of the Old Testament exactly in proportion as they have decried the use of reason, the translators have so arranged the Books as to produce the most striking effect; and thus an individual existence has been given to that which has none, but which really is only a part of the whole. Yet, notwithstanding first, the separation of Samuel from Kings, and then its division into two parts, the work bears on the face of it the strong fact that it could not have been written by Samuel: for the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book begins with the words:—'And Samuel died!' Thus more than half of the whole was obviously composed by a later writer. But we shall see by an examination of the book in order that the whole of it owes its origin to a date later than that of Samuel.' (*Vide* 'Hebrew Records.') [pg119](#)

Chapter i., v. 5, says that Elkanah gave Hannah 'a worthy portion.' The Douay renders it 'But to Anna he gave one portion with sorrow.'

Verse 6. What 'adversary' is this? The phrase may possibly refer to the other wife, but of this there is not the slightest evidence in the wording of the text; sterility has been a subject of reproach amongst the Jews, as also amongst the Arabs, and some other nations.

Verses 6 to 19. It is probable that in the country district, where the family of Elkanah dwelt, that the barrenness of Hannah was a matter of notoriety. The vow also could not fail to be divulged, and its apparent success to create a great sensation. The superstitious people who traced the hand of God in everything, would of course say that Samuel was his special gift.

Chapter ii., v. 5. 'The barren hath born seven.' If Hannah here referred to herself, she must have spoken in the spirit of prophecy, and even then must have erred in her prophetic dreamings, as by verse 21 she only appears to have had five children, and, excluding Samuel from amongst those, it would still leave one short of the number.

Verse 8. What are these pillars upon which the world is set? How many pillars are there, and upon what do they rest? Or is this an oriental figure of speech not capable of a literal interpretation?

Verses 1 to 10. It is scarcely probable that Hannah the wife of a country farmer composed this song—it is more likely to have been composed by a Levite, or perhaps by the writer of the story.

Verses 13 to 16. 'This narrative presents various subjects of instruction: at first it pictures the simplicity, or rather the grossness of the manners of the times very analogous to the age of Homer. This Hebrew people were mostly composed of rustics, living on their little properties, which they had cultivated with their own hands, as the Druzes do now. The only class, a little elevated, a little less ignorant, was the tribe of Levi—that is, the priests, who lived idle, supported by the voluntary, or forced offerings of the nation; this class had more time than means to employ the mind. This shows itself here in the tone and style of the narrator, who, by his knowledge of the duties of the priests, evinced himself a man of the craft. We might compare this Levite to the monks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, writing: their holy histories under the auspices of superstition and credulity. In this relation we see the essential character of the priest, whose first and constant object of attention is the pot or kettle, on which his existence depends; and this reveals the motives of all that display of victims and sacrifices which play so great a part among the ancients.' [pg120](#)

'Until now I could not conceive the advantage of converting the courts and the porches of temples into slaughter-houses. [*Vide* remarks on page 67.] I could not reconcile the idea of the hideous spectacle of the choking of sensitive animals, of the shedding of oceans of blood, of the filthiness of entrails, with the ideas which we were taught of the divine majesty, of the divine goodness that repels to a distance the gross necessities which these practices suppose. In reflecting on that which has just been noticed, I perceive the solution of the enigma. I see that in their primitive state the ancients were as one; as are yet the Tartars of Asia, and their brothers, the savages of America, ferocious men, contending constantly against dangers, and struggling with those necessities—the violence of which raises all the sensibilities; men accustomed to shed blood in the chase, on which their subsistence depended. In this state, the first ideas which they had—the only ones they entertained of the divinity—represented him as a being more powerful than themselves; but reasoning and perceiving like them, having their passions and their character. The whole history shows the truth of this.

'By this mode of reasoning, these savages thought that every unlucky accident, every misfortune which happened to them, was the consequence of the hate, the resentment, the envy of some concealed agent, of some irascible secret power, vindictive, like themselves, and consequently susceptible like them to be appeased by prayers and gifts. From this idea originated the spontaneous habits of religious offerings, the

practice of which shows itself amongst all savages, both ancient and modern. But, as in all times and in all societies, there were men more subtle and more cunning than the multitude, there was soon found some old savage, who, not entertaining this belief, or being undeceived, conceived the idea of turning it to his profit. Supposed to possess secret means, particular recitations for calming the anger of the gods, genii, or spirits, and to render them propitious, the vulgar, ignorant, and always credulous, especially when bound by fear, or stimulated by desire, addressed itself to this favoured mortal. Hence a mediator constituted between man and the divinity: hence a seer, a juggler, a priest, as all the Tartars have, as have most savages and the negroes. These jugglers found it convenient to live at the expense of others, and perfected their art by causing delusions and deceptions. This it was which gave birth to the sacerdotal phantasmagoria. At present, as these physical means are understood, we perceive these artifices in the prodigies of the ancient oracles, and in the miracles of the ancient Magi.

'At the time when the trade became advantageous an association of adepts was formed, and the rules of the association became the basis of the priesthood; but as these associations of divines, of seers, of interpreters, and of ministers of the gods, employed all their time in their public functions, and in their secret practices, it was necessary that their daily and annual subsistence should be provided for by a regular system. The practice, until then casual, of offerings and voluntary sacrifices, was constituted an obligatory tribute; conscience was regulated by legislation; the people led to the altar and the porch of the temple the choice of their flocks, of their lambs, their beeves, and their calves; they brought corn, wine, and oil. The sacerdotal institution had the income, the nation had the ceremonies, the prayers, and everybody was content. The rest does not require explanation; I only remark that the division of animals into pure and impure appears to be derived from their goodness for eating, or the disadvantage as injurious or disagreeable when eaten. Hence the reason why the rank he-goat was rejected in the desert; why the old tough ram was entirely burned; why the measly and scabby hog was despised; but this is saying enough of the kitchen of the priests of Israel.' (*Vide Volney.*)

The priests of the Israelites are similar in some respects to the priests of the Christian Church. The Jew-priest took all that he could, if not by fair means then by force; our priests follow their example. They have seized a poor old woman's family Bible to pay tithes; they have pocketed tithes until unable to sign their names to the receipts for their income, and then when nearly at the point of death, they have bargained for a handsome retiring pension before they would resign their priesthood; yet these are the men who 'lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor mot doth corrupt.' Voltaire says:—

'Priests in a state approach nearly to what preceptors are in private families: it is their province to teach, pray, and supply example. They ought to have no authority over the masters of the house; at least until it can be proved that he who gives the wages ought to obey him who receives them.

'Prayer is not dominion, nor exhortation despotism. A good priest ought to be a physician to the soul. If Hippocrates had ordered his patients to take hellebore under pain of being hanged, he would have been more insane and barbarous than Phalaris, and would have had little practice. When a priest says—Worship God, be just, indulgent, and compassionate, he is then a good physician: when he says—Believe me, or you shall be burnt, he is an assassin.

'The magistrate ought to support and restrain the priest in the same manner as the father of a family insures respect to the preceptor, and prevents him from abusing it. The agreement of Church and State is of all systems the 'most monstrous.' (*Philosophical Dictionary*) Verse 22. The nation must have improved rapidly in morals when its judges and priests were so extremely virtuous. It is instructive to a devout believer to observe that the Church has not degenerated, and that the priests appointed by God were as vicious as those since appointed by the State.

Verse 25. 'Because the Lord would slay them.' What terrible cruelty this seems to harden people's hearts in order to destroy them. But to whom did God make known his intentions? Was it to one man only; to the priest who repeated it? Have we not, then, good reason to attribute it rather to the bearer of the message, to the self-styled interpreter of God's will? It is clear that this could never come from a loving and just God, but rather from a Jewish mouth, from the heart of a fanatic and ferocious Hebrew, full of the passions and prejudices which he attributes to his idol.

Verses 30 to 36. When the *immutable* Deity decreed that the house of Aaron should be his priests for ever, did he foresee the offences of Eli and his children? If not, his attribute of foreknowledge is taken away; if he did, then the whole story is absurd.

'In this account we have first a conversation divulged. But by whom? Eli would not have boasted of it; it was the man of God who made it known. What interest had he to prepare the minds for a change desired by many, even by the greatest number? In his quality of prophet and preacher this man of God must have known the successor announced. Might he not act already in concert with him? His prediction is found to be in favour of Samuel. Might not Samuel play a part in this affair? The axiom rightly says:—He has done it, who had an interest to do it. Should it not have been Samuel in this case? Observe that Eli was blind, and that any one might have spoken to him, and he not have known the person. There is here the management of knavery. Samuel is not impeached; but he is arraigned. As to the prediction against the two sons of Eli on the same day, it is evident how easy it was to the writer or copyist to interpolate afterwards.' (*Vide Volney.*)

Chapter iii., v. 1. 'And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.' What this means I do not profess to explain, but I take the opportunity of allowing Voltaire to deal with the subject generally:—

'When I speak of vision I do not mean the admirable manner in which our eyes perceive objects, and in which the pictures of all that we see are painted on the retina. This matter has been so learnedly treated by so many great geniuses that there is no further remnant to glean after their harvests.

'My subject is the innumerable multitude of visions, with which so many holy personages have been favoured or tormented; which so many idiots are believed to have seen; with which so many knavish men and women have duped the world, either to get the reputation of being favoured by heaven, which is very flattering, or to gain money, which is still more so to rogues in general. 'Calmet and Langlet have made ample

collections of these visions. The most interesting in my opinion is the one which has produced the greatest effects, since it has tended to reform three parts of the Swiss—that of the young Jacobin, Yetzer. This Yetzer saw the Holy Virgin and St. Barbara several times; who informed him of the marks of Jesus Christ. He received from a Jacobin confessor a host, powdered with arsenic, and the Bishop of Lausanne would have had him burnt for complaining that he was poisoned. These abominations were one of the causes of the misfortune which happened to the Bernese, of ceasing to be Catholic, Apostolical, and Roman.

'I am sorry that I have no visions of this consequence to tell you of. Yet you will confess that the vision of the reverend father Cor-delius, of Orleans, in 1534, approaches the nearest to it, though still very distant. The criminal process which it occasioned is still in manuscript in the library of the King of France, No. 1770.

'The illustrious house of St. Memin did great good to the convent of the Cordeliers, and had their vault in the Church. The wife of a Lord of St. Memin, provost of Orleans, being dead, her husband, believing that his ancestors had sufficiently impoverished themselves by giving to the monks, gave the brothers a present, which did not appear to them considerable enough. These good Franciscans conceived a plan for disinterring the deceased, to force the widower to have her buried again in holy ground, and to pay them better. The project was not clever, for the Lord of St. Memin would not have failed to have buried her elsewhere. But folly often mixes with knavery.

'At first, the soul of the lady of St. Memin appeared only to two brothers. She said to them—"I am damned, like Judas; because my husband has not given sufficient." The two knaves who related these words perceived not that they must do more harm to the convent than good. The aim of the convent was to extort money from the Lord of St. Memin, for the repose of his wife's soul. Now if Madame de St. Memin was damned, all the money in the world could not save her. They got no more; the Cordeliers lost their labour.

'At this time there was very little good sense in France: the nation had been brutalised by the invasion of the Franks, and afterwards by the invasion of scholastic theology; but in Orleans there were some persons who reasoned. If the Great Being permitted the soul of Madame de St. Memin to appear to two Franciscans, it was not natural, they thought, for this soul to declare itself damned like Judas. This comparison appeared to them to be unnatural. This lady had not sold our Lord Jesus Christ for thirty deniers; she was not hanged; her intestines had not obtruded themselves; and there was not the slightest pretext for comparing her to Judas.

'This caused suspicion; and the rumour was still greater in Orleans, because there were already heretics there who believed not in certain visions, and who, in admitting absurd principles, did not always fail to draw good conclusions. The Cordeliers, therefore, changed their battery, and put the lady in purgatory.

'She therefore appeared again, and declared that purgatory was her lot; but she demanded to be disinterred. It was not the custom to disinter those in purgatory; but they hoped that Monsieur St. Memin would prevent this extraordinary affront by giving money. This demand of being thrown out of the Church augmented the suspicions. It was well known that souls often appeared; but they never demanded to be disinterred.

'From this time the soul spoke no more, but it haunted everybody in the convent and church. The brother Cordeliers exorcised it. Brother Peter, of Arras, adopted a very awkward manner of conjuring it. He said to it—If thou art the soul of the late Madame de St. Memin, strike four knocks; and the four knocks were struck. If thou art damned, strike six knocks; and the six knocks were struck. If thou art still tormented in hell, because thy body is buried in holy-ground, knock six more times; and the other six knocks were heard still more distinctly. If we disinter thy body, and cease praying to God for thee, wilt thou be the less damned? Strike five knocks to certify it to us; and the soul certified it by five knocks. [Spirit-rapping is therefore more ancient than is generally supposed. 'This interrogation of the soul, made by Peter, of Arras, was signed by twenty-two Cordeliers, at the head of which was the reverend father provincial. This father provincial the next day asked it the same questions, and received the same answers.

'It will be said that the soul having declared that it was in purgatory, the Cordeliers should not have supposed that it was in hell; but it is not my fault if theologians contradict one another.

'The Lord of St. Memin presented a request to the king against the father Cordeliers. They presented a request on their sides; the king appointed judges, at the head of whom was Adrian Fumee, master of requests.

'The Procureur-General of the commission required that the said Cordeliers should be burned; but the sentence only condemned them to make the "amende honorable," with a torch in their bosom, and to be banished from the kingdom. This sentence is of February 18th, 1535.

'After such a vision, it is useless to relate any others: they are all a species either of knavery or folly. Visions of the first kind are under the province of justice; those of the second are either visions of diseased fools, or of fools in good health. The first belong to medicine, the second to Bedlam.'

Verse 3. 'Before the lamp of God went out.' I presume this refers to some lamp kept burning in the tabernacle; but it is a strange mode of description.

Verses 4 to 21. 'Now to appreciate this narrative, I do not intend to reason on its leading features: God comes into a chamber, stands before a bed, speaks as a person of flesh and bones. What should I think of a person who would believe such a fable? I shall confine myself to the conduct and character of Samuel. And first, I demand who saw, who heard, all that was said; who related it, who made it public? It could not be Eli; it could be only Samuel, who was actor, witness, and narrator. He alone had an interest to invent and promulgate. Without him who could have specified the minute details of this adventure? It is evident that we have here a scene of phantasmagoria, resembling those which took place among the ancients in the sanctuaries of the temples, and for the responses of the oracles. The young adept was encouraged to it by the physical and moral feebleness of the high-priest Eli; perhaps by the instigation of some person concealed behind the curtain, and having interests and passions which we cannot now ascertain; though it is most probable that Samuel trusted to no one. What remains to be afterwards seen of his dissimulation, seems to fix the balance on this side. Divulging was not so difficult; he might have been satisfied with the confidence of a servant, a devoted friend, an old or a young priestess, that the apparition of God, the oracle of the holy ark might be rumoured, acquiring from mouth to mouth an intensity of certitude and belief.

"But Samuel increased (says the text) and God was with him, and none of his words fell to the ground: and all Israel knew that he was become a prophet of God; and God continued to appear in Shiloh." As to the word *prophet* the historian tells us that, at this epoch, the Hebrew term [———] (*nebiah*) was unknown: that the word [———] (*raeh*) was used, which signifies *seer*. Here, then, we have a posthumous writer, who connected at pleasure the memoirs which Samuel, or some other contemporary, had composed. It pleased him to set down, as a positive fact, the belief of all Israel in this fable, while he himself knew nothing of the matter. If we had memoirs of those times from several hands, we should have materials for reasonable judgment. It is said in the text, that for some time the word of the Lord had become scarce, and that there appeared no more visions. Why was this? because there were some incredulous; because there had happened bad examples, false oracles, divulging of sacerdotal knavery, which had awakened the good sense of the higher class among the people. The blind and fanatic credulity remained, as it always happens, among the multitude; it was on them that Samuel calculated, and we shall see on the installation of Saul, that he had always against him a party of unbelievers, powerful enough to compel him to use management, and even to oblige him to abdicate.' (*Vide Volney.*)

Chapter iv., v. 4. 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth between the cherubims.' The Douay translates the same thus:—"The ark of the covenant of the Lord of Hosts sitting upon the cherubims." As to cherubim see page 21. The word translated ark is [———] (*aroun*). In Parkhurst, under the root [——], I find the following remarks which are worthy of consideration:—

'Thus *Tacitus* informs us that the inhabitants of the north of *Germany*, our *Saxon* ancestors, worshipped *Herthum* or *Hertham*, that is, the *Mother Earth* (*Terrain Matrem*), and believed her to interpose in the affairs of men, and to visit nations; that to her, within a sacred grove in a certain island of the ocean, a vehicle, covered with a vestment, was consecrated, and allowed to be touched by the priest alone, who perceived when the goddess entered into this her *secret place* (*penetrati*), and with profound veneration attended her vehicle, which was drawn by cows. While the goddess was on her progress, days of rejoicing were kept in every place which she vouchsafed to visit. They engaged in no war, they meddled not with arms, they locked up their weapons; peace and quietness only were then known, these only relished, till the same priest reconducted the goddess, satiated with the conversation of mortals, to her temple. Then the vehicle and vestment, and, if you will believe it, the goddess herself was washed in a secret lake.

'Among the *Mexicans*, *Vitziputzli*, their supreme god was represented in a human shape sitting on a throne, supported by an *azure globe*, which they called *heaven*. Four *poles or sticks* came out from two sides of this *globe*, at the ends of which serpents' heads were carved, the whole making a *litter*, which the priests carried on their shoulders whenever the idol was shewed in public'—*Picart's Ceremonies and Religious Customs*, vol. 3, p. 146.

'In Lieutenant Cook's voyage round the world, published by Dr. Hawksworth, vol. 2, p. 252, we find that the inhabitants of *Huaheine*, one of the islands lately discovered in the South Sea, had "a kind of *chest or ark*, the lid of which was nicely sewed on, and thatched very neatly with palm-nut leaves; it was fixed upon *two poles*, and supported on little arches of wood, very neatly carved. The use of the poles seemed to be to remove it from place to place, in the manner of our sedan-chairs; in one end of it was a square hole, in the middle of which was a ring touching the sides, and leaving the angles open so as to form a round hole within, a square one without. The first time *Mr. Banks* saw this coffer, the aperture at the end was stopped with a piece of cloth which, lest he should give offence, he left untouched. Probably there was then something within; but now the cloth was taken away, and upon looking into it it was found empty. *The general resemblance between this repository and the ark of the Lord among the Jews is remarkable*; but it is still more remarkable, that upon inquiring of the (Indian) boy what it was called, he said *Ewharre no Eatua*, the House of God; he could, however, give no account of its signification or use." In the neighbouring island of *Ulietea* "were also four or five *Ewharre no Eatua*, or Houses of God, like that we had seen at *Huaheine*." p. 257.

Verse 11. The presence of the ark seems rather to have increased the misfortunes of the Israelites in the previous battle; without the ark they lost 4,000 men, in this they lost 30,000 men, beside also losing possession of the ark.

Chapter v., w. 3 and 4. 'The ark of the God of the Jews was in the profane hands of the Philistines. The people might have profited by the opportunity to destroy the talisman which had so often frightened them; but at this time superstition was universal, and among all nations the priests had a common interest to maintain it, lest contempt for a strange deity should lead their ferocious warriors to examine too closely their own idol. The ark is respected, the priests of the Philistines place it in the temple of their God *Dagon*, in the city of *Azot* (or *Ashdod*). The following day on rising, the people of *Azot* found the idol *Dagon* fallen upon its face (the posture of adoration), before the ark; but they raised it up and replaced it. The next day they found it fallen again, but this time the hands and the head were separated from the body, and placed on the threshold of the temple. Whence, I would ask, came this act of audacity and secret knavery? Did some Jew introduce himself into the city with that artifice, that pickpocket stratagem of which the Arabs and the peasants of Egypt and Palestine give, even in our days, astonishing examples? This might be possible; fanaticism might lead to it. The temple had no sentinels; it was even open, and decisive victory might have banished all vigilance. On the other hand, might it not have been the priests of *Dagon*, who resorted to this knavery from the motive already pointed out? Their subsequent conduct, altogether partial, renders this extremely probable.

'The people of *Azot* could not believe their God so powerless as to be treated so by human force; they would say, "it is *Dagon* himself who declares his will, who shows his respect for his brother, the God of the Jews; he did not wish to hold him captive." The alarm spreads, the priests announce some calamity, the effect of the celestial anger, and epidemic disease of the intestines takes place (in that country ruptures and dysenteries are common); then an eruption of rats and field mice was very destructive. The people are confounded, all is attributed to the captivity of the ark. They demand its release, The inhabitants of another town where they take it learn the motive and become alarmed; the disease spreads by contagion, and terror thus becomes general. Finally, after seven months' delay, the military chiefs of the Philistines call before them their priests and divines, and demand of them what they shall do with the ark? It was proposed to burn it, but mark the

reply; they advise not only to send it back, but also to offer an expiatory offering for the sin of the warriors. These (as is commonly the case), not less credulous than brave, ask what offering should be given? The priests reply, "make five golden emerods and five mice of gold, according to the number of your principalities, to appease the God of the Hebrews. Why have you hardened your hearts like the King of Egypt? You have been smitten like him; send away also the ark of the God of the Hebrews." Here the spirit and system of the priests are evident; they nourish the public credulity in favour of their particular power, at the expense even of the interests of their own nation. Is there not reason to believe that the trick played by Dagon came from their hands?' (*Vide* Volney.)

Verse 5. "Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day."

'Bishop Patrick has a note on the words "unto this day:"—

"The day when Samuel wrote this book: when the events happened he was a youth: but the book was written when he was advanced in years." "The space of time between this event and Samuel's death was [pg128](#) about forty years—not long enough to justify the expression "unto this day." It must not be taken for granted that Samuel wrote this book; and the verse before us tells as plainly as words can express, that Samuel must have been dead many years, perhaps centuries, when it was written. But the commentators have not seen the natural force of the words, on account of the erroneous opinion that Samuel was the writer, with which they would make the narrative harmonise.' (*Vide* 'Hebrew Records.')

Verse 9. The Douay adds—'And the Gethrites consulted together and made themselves seats of skins.'

Chapter vi., v. 5. It is difficult to understand how the Deity could be propitiated by a direct violation of the second commandment.

Verse 19. Psalm 103, v. 8. 'The Lord is slow to anger,' yet 50,070 people slain in an instant for a mere act of indiscretion.

'Bethshemesh was a village belonging to God's people, situated, according to commentators, two miles north of Jerusalem.

'The Phoenicians having in Samuel's time beaten the Jews and taken from them their ark of allegiance in the battle in which they killed thirty thousand of their men, were severely punished for it by the Lord:

"He struck them in the most secret part of the buttocks; and the fields and the farm houses were troubled.... and there sprung up mice; and there was a great confusion of death in the city."

'The prophets of the Phoenicians or Philistines having informed them that they could deliver themselves from the scourge only by-giving to the Lord five golden mice and five golden emerods, and sending him back the Jewish ark, they fulfilled this order, and according to the express command of their prophets, sent back the ark with the mice and emerods on a waggon drawn by two cows, with each a sucking calf, and without a driver.

'These two cows, of themselves, took the ark straight to Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh approached the ark in order to look at it; which liberty was punished yet more severely than the profanation by the Phoenicians had been. The Lord struck with sudden death seventy men of the people and fifty thousand of the populace.

'The Reverend Doctor Kennicott, an Irishman, printed in 1768 a French commentary on this occurrence, and dedicated it to the Bishop of Oxford. At the head of this commentary he entitles himself Doctor of Divinity, Member, of the Royal Society of London, of the Palatine Academy, of the Academy of Gottingen, and of the Academy of Inscriptions at Paris. All that I know of the matter is, that he is not of the Academy of Inscriptions at Paris. Perhaps he is one of its correspondents. His vast erudition may have deceived him; but titles are distinct from things.

'In this pamphlet he pretends to prove that the Scripture text has been corrupted. Here we must be permitted to differ with him. Nearly all Bibles agree in these expressions: seventy men of the people, and fifty thousand of the populace. 'The Reverend Doctor Kennicott says to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of [pg129](#) Oxford, that formerly there were strong prejudices in favour of the Hebrew text; but that for seventeen years his lordship and himself have been freed from their prejudices, after the deliberate and attentive perusal of this chapter.

'In this we differ from Dr. Kennicott; and the more we read this chapter the more we reverence the ways of the Lord, which are not our ways. It is impossible (says Kennicott) for the candid reader not to feel astonished and affected at the contemplation of fifty thousand men destroyed in one village—men, too, employed in gathering the harvest.

'This does, it is true, suppose a hundred thousand persons at least in that village; but should the Doctor forget that the Lord had promised Abraham that his posterity should be as numerous as the sands of the sea?

'The Jews and the Christians (adds he) have not scrupled to express their repugnance to attach faith to this destruction of fifty thousand and seventy men.

'We answer that we are Christians, and have no repugnance to attach faith to whatever is in the Holy Scriptures. We answer with the Reverend Father Calmet, that "if we were to reject whatever is extraordinary and beyond the reach of our conception, we must reject the whole Bible." We are persuaded that the Jews being under the guidance of God himself, could experience no events but such as were stamped with the seal of the divinity, and quite different from what happened to other men. We will even venture to advance that the death of these fifty thousand and seventy men is one of the least surprising things in the Old Testament.

'We are struck with astonishment still more reverential when Eve's serpent and Balaam's ass talk; when the waters of the cataracts are swelled by rain fifteen cubits above all the mountains; when we behold the plagues of Egypt, and the six hundred and thirty thousand fighting Jews, flying on foot through the divided and suspended sea; when Joshua stops the sun and moon at noon-day; when Sampson slays a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass.... In those divine times all was miracle, without exception; and we have the profoundest reverence for all these miracles; for that ancient world which was not our world; for that nature which was not our nature; for a divine book, in which there can be nothing human.

'But we are astonished at the liberty which Dr. Kennicott takes of calling those *Deists* and *Atheists*, who, while they revere the Bible more than he does, differ from him in opinion. Never will it be believed that a man with such ideas is of the academy of medals and inscriptions. He is, perhaps, of the academy of Bedlam, the most ancient of all, and whose colonies extend throughout the earth.' (*Philosophical Dictionary*.)

Verse 19. The Douay renders this—'He slew of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people;'

Chapter vii., v. 1. What were the men of Kirjathjearim, that they should enjoy complete immunity from the ills which attended the other unfortunates who came in contact with the ark, and what gave them the right to sanctify Eleazar? Kirjathjearim was a city of the Gibeonites. (Joshua, chap, ix., v. 17.)

Verse 6. 'Drew water, and poured it out before the Lord.' This is a mode of sacrifice, or rather of offering, to the Lord which I do not find mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Verse 13. It is not true that the Philistines came no more into the coast of Israel. (*Vide* chap, xvii., v. 1.)

Verse 15. 'And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.' Bishop Patrick's interpretation of this stubborn verse may be quoted, but to be as speedily rejected; because it perverts the plain meaning of words, for the purpose of making them support a preconceived theory:—

"As Samuel was the author of this book, he could not speak literally of 'all the days of his life;' the sense probably is, that he was so diligent in the discharge of his office, that he gave himself no rest, but sat to judge causes every day."

'It is almost a waste of words to reply to such a manifest perversion of the meaning. "All the days of his life" means "the whole of his life," not "every day:" and the use of these words shows that Samuel could not have been the author of the book. But the commentator, taking for granted that Samuel was the author of the book, has twisted the meaning of words to suit this preconceived notion.' (Dr. Giles.)

Chapter viii., v. 3. The sons of Samuel seem to have been equally as vicious as the sons of Heli, yet Samuel escapes punishment.

Verses 6 to 9. 'The thing displeased Samuel,' doubtless it did, he disliked having to resign the supreme power. Volney says:—

'A conspiracy was evidently formed; for, according to the historian, a deputation from the sages of Israel came to find Samuel, at his residence at Ramatha, to demand from him a king—a royal government, constituted like that of the neighbouring people, to whose example generally his attention was directed. The answer which he gave to this deputation, and the details of his conduct in this affair, disclose the anger of disappointed ambition, of a pride deeply wounded. It was necessary for him to bend to force, to yield to necessity. But we shall see him in the execution exhibit a cunning intellect, even to perfidy, which, by its analogy to the adventures in the temple, his pretended visions and nocturnal revelations, discovers all his character.

'They forced Samuel to name a king. He might, he ought to have chosen, the man the most capable by his talents and by his resources, to fill this eminent post. But this he avoided. Such a man would reign by himself, and not obey him. A docile subject was necessary. He sought him in a family of low degree, without adherents; but having that exterior which would impose on the people. His choice was that of one who, having just enough sense necessary to transact ordinary business, was constantly under the necessity of recurring to a benefactor, who could preserve a strict hand over him. Samuel, in a word, selected a handsome man of war, who should possess the executive, and be his lieutenant, while he would continue to hold the legislative reigning power. Here is the secret of all the conduct which we shall see him pursue in the elevation of Saul, in the disgrace of this king, and in the substitution of David, another trait of sacerdotal Machiavelism.'

Chapter ix., v. 1. The Douay substitutes for 'mighty man of power' the words 'valiant and strong.' By verse 21, according to Saul's own statement, his family was least amongst the families of Benjamin.

Verses 6 to 8. So that the fortune-tellers of the Jews, like those of the present day, were inaccessible, unless you had money. The servant knew that with the piece of silver he would be a welcome visitor to the man of God.

Verses 9 and 10. (Beforettime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spoke:—'Come, and let us go to the seer;' for he that is now called a prophet, was befortime called a seer.) Then said Saul to his servant, 'Well said; come, let us go.' So they went unto the city, they found young maidens going to draw water, and said to them, 'Is the seer here?'

In explaining this passage, the editors of the Family Bible try to make it appear that the words 'now' and 'beforettime' imply no greater interval of time than that which passed in Samuel's own life-time. They quote as follows from Bishop Patrick, Pyle, and Dr. Gray:—

'The word now refers to the time when this book was written, probably the latter part of Samuel's life. The verse explains that, at the time when Saul was appointed king, the Hebrew word Roeh, "a seer of secret things," was usually applied to inspired persons; but that afterwards the word Nabi, or "prophet" (which had been very anciently known, as appears from the books of Moses), came into common use. (Bishop Patrick, Pyle.) The word Nabi, 'prophet,' was in use in the time of Moses, or Abraham. (See Genesis, chap, xx., v. 7.) But then it only implied a man favoured of God; whereas in the time of Samuel it was appropriated to one who foresaw future events.

These remarks contain both what is true and what is false. It is evident that the word Roeh, seer, is the older term of the two, and we find that it is the word which Saul and his companions actually used—'Is the seer here?' The word seer, therefore, was used in Samuel's life-time, and there is no proof that the word Nabi, 'prophet,' superseded it during the life of Samuel. Indeed, there is a verse in the Second Book of Samuel which shows that the old word seer was still in use after the death of Samuel.

The king (i.e., David), said also unto Zadoc, the priest, 'Art not thou a seer?' return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.' Chap, xv., v. 27.

The book of Samuel was, consequently, not written by Samuel. The words now and beforetime denote too long an interval to allow room for such a supposition. But yet the word Nabi, 'prophet,' not in use in the time of Samuel, actually occurs in the Pentateuch, and other books of the Old Testament; as for example, in Genesis, chap. xx., v. 7; Exodus, chap, vii., v. 1; chap, xv., v. 20; Numbers, chap. xi., v. 29; chap, xii., v. 6; Deuteronomy, chap, xiii., vv. 1,5; chap. xviii., v. 15; chap, xxxiv., v. 10; Judges, chap, iv., v. 4; chap, vi., v. 8; 1 Samuel, chap, iii., v. 20; chap. ix. v. 9; 2 Samuel, chap, vii., v. 2; 1 Kings, chap, xiii., v. 11. In the later of these passages it is not to be wondered that the word rendered 'prophet' should be found, because the writer of the First Book of Samuel tells us that it had come into use in his time, and therefore must have been a common word afterwards; but that it should occur in the Book of Genesis proves either that Genesis was written after the introduction of the word into the Hebrew language, or that the writer of the First Book of Samuel is wrong in describing the word as modern, or that the meaning of the word had changed. I believe that the word was actually a new word in the Hebrew language, introduced after the Babylonish captivity, and consequently that the First Book of Samuel, as well as the Pentateuch, were written after that captivity. ('Hebrew Records.')

Verse 15. In a note to Home's 'Deism Refuted,' Bishop Middleton is quoted, in favour of, the simplicity of the style of the Bible; the style here is undoubtedly simple enough: 'The Lord had *told Samuel in his ear* a day before Saul came.'

Verse 24. According to the Hebrew it is not Samuel, but the cook, who speaks in this verse to Saul.

'What are we to think of all this? Can we believe that it was by accident that the asses of Kish disappeared, and that Saul was led to the house of Samuel? Let those believe this who have faith in seers, fortune-tellers, the gods of the heathen, and a particular Providence in finding lost asses; but to those who have not lost or abjured their senses, it is clear that all this is a crafty manoeuvre, secretly contrived to attain a particular object. We cannot doubt that Samuel, a man so acquainted throughout Israel, had already known the person of Saul. He thought his character suited to his end; but, to be assured precisely of it, it was necessary to talk with him. He could not decently go to see him; he must send for him. He says to a devotee (as men of that caste always had them), "God wishes to prove his servant Kish; go, take away his asses, and lead them to such a place." The man obeys. Behold Saul seeking them. He does not find them. In such a case, how many Swiss, Bavarian, Tyrolese, Breton, Vendean peasants would go to see the fortune-teller? But nothing was easier to this divine than to bribe people on the route which Saul was to take. It was foreseen by Samuel. He projected the sacrifice and the feast after this calculation. The portion set apart for an absent guest proves it. When he had Saul in his house he employed the evening to sound him in every way; he prepared him for his new part; finally he sends off the servant, and mysteriously, without witness, performs the grand, the important ceremony of pouring a little oil on his head [mark well the circumstance; he anoints him without witness in secret for a public effect]; he kisses him, says the text; he tells him that from this moment God has consecrated him unchangeable, irremovable king of Israel. 'At this stage of their intimacy, it is evident their confidence was complete. Saul knew and accepted the propositions and conditions of Samuel. He who had measured the mind of his pupil, in order to subjugate him more and more, uttered several predictions to be accomplished immediately. "In returning home (says he) you will meet at such a place two men, who will tell you that your father has found his asses; further on you will find three men going to Beitel (or Bethel), they will say to you such things; they will make you such a present. Again, at the hill of the Philistines, you will find a procession of prophets, descending from the high place, to the sound of the lyres, of drums, of pipes, and of guitars. The spirit of God will seize you; you will prophesy with them; you will be changed to another man. When these signs shall happen to you, you must do that which you wish. God will be with you; you must come and find me at Galgala to sacrifice: I shall go down there to offer pacificatory sacrifices; you must wait my arrival seven days, and I will let you know what you must do. Saul went, and all that Samuel had predicted came to pass!" Now, what was there miraculous here? It was easy for Samuel to organise all these meetings, and even to calculate the time and place of the procession of the prophets—a religious ceremony which had its fixed days and hours.

'Saul, dismissed by Samuel, met the procession of prophets, and at sight of the train, seized with the spirit of God, he set himself to prophesy with them. The people inquired if Saul had become a prophet. Those who knew it asked what had happened to the son of Kish to have also become a prophet? Others observed, what is their father to them? His father-in-law having questioned him on the details of his journey, Saul told him all except the affair of the royalty. Behold, then, a connivance between Saul and Samuel.

'There remained a public scene to play to gain the respect and credulity of the people. For this purpose, Samuel convoked at Maspha a general assembly. After some reproaches on the part of God (for nothing can be done without his name), you wish to have, says he, another king than your God; you shall have him. In the meantime he began to draw by lot the twelve tribes of Israel, to know from which tribe should issue their king. The lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin: he drew them by lot, and the lot fell upon the family of Matri; and finally on the person of Saul. Assuredly if there is any juggling, it is that of drawing lot on a thing already determined. As to the trick of directing the lot, we know that it requires but very little address to play the sleight of hand: it has been seen everywhere; we yet see examples of it

'It is necessary that the Hebrew people should believe that God himself had made choice of Saul, in order that his choice might impose obedience upon all, and respect to the malcontents, which the opposition had not yet let be seen. By an addition to the jugglery, Saul was not present: it is clear that Samuel had concealed him; they seek him; they soon find him in the hiding-place which the seer had the merit of divining. The people were surprised to see so fine a man; and, according to the literal account, they cried 'God save the King.' Then Samuel read to the people the statutes of the kingdom, and he wrote them a book, which he deposited, without doubt, in the temple. After the ceremony the people were dismissed. Saul returned to his house at his farm; and to form an army he assembled around him men whose hearts God had touched; that is the sycophants and partisans of Samuel; but the evil one's exclaimed, What! is this he who is to save us? And they carried him no presents.

'These last expressions point out a party of malcontents. Their spirit and tone of disdain indicate the low rank and condition in which Saul was born, and perhaps also the mediocrity of his talents already known to

his neighbours, without exposing a secret infirmity, which we shall soon see developed. We perceive, then, that these malcontents were of a class distinguished by birth and by wealth, who are in the text denominated "evil ones," because the writer was a believer, a devotee, imbued with the ideas of the priest, his hero, and that of the superstitious majority of the nation.

'The book of royal statutes, written by Samuel, is worthy of some attention. The Hebrew word *mashfat* [—] which it is designated, signifies sentence rendered—law imposed. What was this law, this constitution of royalty? The answer is not doubtful. It was the same *mashfat* mentioned in the 8th chapter and 11th verse, where Samuel being angry, says to the people—Here is the *mashfat* of the King; who will reign over you: he will take your children; he will employ them in the service of his chariots and his horses; they will run before him and before his chariots of war; he will make them captains over thousands and captains of fifties; he will employ them as labourers in his fields to gather his harvest, to make his instruments of war, and his chariots. He will take your daughters and make them perfumers (or washerwomen), his cooks, and his bakers. He will take your corn fields, your olive orchards, and your vineyards; he will give them to his servants; he will take the tenth of your grain and of your wine to give to his eunuchs and servants; he will take away your slaves, male and female, as well as your asses; and the best of your goods will be for his use; he will decimate your cattle, and of your own persons he will make slaves.

'Those will be deceived who take this for menaces only. It is simply the picture of what passed among the neighbouring people who had kings. It is an instructive sketch of the civil, political, and military state of those times when we see chariots, slaves, eunuchs, tithes, tillages of different kinds, companies and battalions of thousands and fifties, etc., as in later periods. Such were the evils resulting from the theocratic *régime*, or government of priests in the name of God, that the Hebrews preferred to it a military despotism, concentrated in a single person; who at home had the power of maintaining peace, and abroad to repel aggression and the intrusion of strangers.

'If Samuel had been a just man he would, in establishing the rights of the king, have also fixed the balance of his duties, what constituted the rights of the people: he would have imposed upon him, as is practised in [pg135](#) Egypt, the duties of temperance in all things, of abstinence from luxury, of repressing his passions, of overseeing his agents, of discountenancing flatterers, of resolution to punish, and of impartiality to judge between his subjects. But the priest Samuel was irritated at having wrested from him the sceptre which his knavery had obtained. The most to be regretted in this affair is, that Saul was not endowed with sufficient means or sufficient spirit to counteract this perfidious protector. He could, by feigning to hold Samuel strictly to his order, by obliging him to explain it clearly, have thrown back upon him the checks which he imposed, and thus, in the eyes of the people, he would have had the merit of liberating them. David did not fail; but Saul, altogether a brave warrior, and not suspecting the policy of the temple, became the dupe and the victim of a consummate Machiavelism.

'According to Samuel, the royal statute was a pure and severe despotism, a genuine tyranny. According to Moses, it was quite another thing. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to read the precept recorded in the 17th chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 14, etc. It says, literally, "When you shall have entered into the land which Jehovah your God has given you, and which you shall possess and inhabit, and you shall say I will establish over me a king like all the people that surround me, you shall establish him who shall choose Jehovah your God; you shall take him from among your brethren (Jews); you shall not take a stranger who is not your brother; and this king shall not possess many horses; he shall not make the people return to Egypt to have many horses; he shall not multiply wives, that his heart turn not away; he shall not amass treasures of gold and silver, and when he shall sit upon the throne he shall write for himself a copy of the law in a book before the priests and the Levites, and this copy shall be in his hands; he shall read it every day of his life to learn to fear Jehovah his God, and to practise all his precepts." What a difference between this statute of Moses and that of Samuel! Mark well the words: the king shall be one of your brethren, a man entirely as one of you; and he shall be submissive to the will of the nation. How happens it that Samuel was not intimate with, or did not mention, a single word of an ordinance of the legislator so precise and radical? How was it that no person made the least mention of it? Was this law of Moses unknown or forgotten? or was it by some chance not yet inserted? These are reasonable suspicions in this respect.' (*Vide* Volney.)

Dr. Giles observes that:—

'The description of a king (Deuteronomy xvii., 16—20), presents nothing offensive to the feelings or injurious to the happiness of the people: nor does it seem to imply that the Almighty would disapprove of the Israelites choosing for themselves a king when they should, be settled in the land of promise. On the contrary, it conveys an idea that the request would be a natural one, and it explains the mode in which the petition should be complied with. Is it, then, likely that Samuel had read this description, when he cautioned the people against choosing a king by giving that forcible picture of his tyranny and his rapacity? [pg136](#)

'The words of Samuel will seem highly reasonable to those who know the nature of Oriental despotism, if we only suppose that Samuel had never read the 17th chapter of Deuteronomy, which deals so much more leniently with the same contingency.

'It is something, also, to our present point that neither does Samuel cause Saul to copy out the book of the law as before alluded to, and this seems to prove that there was no book of the Law besides the two tables of stone then in existence.'

Chapter x., v. 5. 'The hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines.' So that, according to this, the God of the Israelites, who had brought the Jewish nation into the land promising to cast out all opposers, not only failed in the promise, but actually suffered the indignity of having the hill designated *par excellence* as the 'hill of God,' occupied by a hostile garrison.

The musical accompaniments to the prophesying, prove that a very different meaning must attach to the word than the one usually given; some allege that the word means poet. It is used in many places in a manner entirely unconnected with the foretelling of future events. In the epistle to Titus the word prophet is used in reference, probably to a heathen poet. By Chronicles, chap. xxv., v. 123, the word 'prophesying' clearly denotes musical performances 'under order of the king.' The Douay in a foot-note tells me that prophesying is

singing praises to God by divine impulse.

I am inclined to consider the word prophet as synonymous with that of *bard*. Our ancient bards recited the events of the past, and in stirring poetical phraseology gave forth their hopes and conjectures of victories in the future.

Verse 12 has no connection with the rest of the chapter, and it is not consistent in itself. There is no connection between the question 'Who is their father?' and the following words, 'Therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also amongst the prophets?' Besides which, in chap. xix., v. 24, we get a totally different version of the origin of the proverb.

Verse 25. This book is lost, I presume. It is never referred to afterwards. Was it a revelation from God?

Verse 26. Why did not God touch the hearts of every man.

Chapter xi., vv. 4 to 7. Although Saul was the anointed king of Israel, he seems to have been ploughing in a field, and to have killed the very oxen he had been using. The king at that time, therefore, was not so well off as the priest.

Verses 8 to 15. 'The Hebrew version says, thirty thousand men of Judea, and three hundred thousand of the eleven tribes. The Greek, on the contrary, says, seventy thousand of Judea, and six hundred thousand of the others. Such variations, which are often repeated, show the credit that is due to these books of morals. According to the Greek version, by supposing every six persons to furnish one man-of-war, there would be three millions of inhabitants on a territory of nine hundred square leagues; consequently more than three thousand persons to the square league; which is against all probability. The most reasonable number, perhaps, is twenty thousand picked men for a *coup de main*, which moreover demanded rapidity. Saul departs like an arrow; arrives at break of day, and pours on the camp of the Ammonites, who, accustomed to the sluggish manner of the Jews, expected no such movement. Saul surprises, destroys them, and delivers the town. The people, charmed with this beginning, come uncovered, and propose to Samuel to slay those who do not recognise and salute the king. Saul brave, and for this reason generous, opposes it. This once Samuel is satisfied, and gives orders that there shall be a general assembly at Gilgal to renew the installation, which was done. But why this second ceremony? Was it to give the opponents and malcontents an opportunity to rally with the majority of the people, and to stifle a schism which had more partisans than are indicated? for we see symptoms of it when in the approaching war with the Philistines there were found in their camp many Hebrew deserters, bearing arms against the party of Samuel and Saul. This was the first apparent motive, and it was quite ingenious. But we shall soon discover that Samuel, always, profound and full of deception, had another secret intimately connected with his interests and character. The text tells us, chap. xii., that the assembly being formed, Samuel standing before all the people, made a speech, the substance of which was that he had managed their affairs with perfect integrity; that he had taken no one's ox or ass; that he had oppressed or persecuted no one; that he had not taken bribes; and that nevertheless he had been forced to put a king in his place. He attributes this step as against God. But why God? It was himself. As, by the nature of the royal *régime*, such as he has pictured it, Saul could not fail to cause similar vexations, a contrast was created which even at this time tends to diminish the credit he had just, acquired, and shows the jealousy that actuated Samuel.

'The priest insisted that God had, until then, governed the nation by his special servants, such as Moses, Aaron, Gideon, Jephtha, etc.; and that the people, now rebellious, wished to govern themselves by men of their own choice. But as this new system took away the supreme and arbitrary power from the priests of whom Samuel was the head, we see whence came the deep hatred which he entertained for it; and his sacerdotal arrogance in setting himself up as the chief interpreter and representative on earth of the Divinity. Here the writer (a priest also) has joined a remarkable circumstance: "You see," says Samuel to the people, "that we are in the time of harvest [the end of June, or beginning of July.] Well, I will invoke God, and he will answer me in a voice of thunder and rain, and you shall know your sin of disobedience." So there came thunder and rain, and the people were seized with fear; they knew their sin and demanded pardon of Samuel, who (generously) answered that he would not cease always to pray for them.

'This recital is very well, but we have a right to ask for the evidence of its truth? Who has seen the occurrence? Who has told it to us? A narrator at second hand. Was he a witness of it? He is the only one; he is partial. Besides, a crowd of facts and similar accounts are found among the Greeks, the Romans, and all the ancient barbarians. Are we to believe that their seers, that their divines had also the gift of miracles? But admitting the recital and the fact, we have yet the right to say that Samuel, more knowing than a multitude of superstitious, ignorant peasants, had perceived the sign, or forerunner of a storm, which is not rare at that time of the year. I myself, while travelling, have seen it in the last days of December, when the case is still more singular. The result was, the people placed greater confidence in Samuel; and that was what this ecclesiastical king wanted, in order not to lose the tutelage of his royal lieutenant.' (*Vide* Volney.)

Chapter xii., v. 11. 'Bedan.' "It is remarkable," says Bishop Patrick, "that there is no such name as Bedan mentioned in the Book of Judges."

'Dr. Hales, with a singular boldness of criticism, observes on the same passage:—

"Perhaps Barak may be meant."

'This supposition might pass if it were certain that the Book of Judges contained a full history of all that period of the Jewish national existence; but as it certainly is a very brief history, and occasionally changes with great abruptness from one subject to another, it is most probable that other writings once existed which perished before the present Book of Judges was compiled.' (*Vide* 'Hebrew Records.')

Chapter xiii., v. 1. The Douay translates this—'Saul was a child of one year when he began to reign.'

'It was natural for this new king to be elated with his first and brilliant success, and with his sudden and high fortune. We find him also a little while after declare war against the Philistines. Several incidents mentioned give cause to suspect that this was contrary to the wish of Samuel, and that hence began the misunderstanding which we shall soon see break out. Samuel might with reason represent to Saul "that the Philistines were powerful, warlike, and formidable; that their maritime trade rivalled that of Sidon and Tyre,

giving them the means of industry superior to those of the Hebrews; who, although left in peace under their own government, were not in a state fit for independence or resistance, since they had not even the liberty of having smiths to make their axes, their ploughshares, and still more their lances, and that it was, therefore, better to temporise." This is all very true and wise. But Saul went farther; full of confidence in the ardour of the people, he could answer that God would benevolently provide, as in the time of Gideon and Jephtha. He chose three thousand men to remain on duty with him, and sent away the rest. Of this light corps he gave one thousand to his son Jonathan. This young man soon attacked a post of the Philistines, who called to arms and gathered together. Saul, seeing them numerous, summoned the Hebrews. According to the historian [\(pg139\)](#) the Philistines detached thirty thousand war chariots, six thousand horsemen, and a multitude of foot soldiers, as numerous as the sand of the sea shore. We ask, who counted these chariots and horsemen? There is, besides, a shocking contradiction, for the whole territory of the Philistines was not more than one hundred leagues square, which does not answer to more than two hundred thousand inhabitants. We must suppose, according to the narrative, there was more than one hundred thousand warriors. It is a very remarkable circumstance that in the books of the Jews the numbers are generally exaggerated beyond belief, and almost always in round numbers by decimals. Fear seized the Hebrews; the country people dispersed, and hid themselves in the mountains and caves. Saul found himself in a great straight; he called upon Samuel, who desired him to wait seven days (he wished to see how it would turn). During this time the people contrived to desert. Saul, believing that success depended upon a propitiatory sacrifice, ordered preparations, and seeing the enemy ready to attack him before Samuel's arrival, he determined to make the sacrifice himself, which was the duty of the priest. Finally Samuel arrived: "What have you done?" says he to Saul. The king explains his reasons. Samuel answers, "You have acted foolishly; you have not observed the orders which God gave you; he had established your kingdom for ever: now your kingdom shall not stand; *God has chosen a man after his own heart* (this phrase must be borne in mind when criticising David's life); he has made him chief over his people;" and Samuel went away.

'Such a sudden change of conduct could not take place without serious motives. We must suppose that some dissention had arisen between them; some serious dispute of the kind which I have pointed out. If, however, that should not suffice to explain a part so decided, or justify so much insolence, I can perceive another motive. The course of public and private actions of Saul, show that he was subject to a nervous disease, the symptoms of which are those of epilepsy. Might it not be that this distressing disease being ordinarily concealed, Samuel did not know of it when he made choice of Saul; but having discovered it, he perceived himself to blame in public opinion and before his enemies, and then sought occasion and means to disown him? It is no less true that in this his conduct is wicked and blameable, inasmuch as he destroys the confidence of the people in their chief, and encourages them to desert and lay open the country to the enemy.

'This priest thought all success impossible, and by immolating his vanquished pupil he wished to insure for himself a compromise with his enemies, both within and without. Chance defeated his calculations. Saul remained with six hundred men, courageous and determined like himself. He takes post before the enemy's camp, prohibiting all attack. Several days passed. His son, Jonathan, stealing under cover (of the night, probably), followed by one only squire, he presents himself before a Philistine post, situated on a high rock; he is taken for a refugee Hebrew, such as had arrived in great numbers for several days before; he climbs up with his squire and is received. In a moment they both attack the enemy with so much boldness and good [\(pg140\)](#) fortune that they stretch twenty men dead upon half an acre of ground. Confusion and terror spread through the camp.' [In fact, Jonathan's exploit exercised such a wonderful effect that, we are told, the earth quaked and trembled with fear. The Douay says, that 'it was a miracle from God;' our authorised text does not notice the miracle, but it is quite certain that the last word of the Hebrew verse is [—] (Alehim or Elohim), for which I find no equivalent in our version. Why is this omitted?] The Philistines think themselves betrayed, either by one another or by the refugee Hebrews. One man strikes another: Saul, hearing the noise, advances with his men, and the rout became complete. Carried away by his excessive courage, the king imprudently forbids the eating of anything before the end of the day, and of the slaughter and pursuit. His son, ignorant of this, refreshes himself with a little honey; his father would have immolated him to his oath (like Jephtha), but the people oppose it, and save Jonathan. [I confess that I do not quite understand how the Israelites smote the Philistines without weapons; but God's ways are not as our ways. Nor do I understand how it was that the Lord allowed the people to escape, who ate the flesh with the blood thereof. 'Here is a second victory of the new king; but this happened contrary to all expectations, and must have disconcerted Samuel, who does not appear upon the scene of action. The Philistines being vanquished, retire to their own country. It would appear that a truce must have been made, since the historian does not speak any more of war on this side. He mentions that Saul turned his arms against other nations; "that he attacked one after another: the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Idumeans, the Syrian kings of Sobah, to the north and beyond Damas; and that it was not until then that he turned again against the Philistines and Amalekites." Everywhere he was fortunate and conquered. It is evident these different wars must have taken several years; at least each of them one campaign. The narrator likewise seems to terminate here his history in numbering and naming the wives whom Saul married, the children he had, and the man whom he made commander of his guard and general of his troops. 'From the manner in which the fourteenth chapter is terminated!' a reader used to the style of these books would believe that the history of Samuel is really finished; for the ordinary form in closing the history of the other kings, is by recounting their wives, their children, and the prominent personages of their reign. The fifteenth chapter, however, which follows, seems to commence another portion of the reign of Saul, containing the details of the consecration and substitution of David, which may be dated from a scene of the final rupture, which took place between the king and Samuel. May it not have been that the last compiler, presumed to have been Esdras, in arranging the manuscripts originally written by Samuel, Nathan, and God, according to the testimony given in Chronicles i., 29, sewed the narratives together without much care, as was generally done among the ancients? We shall see the proof of this in the presentation of David to Saul.' [\(pg141\)](#) *Vide Volney.*)

Chapter xv., vv. 2 and 3. Christian, contrast these with Daniel, chap. ix, v. 9, and then consider well how your Deity has entitled himself to the attribute of a God of love, shewing mercy and forgiveness to all, even to those who have rebelled against him.

Verse 9. If only as a measure of policy, Saul's conduct is worthy of approval; he acted far more wisely than Samuel.

Verse 29 is contradicted by v. 35 of this chapter, and in Jeremiah, chap, xv., y. 6; and of all the parts of the Bible this is the most absurd, for the whole transaction arises from his having repented that he had set up Saul as king. (See V. 11.)

Verse 32. The Douay says that Agag was 'very fat;' if the Jews were cannibals this would doubtless be a sufficient reason for the sacrifice.

Volney thus comments on this chapter (the reader ought to bear in mind that Volney scarcely ever quotes from the Protestant version):—

'Several years, perhaps eight or ten, were passed in the wars of Saul without any mention of Samuel. Without doubt the successes and popularity of the king affected the prophet. At last he reappears on the scene; he seeks an occasion favourable to his views; he finds Saul; he opens by recalling to his mind that he consecrated him king. This was to induce obedience, through a sentiment of gratitude, to what he was going to say. "Behold," he observes, "what that God now ordains who formerly ordered me to consecrate you. I recollect what the people of Amalek did against my people at the coming up from Egypt. (It was 400 years before; Amalek had opposed the passage of the Hebrews, and had slain many.) Go now, strike Amalek; destroy all that belongs to them; spare nothing; you must slay men, women, children, oxen, sheep, goats," etc Who is not chilled at such a command? To make God order the extermination because of a quarrel 400 years before, in which the Hebrews were the aggressors, for they wished to force a passage through the territory of Amalek. But what was the object of Samuel? He had a design in view, and an occasion was wanted to execute it. Samuel saw a popular cause for war and seized it

'Saul formed an army. The Hebrew text says 10,000 men of Judah and 200,000 foot soldiers of the other tribes. The Greek says 400,000 men of one and 30,000 of the other. The Alexandrian manuscript says only 10,000 of each, which is the most probable. Why these contradictions? Why these absurdities? For it is absurd to collect 200,000 men to take by surprise a small tribe of Bedouins. Saul departs and surprises the Amalekites in the desert; he kills all those who fall into his hands; takes their king alive; guards him together with the beasts and other booty. Returning triumphant to Mount Carmel, he descends to the valley where there is an altar, and prepares, says the text, to offer a sacrifice to God of the best among the spoil, according to the rites of the Greeks and Romans. Samuel arrives; but, says the historian, God had spoken to the see [pg142](#) (during the night) and had said, "I repent of having made Saul king, for he has turned from me and does not obey my orders." This, it is said, frightened Samuel, who cried to the Lord all night. Here again is a vision, a conference, a repentance from God! Could our negroes and savages hear such fables without laughing? The Jews believe all; they do not ask any proof of Samuel; he however is the only evidence; he only could have written such details. He is here author, actor, judge, and party. Who would be a Jew to believe upon his word? Yet it is a proverb, "as unbelieving as a Jew."

'Samuel arrives and advances to Saul. "What means," says he, "this noise of cattle that I hear?" Saul answers, "The people have spared the best of the effects of Amalek to offer to the Lord our God; we have destroyed the rest." "Allow me (replies Samuel) to relate what God said to me last night." "Speak," says Saul. "When you were little in your own eyes (says the Lord) did not I make you king of Israel, and now have I not sent you against Amalek directing you to exterminate him; why have you not fulfilled my commandment? Why have you sinned and kept the spoils?" "I have obeyed (replied Saul); I marched, I destroyed Amalek, and brought away the king alive, but the people have kept back these spoils and these victims of beasts to offer on the altar of God at Galgala." Samuel answers, "Does God demand these offerings and victims rather than obedience to his orders? You endeavour to ascertain good fortune by a victim, by inspecting the fat of rams; but know that the sin of divination is rebellion, a falsehood, an idolatry; but since you reject the commands of God he rejects your kingdom."

'Saul, feeble and superstitious, confesses himself culpable; he supplicates the ambassador of God to pray for the removal of his sin; the priest rejects his prayer, reiterates his deposition, and turns to leave him. Saul seizes the skirt of his coat or cloak to retain him; the priest, implacable, makes an effort by which the part is torn. "God (he repeats) has torn from you the kingdom of Israel, and has delivered it to a better; he has so decreed; is he man to repent?" Saul insists, "I have sinned, do not dishonour me before my people and before their chiefs; return to me, and I will humble myself before thy God." (These words seem remarkable; there were, then, among the Hebrews, other acknowledged Gods who lived on an equality with Jehovah.) And Samuel returned, and Saul humbled himself before Jehovah. Samuel then said, "Bring me Agag, king of Amalek;" and Agag being come, Samuel said to him, "What you have done to the children of our mothers that shall be done to yours;" and Samuel cut him in pieces [it seems with an axe]. Having performed this exploit, Samuel returned to Ramatah, and during his life did not visit Saul.

'What a barbarous scene! horrible it must be confessed; but I know some more horrible still pass before eyes in our day. Suppose that Samuel had brought Agag to Ramatah; that there he had confined him in a dungeon at the bottom of a cistern; that he had come every day with an attendant to make him undergo [pg143](#) various tortures, to burn his feet—his hands, to stretch him upon a wooden horse, to dislocate him, etc. etc.; all this with honied terms, saying that it was all for his good; would not the lot of the victim have been a thousand times more dreadful? Ah! much better the open cruelty of the Hebrew priest, compared with the charity of the priests and monks which bless Rome! Yet the European Governments authorise and suffer such abominations! But did Samuel commit such an act without motive—without a projected object? That would not be in conformity to his deep and calculating character. We will examine these motives.

'For ten or twelve years Saul, by his victories, did not cease to flourish and strengthen his credit in the minds of all the nation. Samuel, finding himself eclipsed, took occasion to flatter the vindictive passion of the Hebrews against the Amalekites. The victory of Saul, and taking king Agag in disobedience to the command of God, who had ordered the extermination of the Amalekites, furnished Samuel with a pretence for striking the audacious blow of anointing a substitute to rival Saul. He thought it necessary to strike terror into their minds by a preliminary imposing step, which would make Saul dread the falling upon him of some new celestial anathema. It is certain that this manoeuvre of Samuel succeeded, since Saul did not dare to use any

act of violence against him.

'In considering the action of Samuel in a general point of view, political and moral, it presents an astonishing union of pride, audacity, cruelty, and hypocrisy; a little orphan upstart, to decree from his caprice the extermination of a whole nation, even to the last living being! to insult—to abuse a king covered with laurels, become legitimate by his victories, and by the assent of the nation grateful for the peace and respect which he had procured for them! a priest to trouble this whole nation by a change of the prince, by the intrusion of a new elect of his choice. Here is found the first germ of that political division of the Hebrews which, suppressed under David and Solomon, broke out under the imprudent Rheoboam, and prepared the fall of the nation by rending it into two kingdoms.

'We see here the fruits of that divine or visionary power imprudently allowed by a people, stupified by superstition, to a king, otherwise worthy of esteem, but feeble-minded. We see an impostor, who dared to call himself the sent of God, the representative of God, finally, God himself (for such is the transition of ideas which will not fail to occur when the first is tolerated), turning all this to his profit. The plain historian achieves, without knowing it, the tracing of the portrait and character of Samuel, in saying, "Samuel did not see Saul any more; but lamented his misfortune that God had rejected him."

Chapter xvi., v. 2. Here the Lord directs Samuel to tell a lie, yet in Proverbs, chap, xii., v. 22, we are told that lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord.

Verse 4. Our version says the elders 'trembled,' the Douay says they 'wondered,' and the Breeches Bible [pg144](#) says they were 'astonished.'

Verse 7. The choice of Saul, whose height was so great (*vide* chap, x., v. 23), being an unfortunate one, this time the selection is made on totally different principles.

Verse 14. 'An evil spirit from the Lord.' If read literally, these words would occasion, in the minds of pious theists, grave doubts as to how an evil spirit could come from an infinitely pure and good God; but Hugh Farmer, in his essay on Demoniacs, says that Saul's disorder was a deep melancholy, and that this appears by the mode of cure—i.e., music, a proper method of exhilarating the animal spirits.

Verse 18. It is clear that this servant, if he spoke the words here alleged, spoke untruly. David was a young lad who kept his father's sheep, who was regarded as too young to go to battle, and who did not know how to wear armour.

Chapter xvii., v. 4. Goliah must have been at least nine feet six inches high.

Verse 5. This coat of mail would weigh about one hundred and fifty-six pounds four ounces avoirdupois, allowing half an ounce to the shekel, which I believe is under the weight.

Verse 7. The spearhead at the same rate would weigh about eighteen pounds twelve ounces.

verse 12. David is here introduced as if he had never been mentioned before. 'The days of Saul;' these words indicate a writer subsequent to the death of Saul.

Verse 17. 'What can we think of this? Jesse hardly recalled his son from the honourable post of armour-bearer to the king! It is not likely that he was turned off, since we afterwards find him playing on the harp to the king as before; neither was it a proper employment for the King's armour-bearer to be feeding sheep when the army was in the field, and his majesty with them in person! Why, the most easy method is to take it as we find it, to suppose it to be right, and go quietly on with the story.'

Verse 34. Instead of 'a lion *and* a bear,' the Douay reads 'a lion or a bear.'

Verse 35, Instead of 'I caught him by his beard and smote him,' the Douay has 'I caught them by the throat, and I strangled and killed them.'

Verse 49. The helmet which afforded no protection to Goliah's forehead must have been of a very curious pattern. The fact of David's going unharmed except with a sling and stones would induce one to suppose that he intended to keep a long distance between himself and Goliah. If so, he would incur no danger in the combat, as the heavily-armed Goliah could not run after him, and all that was necessary was for David to avoid coming within the reach of the giant's spear. When Goliah and David talked, they must have been a very long way from each other, for we find that David afterwards ran and hasted toward the Philistine before he got sufficiently near to sling a stone at him....

REMAINDER OF THE PAGES IN THE PRINTED BOOK ARE MISSING

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS! ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may

use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project

Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second

opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.