

“Their words had not availed to keep back the people from those deadly sins which had already brought down upon the Ten Tribes a fearful judgement, and threatened before long a yet more terrible woe upon Judah and Jerusalem. What if the authority of the great Lawgiver should be brought to bear upon them? And since the Law Book, as it then existed, was not well suited for the present necessity, with its long details of the lives of their forefathers, . . . as well as its minute directions about artistic and ceremonial matters—what if the very *spirit* of the older Law should be summed up in a powerful address . . . such as he would have delivered if now present with his people, and put into the mouth of the departing lawgiver.”

But if such a thought arose, as we are bound to suppose that it did arise, in the mind of the prophet, this thought would most assuredly assume for him the form of a Divine command.

“All question of deception, or *fraus pia*, would vanish; and Huldah too, in like manner, if she knew of what was being done, would consider, not whether it was right or wrong to speak to the Jews in the name of Moses, but what might happen, since those threats of coming judgement, thus spoken, were uttered by Divine inspiration, and, therefore, were certainly true.”<sup>1</sup>

This, if the report of the narrative may be received as correct, is precisely what she did. Her words make no reference to Moses. She does not even refer, as Josiah refers, to the disobedience of their forefathers. She speaks merely of the judgements impending for the present misdoings of the people and their rulers, and without implying that the book discovered was an old one, the work of Moses, she confines herself to declaring that the evil threatened should surely come to pass. The step, accordingly, was taken. The book thus found was read to the king, and by the king read

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 428.

to the people. The impression made was vivid and keen ; but it was not lasting, and, as we have seen, the zeal even of Josiah himself seems to have been chilled by the discovery that the warnings and promises of the Deuteronomist came from a teacher of his own age and not from the lawgiver of whom the book spoke as having died upon the mountain of Nebo.

But if the Book of Deuteronomy is not the work of the author or authors of the Tetrateuch, we may safely infer that an examination of its contents will exhibit contradictions with the earlier narratives ; and this is, in fact, the case. The discourses of this fifth book are said to be uttered in the hearing of all Israel, a population, according to the older story, of some three or four millions ; and beyond doubt the phrase is not to be interpreted as denoting only the chiefs and elders of the people, for the lawgiver himself in his address is represented as saying, "Ye stand this day, all of you, before Jehovah your God, your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers and all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water." The writer never thought of historical impossibility, as he never thought of geographical incongruities, when, speaking of an unknown country traversed for the first time, he mentions that "there are eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea." But, further, he makes Moses address the generation which came out from Egypt, whereas, if the Tetrateuch is to be trusted, they had all died during the forty years' wanderings. In the earlier story, the appointing of the seventy elders to lighten the toil of Moses takes place before the giving of the law at Sinai : in Deuteronomy it takes place a year later, when they are just about to leave Horeb.<sup>1</sup> In Deuteronomy, again, the sending of the spies is a suggestion

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 433.

of the people, which pleases Moses well: in the Book of Numbers (xiii. 1, 2), it is an express command of Almighty God. Of the long sojourn in the wilderness the other books have very little to tell us; in Deuteronomy a period of seven-and-thirty years is dismissed in the single phrase that they "abode many days in Kadesh" (i. 46). In all the books the Israelites are depicted as an idol-loving people; but the character of their idolatry in the Tetrateuch is not the character of their idolatry in the Book of Deuteronomy. In the latter they are mentioned as being addicted to the worship of the hosts of heaven, which in the historical books (2 Kings xvii. 16) is first named as one of the sins for which the Ten Tribes were carried into captivity,<sup>1</sup> and seems to have been first generally practised in Judah in the reign of Manasseh, the grandfather of Josiah. The latter king made, indeed, a vigorous effort to suppress it; but the denunciations of Zephaniah and Jeremiah show that it revived again even during his life-time. Nor must it be forgotten that this worship is nowhere mentioned in the Tetrateuch, and that the phrases which describe it are found only in the Book of Deuteronomy.

But, in truth, the mind of the Deuteronomist was not set upon the avoiding of discrepancies. He is thinking of his own time when he represents Moses speaking of the Israelites as dwelling in a land from which great nations had been driven out before them, "as it is this day"; and again and again he insists that the men who listened to the recapitulation of the Law were the very men who had witnessed the giving of the Law at Sinai. The covenant, he says, was made "not with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy v. 2-5); and again, "I speak not with your children, which have not known His miracles and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, . . . but your

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 444.

eyes have seen the great acts of Jehovah which He did" (Deuteronomy xi. 2-7).

Nor is the writer careful about other things, as to which it might be supposed that the popular feeling would be most sensitive. He gives the Decalogue as it is given in Exodus: but he assigns a totally different reason for the observance of the Sabbath day. If some of the marvels mentioned in the other books are not to be found in Deuteronomy, others are introduced which are not found in the Tetrateuch, among these being the wonderful preservation of the shoes and clothes of the Israelites. Later superstition hit upon the notion that the garments of the children grew with their growth: it is sufficiently remarkable that such durability was imparted to their raiment that the men of one generation could hand them on as good as new to those of another. In Deuteronomy ix. 3, the writer speaks of the rapid extermination of the Canaanitish tribes, forgetting that a little while before (vii. 22) he has forbidden this destruction.<sup>1</sup> In Exodus (xxxiv. 29), the two stone tables with the Decalogue graven on them are in the hands of Moses before any receptacle has been made in which they may be placed. In Deuteronomy (x.), the ark is actually made before Moses goes up into the mount to receive the second tables. But the Bishop urges that the account in Exodus renders this impossible.

"Not only is there nothing said about the ark in Exodus (xxxiv. 1), where he is commanded to make the tables; but it is only after coming down with the second set of tables that Moses summons the wise-hearted to come and make the ark."<sup>2</sup>

In Deuteronomy (x. 6, 7), the death of Aaron is described as happening before the separation of the Levites; according to the Book of Numbers the separation takes place nearly forty

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 452.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 454.

years before his death.<sup>1</sup> In the former Aaron dies at Moserah: in the latter he dies on Mount Hor, some five stations beyond Moserah. In the former the tribe of Levi are set apart to bear the ark: in the latter the duty belongs to the sons of Kohath, not to the Levites generally. While, again, the Deuteronomist (xi. 6) mentions the destruction of Dathan and Abiram, he says nothing of Korah, manifestly because he knows no distinction between priests and Levites, and therefore sees no great wrong in a Levite seeking the priesthood also.

But it is in Deuteronomy that for the first time we hear of Jehovah choosing one special place out of all the tribes to put His name there. The earlier kings, no doubt, thought of attracting the affections of the people to Jerusalem; but the idea of making attendance at Mount Zion compulsory three times a year could hardly have arisen in an age when Solomon sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places, and especially at the "great high place" of Gibeon. The great prophets of Israel are never spoken of as going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover; and the most pious kings (Asa, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, and others) brought their offerings to other altars than that erected in the Temple, which they could not have done if this exclusive law had been then in existence, or if, on the supposition of its existence, it had been regarded as of Mosaic origin.<sup>2</sup> The growth of a tendency to visit Jerusalem on occasions of extraordinary solemnity is undeniable. The erection of the tabernacle on Mount Zion seems to have been contemporaneous with the discontinuance of the older sanctuaries at Ramah, Bethel, Mizpeh, &c.; and the acts of Jeroboam show with sufficient clearness how great for him was the need of counteracting the impulse which might draw his subjects to the sanctuary of the rival kingdom. The command that all males should go up to Jerusalem yearly at each

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 467.

of the great feasts seems rather to point to a time after the fall of the Israelitish kingdom, when there remained only the small centralised kingdom of Judah. In fact, there is only one indication of the rule having ever been acted upon; and this solitary instance was, as we have seen, at the great Passover of King Josiah, when this very Book of Deuteronomy had just been found in the Temple. Nay, further, the best kings of Judah, after the setting up of the ark at Jerusalem, are spoken of in the Books of Kings, without any very strong words of censure, as allowing the people still to sacrifice in the high places.

“It can hardly, therefore,” the Bishop urges, “be believed that the strongest commands of the Book of Deuteronomy to utterly destroy all the high places of the heathen and sacrifice to Jehovah only at Jerusalem could have been read and studied by these pious princes, much less copied (as Deuteronomy xvii. 18-20 directs) by each of them with his own hand, when seated on the throne of his kingdom. More especially does this apply to the case of Joash, who began to reign when seven years old, and for the greater part of his life was directed wholly by the high priest Jehoiada.”

The condition of the Levites in the Book of Deuteronomy is another point which presents a perplexing contrast with the pictures of the Tetrateuch. In the latter they are spoken of as about to be settled in forty-eight cities as their exclusive possession, and as being abundantly supplied from the free-will offerings and sacrifices of the people. In Deuteronomy they are depicted as being likely to be in a very necessitous condition and living as stragglers in the land, in “any of the gates of the people,” in a state of utter poverty and dependence,<sup>1</sup> which is compared with that of the widow, the stranger, and the fatherless. The Book of Numbers speaks of them as intitled by the command of God Himself to all the tenth of

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 473.

Israel for an inheritance. No such claim is ever even hinted at in Deuteronomy, where the Levite is pointed out as an object for pure compassion, as, in short, a stranger and sojourner within the gates of others.

“And all this . . . . is supposed to be said by Moses only a few months after the laws had been laid down by Jehovah Himself, which provided for them abundant supplies of food, and cities of their own with their suburbs, thirty for the Levites, twelve for the priests.”

With this picture of the impoverished state of the Levites, the statements of the historical books are in close agreement. In the Second Book of Kings the number of the priests is extremely small. In the days of Josiah there was a “chief priest,” some “priests of the second order,” and “others who are keepers of the door.” In the time of his son Zedekiah there were only five priests ministering in the Temple; nor is this surprising when we remember that three temples of Solomon might have been placed on the ground now occupied by the church of St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields in London.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the Chronicles speak of David as attended at Hebron by 4,600 Levites and 3,700 priests of the sons of Aaron (1 Chronicles ii. 26-28); but it is also true that the historian of the Book of Kings (1, iv. 4) makes mention only of two priests after the transference of the ark to the tabernacle on Mount Zion. The fact is that the chronicler cared nothing for truth whenever it clashed with his purpose. His very design was to exhibit as real a state of things which had no being except in his own brain; and it was as easy for him to attach ten thousand, as to attach ten, priests to the Solomonian temple. He could, therefore, with the utmost complacency, speak of David as collecting for the temple which his son was to build a hundred thousand talents of gold (£500,000,000), and a million

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 485.

talents of silver (£353,000,000), and at the same time declare with cool effrontery that these vast sums (which, with the contributions of David's great men, reach the stupendous total of not much less than £900,000,000, a sum far exceeding the national debt of Great Britain) were gathered together by David in his trouble; nay, more, that this enormous mass of gold and silver, which could have little or no value except as a purchasing power, was exclusive of vast stores of timber, and of brass and iron without weight,—and all this for a building which the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields could contain three or four times over.<sup>1</sup>

But the priests and Levites, though their numbers were thus scanty, were miserably poor and almost starving. The earlier laws of the Pentateuch assign for their support the tithes and firstlings. There is not the slightest sign that these were paid; and the inference follows either that these laws were unknown to the people generally, or that, if known, they were not regarded as of any special authority. Not only, indeed, were the priests wretchedly indigent, but the Temple itself was often either disused or closed. The chronicler himself, not heeding the inconsistency of his words with his other pictures of priestly greatness, draws a pitiable picture (2 Chronicles xxix. 7-16) of the uncleanness and desolation of the Temple, thus admitting that the worship and the house of Jehovah were, to say the least, very thoroughly unpopular; and he admits further that Ahaz actually shut up the Temple, which

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Moabite Stone*, p. 341. This volume, published in 1873, is an excellent summary of the Bishop's critical work, prepared especially in the hope that it might be found useful to teachers in day schools and Sunday schools, as well as to parents among the more educated laity, who may wish to show their children the real nature of these books which have had so prominent a part in the religious education of the race. The account of the Moabite stone in the concluding lecture would, at least, show them that there were other versions of the narratives found in the more trustworthy of the historical books of the Hebrew Scriptures.



he could hardly have done if the Levites had possessed the power which the chronicler ascribes to them. The reforms of Hezekiah brought about a change for the better. The priests now allowed that they had enough to eat (2 Chronicles xxxi. 10), and, in place of the tithe which seemingly had never been paid to them, they were suffered to share in the sacrificial offerings of the faithful, in strict accordance with the language of the Book of Deuteronomy, the composition of which seems thus again to belong to a period later than that of Hezekiah.

Differences between the statements of Deuteronomy and those of the preceding books meet us, indeed, everywhere. The writers in Exodus (xxiii. 11) and Leviticus (xxv. 1-7) enjoin that in every seventh year the whole land shall be allowed to lie fallow, and enjoy its Sabbath without being troubled by either ploughing or sowing; but not one word is said about the cancelling of debts for those who at the end of the six years have been unable to pay them. The Deuteronomist (xv. 1-11) enjoins the release of insolvent debtors in the seventh year, but says nothing of the duty of suffering the land to lie idle. In short, the whole history of the Hebrew people gives no indication that the law relating to the Sabbath year was ever once obeyed.<sup>1</sup> Critics who wish to uphold the traditional view plead that the Sabbath year was prescribed by all lawgivers, although it was first carried out in the post-Captivity time; but this still leaves us facing the alternative either that up to that time this law was unknown, or that, if known, it was not looked upon as authoritative.

It is true that Bishop Harold Browne faces such difficulties with an almost light-hearted cheerfulness. The Israelites had a strange way of hearing commands of the most solemn kind, and not heeding them.

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 496.

“We know that circumcision, the very bond of the covenant, the initiatory rite of Judaism, was neglected till the people came to Gilgal.”

But the negative in this case is not confined to the people. The Bishop of Natal may well express his amazement at such a plea as this.

“As if this fact itself, which Bishop Browne states so quietly, did not involve a stupendous difficulty, as great as any which I have set forth in Part I. For who can believe that Moses, after having actually written the account, in Genesis xvii., of the solemn institution of the rite by Almighty God Himself; . . . after having been expressly warned in person of the danger of neglecting the rite by the occurrence recorded in Genesis iv. 24-26; after having been again reminded of his duty in this respect by the words pronounced to him by Jehovah, on the occasion of the Passover, on the very night of the Exodus, . . . would yet, under the holy mount itself, fresh from his daily communings with God—when they rested for nearly twelve months together in one place, and everything, place, time, circumstances, combined to assist the discharge of this primary duty—have allowed the people entirely to neglect having their children circumcised, during all his life-time for forty years together. The thing is utterly incredible; and no stronger proof of the unhistorical character of the Pentateuchal story can be produced than the very fact itself to which Bishop Browne appeals as helping him partially out of his difficulty.”

If, however, there is any one thing which in the historical books is spoken of as a deliberate lapse on the part of the Hebrews, it is the substitution of a visible and earthly monarchy for the theocracy under which they are supposed thus far to have lived. The thought of and the desire for this change are spoken of by Samuel as a great sin, “Your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of Jehovah in asking for a

king ;” and his words extort from the people the confession that they had added to all their sins this evil, “to ask us a king.”

“Nay, Jehovah Himself is introduced as saying to Samuel ‘They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.’”<sup>1</sup>

But on the supposition that Deuteronomy is Mosaic, both Samuel and the people had before them a law with which they were bound to be acquainted, which spoke of this change as one likely or sure to come, and which did not denounce the thought of it or the desire of it as sinful or wrong at all. All that the lawgiver does (Deuteronomy xvii. 14-17) is to add certain cautions as to the policy which the Jewish kings ought to follow, while there is not a word to imply that the institution of monarchical government would in itself be an offence in the sight of Jehovah. It is inconceivable that Samuel should have spoken as he did, if the Deuteronomistic Law had been known to him ; and inconceivable also that the people, if acquainted with it, should not have adduced it as a complete justification of their conduct, instead of abasing themselves before him in an agony of humiliation ; and if it was unknown both to the seer or judge and to his people, is it possible to resist the conclusion that in their age the Book of Deuteronomy was not written ?

But not only did the Deuteronomist speak of the establishment of the monarchy as a certain event of the future ; not only did he prescribe the lines of their policy and forbid them to form any connexion with Misraim : he further imposed on each king the solemn duty of writing with his own hand “a copy of this Law in a book,” “and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life.” Well may the Bishop ask :—

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 509.

“What sign is there that either David or Solomon each made a copy for himself of this Law, or that any of the best kings did so—even Joash, as a youth, under the ‘direction’ of the chief priest Jehoiada? If they did, pious kings as they were, how is it to be explained that they completely neglected its precepts in so many points, as we know they did,—for instance, in sacrificing at Gibeon and other high places, and in not duly keeping the Passover? On the other hand, if they did not make a copy of the Law, why was this? Can it be believed that they knowingly omitted to do so—that is to say, that, having the Law itself, as is supposed, in their hands, with prophets and priests to remind them of their duties, they wilfully or negligently passed by so solemn, and indeed so essential, a part of their duty to themselves and to their people.”<sup>1</sup>

The supposition is not merely wild but ludicrous. Not less than seventeen kings reigned over Judah before Josiah; therefore, there should have been seventeen manuscript copies of the Law preserved in the temple, or in the Royal archives; and if the ungodly kings had disregarded the command, these were but a small minority as compared with the number of those who sought to obey the Lord all the days of their life. There must, therefore, have been at least some ten or twelve copies of the Law written out by the hands of their kings; and perhaps not even the great Alexandrian library in its palmiest days was so rich in manuscripts of any one work. But the point is, not that the copies were fewer than they should have been, but that the book which enjoined the making of these copies was so lost as to be forgotten, or unknown. Nothing can be more genuine than the expressions of grief and shame on the part of Josiah, when he hears for the first time words which had never fallen on his ears before. As he listens to them, he rends his clothes. He is,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 512.

in fact, as well he might be, utterly bewildered ; and he gives his charge to Hilkiab the priest and others, to go and inquire of the Lord on his behalf, and on that of the people, concerning the words of this book that is found,—a charge that could not possibly have been given with reference to a book of which a large number of copies had already been made by the hands of his predecessors. His mind is not troubled with any historical difficulties ; nor does he pause to reflect on the astonishing and seemingly incredible fortune which had attended a Law, or rather a series of discourses on law, uttered in the ears of some three or four millions of people,—discourses forgotten, it would seem, almost the moment after their utterance, and, to say the least, passing away without making the faintest impression either on them or on their rulers. To his amazement, he must have found, as he read the book in the presence of his subjects, that he was reading words with which, as King of Judah, he was bound, as his predecessors had been bound, to be familiar ; but even this pain was not equal to the agony with which he discovered that this book imposed upon him a gigantic work of reform, going down to the very roots of the national life. If he had any regard for the Divine Law thus made known to him, he must strike down abuses and abominations which were rampant everywhere. He must put a ban on practices which the most righteous of the kings who had reigned before him had either allowed, or by their own acts sanctioned. The task was urgent : it was also all but overwhelming. The young king braced himself to it with heroic courage. The reforms enjoined were carried out to the uttermost of his power ; but it must soon have become mournfully evident that the general establishment and the permanent maintenance of the new state of things was hopeless ; and the certainty of eventual failure seems to have weighed like lead on the zeal even of one whose heart, in the words of Huldah, was so tender as that of Josiah. The effort was made to hold

a Passover in strict accordance with the injunctions of the Deuteronomist ; but it was not followed by another, and it was left to the priestly minds of the exilic or post-exilic time to draw out the ideal picture of a sacerdotal state which is depicted in the impossible narratives of the Books of Chronicles.

As then the Book of Deuteronomy belongs to an age later by many centuries than that of Moses, it is merely absurd to claim the authority of his name for particular passages in it, as, for instance, for the promise that God would raise up a prophet for His people like to himself. This utterance thus becomes simply the expression of a conviction that God will supply them with counsel and comfort, when they needed it, by sending some prophet such as Moses, and that they will never be without a Divinely instructed teacher, if only they obey Him.<sup>1</sup> We are, in truth, dealing in this book with imaginary commands issued in an imaginary past. Like the writer in the Book of Numbers, the Deuteronomist enjoins on the Israelites the setting apart of six cities of refuge after their work of conquest shall have been accomplished ; but in a previous passage the lawgiver is represented as having himself set apart three of these cities, and so some critics have been led to suppose that there were really nine cities of refuge. In the history there is no indication that any such cities ever existed ;<sup>2</sup> and therefore we may infer that many injunctions contained in the book were rather intended to convey a lesson and a warning to his countrymen than to be regarded as commands coming with a Divine sanction. Among these are the terrible sentence to be inflicted on conquered cities (Deuteronomy xx. 10-15), and the treatment of stubborn and rebellious sons (Deuteronomy xxi. 18-21). The idolatry of the one, the obstinacy of the other, typified sins of which the Jews of Josiah's age were especially guilty ;

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 521.

and these passages might serve at least as a warning that their offences deserved judgements not less severe. The same ideal painting is seen in the narrative of the blessings and cursings pronounced from the heights of Ebal and Gerizim. This passage is, indeed, singularly confused and perplexing, and the Bishop expresses his inability to explain it without some extravagant assumption as to what the writer has omitted to state. On the whole, he thinks it most probable that the Deuteronomist departed from his original intention.

“In xi. 29, he meant the *tribes* to pronounce the blessings and curses, and made the arrangement for that purpose in xxvii. 11-13; but he then decided to place them in the mouths of the priests, and make the people say ‘Amen’; and this he actually did with the curses. But instead of limiting himself in this way with respect to the blessings, he has insensibly been carried away by his subject, and poured out his full heart in the glowing and vehement words of chapter xxviii. This chapter he has now left without any introduction or explanation, without any intimation of its connexion with the matter before or after.”<sup>1</sup>

Much speculation has been bestowed on the question of the physical possibility of such blessings and curses being, in such a position, so uttered as to be heard by the people and duly responded to; but it is obviously a superfluous task so to treat details in the picture of an ideal scene.

The blessing of the tribes (Deuteronomy xxxiii.) and the song of Moses (Deuteronomy xxxii.) are full, in like manner, of statements pointing to the late age of the writer and exhibiting marked points of resemblance and agreement with the expressions and the style of Jeremiah. There is no separate blessing for Simeon, because at the time when the book was written the tribe of Simeon had long since been

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 547.

absorbed in that of Judah ;<sup>1</sup> and Levi receives a eulogy singularly at variance with the censure passed upon him in the judgement of Jacob. Giving up the Mosaic authorship of this song, Knobel holds that it was composed during the lifetime of Saul and David ; but there is nothing in the position of the Levites in that age to account for the language here addressed to them.

“ They are nowhere even mentioned in that history, and, indeed, if we were only to form a judgement from the more authentic records of that age, there is no trace even of the existence of the *tribe* as one set apart for religious duties. Even when David had been ten years on the throne, we find that the Levites were *not* employed at the removal of the ark—at least not on the first attempt to remove it, as appears on the testimony of the chronicler himself (1 Chronicles xv. 2, 12, 13).”<sup>2</sup>

But the song seems to be the work of a priest, and Jeremiah was a priest, the son probably of the chief priest Hilkiyah ; and he would naturally hold the Levites, if known as earnest and devout men, in high estimation,

“ as the guardians of the true faith amidst an idolatrous and gainsaying generation. Well might the writer—a priest himself—utter for his own brethren the prayer, ‘ Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim—Thy truth and Thy light—be ever with Thy holy one, *whom Thou didst prove at Massah* (temptation), *whom Thou didst justify at the waters of Meribah* (strife)’ ; *i.e.* whom Thou dost expose now, as Thou didst then, to the rebellious, trying tempers, the angry strife and turbulence, of an unthankful, unbelieving people.”

The composition of the Book of Deuteronomy is thus brought down to a late age, and is restricted within narrow

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 578 ; see also above, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 585.



limits of time. If it was not written in the reign of Josiah himself, it must have been written in that of his father or grandfather. But in that case it must have been composed by some one who hid the book away in the Temple a quarter of a century perhaps before it was discovered there, and who left the fruit of so much labour to the chances of the future.

“He must also have *died* without betraying his secret ; . . . nay without even making any provision against the possibility of the book itself being neglected, destroyed, or lost, while it lay unknown and unheeded in the Temple during the latter part of Manasseh’s idolatrous reign.”<sup>1</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to say that if the book had been found and brought to Manasseh, its immediate destruction would have followed as certainly as that of the roll which was cut to pieces and burnt by Jehoiakim (Jeremiah xxxvii.). But if we allow that it may have been written in the life-time of Manasseh by some one who outlived that king, it then seems even more

“difficult to account for the long and total silence with respect to the existence of this book which was maintained during *seventeen* years of Josiah’s reign, when the king’s docile piety and youth would have encouraged the production of such a book, if it really existed, and there was such imperative necessity for that reformation to be begun as soon as possible, with a view to which the book itself was written.”<sup>2</sup>

These considerations seem to prove that the book was in process of composition during these seventeen years. The youth of the king, his docility, and his deep religious earnestness, gave special encouragement for any attempts to bring about the indispensable reforms. It may not indeed have been begun for some time after the death of Amon; and

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part III. p. 616.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 617.

although two or three years would more than suffice for the actual work of composition, it was subjected, we may be sure, to repeated revisions ; and the corrections thus made, as fresh ideas occurred from time to time to the writer, may in some measure explain the frequent repetitions by which it is characterised. But who then was the writer ? The question is one of subordinate importance, so long as the time of its composition is precisely ascertained. That one who, in the words of Knobel,

“took upon himself to make so free with the Law Book”

must have been an eminent man there can be no doubt ; and

“he can hardly have disappeared so completely from the stage of Jewish history, without leaving behind any other trace of his existence and activity than the Book of Deuteronomy.”

But we know that Jeremiah lived in this age, and that he began to prophesy about four or five years before the book was found in the Temple ; and it is impossible for us to shut our eyes to the many and striking points of likeness and even of identity between the words, phrases, style, and tone of thought in the writings of the prophet and those of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The time of the composition of the book is thus brought into very close proximity with that of its discovery ; and the question thus closed cannot be opened again on the plea that evidence may yet be produced which points in another direction. Such evidence, however, is furnished, it is said,

“by the fact that the Samaritans, while rejecting all the other canonical books of the Jews, yet received the Pentateuch *complete*, though, it is true, with very many and important variations from the Hebrew copies.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 3.

The inference drawn is that the Pentateuch in its entirety must have existed long before the separation of the two kingdoms, as otherwise the Samaritans would never have acquired possession of it; and therefore that the Book of Deuteronomy must have been written probably some ages before the time of Samuel and Saul. The assumption is really both arbitrary and groundless; but, even if it were granted, it would still leave a gap of some centuries before we can reach the age of Moses. It is further argued that the antagonism of the Jews and Samaritans is itself proof that the acknowledgement of the Pentateuch as an authoritative code by the latter must be a fact belonging to a time preceding the revolt under Jeroboam.

These arguments, however, are of no force. The Samaritans, or inhabitants of the central district of Palestine, were a mixed population, settlers introduced by the Assyrian king (2 Kings xvii. 24) being mingled with such Israelites as had not been carried into captivity. This mixed population, we are told, did not "fear Jehovah," and a captive priest sent to them by the Assyrian king taught them how to fear Him; but nothing is said about his teaching them to keep the Law. To this Law, as it was understood in his day, Hezekiah, according to that chronicler, did what he could to bring them into subjection. But his invitation to the Passover which he sent throughout the country from Beersheba to Dan was, within the borders of the old Israelitish kingdom, rejected for the most part with contemptuous mockery, although it was accepted by some belonging to the tribes of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulon. But if this story, coming as it does from the chronicler, is in a high degree suspicious, and seems to be altogether discredited by the fact that no mention is made of these efforts of Hezekiah in the other historical books, still there can be little doubt as to the reality of the reform attempted by Josiah. This king, according to the more

trustworthy historian (2 Kings xxiii.), assailed the sanctuary of Bethel itself, breaking down and burning the high place, and treating after the same fashion the other high places of the Samaritan cities made by the Kings of Israel.

Thus, then, up to this time there is no sign of the Law of Jehovah being practised or even known in Samaria, or of any feeling of mutual animosity between Jews and Samaritans.<sup>1</sup> The first symptoms of such a feeling were provoked about two centuries later, when the Jews refused the offer of the Samaritans to take part in the work of rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem. The strictness with which the Law was now enforced in the latter city prompted missionary efforts to enforce it also on the Samaritans; and perhaps with the sanction of Sanballat himself the missionary priests were enabled to introduce among them the Pentateuch, the only part of the Bible recognised by them to this day. That the Samaritan text was not constituted till after, and perhaps long after, the return of the Jews from the Captivity, seems to be proved by the fact that their text contains only the Pentateuch.<sup>2</sup> In other words, it was received at a time when the Book of Joshua had been already separated from the five Books of the Law, and this separation is supposed to have been first made in the time of Ezra. But, further, the Samaritan text, where it differs from the Hebrew, resembles in many instances the Septuagint version, the inference being that the Samaritans obtained their copies from the Alexandrian Jews of Egypt, and that their text was not composed until nearly three centuries had passed away from the time of Ezra.

If nothing more had been needed than to show that the

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The subject is further examined by the Bishop, in the *Pentateuch*, Part VI. chap. xxv. But his position is so completely established that it is unnecessary to enter on the analysis of additional evidence, which can only add strength to conclusions already incontrovertible.

Pentateuch has in no part the characteristics of genuine contemporary narrative, that the story is full of contradictions and impossibilities, that it contains an elaborate civil and ecclesiastical legislation which does not belong to the age to which it is ascribed, and which was never carried out, the Bishop's work would at this point have been practically at an end. All this he had done with a completeness which left scarcely a loophole for objections, and certainly none for objections of any cogency. But it was necessary, further, to show that the Pentateuch was in every part a composite work.

Even in the Book of Deuteronomy, which, as a whole, was beyond doubt the production of one master-mind, insertions of other hands are plainly discernible. But in the Book of Genesis there is no such harmony of plan or of style. It is a patchwork of materials contributed by different writers in different ages; and it became necessary, therefore, to prove this in refutation of theories and notions which regarded it as from beginning to end the composition of Moses. That the two chief contributors are the Elohist and the Jehovist, the former characterised by the constant use of the name of Elohim for God, the other by the intermixture with it of the name Jehovah, we have already seen. The narratives of these two writers seldom harmonize, and often directly contradict each other. The variations between the Elohist and the Jehovistic accounts of the Creation have been already noticed; and, except for the strange traditional notions which blind men's eyes to facts, it would be scarcely necessary to say anything about the conflicting details in the two stories of the Noachian Deluge. In the Elohist tale Noah is ordered to take two of every living thing; in the Jehovistic every clean beast and every clean fowl is to be taken by sevens. On this contradiction it is enough to cite the words of perhaps the most learned of Jewish critics of the present century.

“All the attempts,” says Dr. Kalisch, “at arguing away this discrepancy have been utterly unsuccessful. The difficulty is so obvious that the most desperate efforts have been made. Some regard the second and third verses as the later addition of a pious Israelite, while Rabbinical writers maintain that six pairs were taken by Noah, but one pair came to him spontaneously. Is it necessary to refute such opinions? We appeal to every unbiased understanding. The Bible cannot be abused to defy common sense, to foster sophistry, or pervert reasoning, to cloud the intellect, or to poison the heart with the rank weeds of insincerity.”<sup>1</sup>

Such contradictions as these are glaring; but the task of analysing a composite document, in which, although two writers may have had the chief part in it, many fragments from other sources have been imbedded, is both intricate and subtle; and those who would appreciate the force of the Bishop's method, and the general correctness of his conclusions, must work their way patiently and carefully through his chapters. But of the method it must be noted that it starts with no assumption of the existence of characteristic differences of style, followed by the assigning to one writer those passages in which the name of Elohim occurs predominantly, and those marked by the name Jehovah to the other. In fact, the peculiarity has been deduced from inspection of the two sets of passages already separated; and these passages have been discriminated, and assigned to their respective authors by a rigorous process of deduction from a great variety of similar peculiarities, detected upon a minute examination and careful comparison of each passage.<sup>2</sup> But although the handiwork of two writers can thus be traced, there is no valid reason for supposing that the Jehovistic narrative ever formed an independent connected

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 49.

whole. The diligence of Hupfeld has recovered to the Jehovist, by means of the internal evidence, many passages which former critics had assigned to the Elohist ; but all these taken together cannot be regarded as anything more than fragments. They are not parts of a compact whole. The Jehovistic passages about the Flood furnish no complete narrative. They say nothing about the original order to make the ark, about the collection of food, about the entry of the animals into the ark, or their exit from it ; and if there are inconsistencies between this account and that of the Elohist, there is nothing surprising in this. They

“ might be looked for under the most favourable circumstances, if the interpolator had had the prime narrative before him in clear Roman type, in a printed volume. How much more, it may be said, when we take into account the difficulty of studying that narrative out of a long roll, consisting of many sheets, stitched together, of papyrus and parchment manuscript.”<sup>1</sup>

Placing thus before the reader the whole of the Elohist narrative in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, followed by the Jehovistic insertions in these chapters, the Bishop finds himself compelled to compare both with the great book of facts spread before us in the phenomena of the sensible world. The legion of subterfuges and fictions by which the traditionalism of the last generation was kept up are now for the most part dead. We may remember with amusement rather than indignation the pleading that the strata of the earth were simulations of age, purposely designed to mislead those who might refuse to accept the chronology of Archbishop Ussher ; that fossils instead of having been animated structures had been formed under planetary influences ; and that the mammoth which towards the end of the last century was

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 56.

found in the ice of the polar regions, in such preservation that dogs and bears fed upon its flesh, had never been a living creature, but had been created under the ice, and there preserved instead of being transmuted into stone, and that all organisms found in the depth of the earth are models created in the first day to typify the living plants and animals to be produced in the subsequent days of the creative week.<sup>1</sup>

It is neither so profane nor so absurd to assert that the Bible was intended by its writers to teach science. The books of the Pentateuch assuredly claim to do so, and do teach it to the full extent of the knowledge and the ability of the writers. The argument that the Bible is exclusively a religious book is characterised by Dr. Kalisch as a bold fallacy.

“With the same justice it might,” he says, “be affirmed that the Bible, in describing the rivers of Paradise, does not speak of geography at all, or in inserting the grand list and genealogy of nations (Genesis x.) is far from touching the science of ethnography. Taken in this manner nothing would be easier, but nothing more arbitrary, than Biblical interpretation. It is simply untrue that the Bible avoids these questions. It has, in fact, treated the history of Creation in a most magnificent and comprehensive manner; it has in these portions, as well as in the moral precepts of the theological doctrines, evidently not withheld any information which it was in its power to impart.”<sup>2</sup>

We have here then such chronology, such archæology, such geography, such ethnology, such history, as the writers had acquired, or thought that they had acquired. What they had, or thought that they had, they imparted; and it would be astounding indeed if their views and conclusions harmonized with the knowledge gained during the millenniums which have since passed away. It is not as though we had to reconcile with this knowledge one statement only or two in

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 87.



these ancient records. The process must be gone through with all, and when we fancy that we have harmonized one, we find that we have only made the contradiction more glaring in another. The very plea that the Hebrew Scriptures were not intended to teach science shows, if it be worth anything, that the notions of Jews stood on the same level with those of Greeks or Romans. The distinction of the waters above from those below the firmament, the governing of day and night by the sun and moon, the stars being thrown in without any special design at all, are fancies as truthful and instructive as the speculations of Ionic and other philosophers that the stars were lamps lit every night, and put out again in the morning, and that the sun was a disk of heated metal somewhat bigger probably than the Peloponnesos. Of the real magnitude of the sun, of the real distances of the fixed stars, neither Jew nor Greek had the faintest conception. It would therefore be a miserable waste of time to examine any of their statements, were it not that these statements are made still to serve as foundations for a mighty mass of superstitions. We read the seemingly simple declaration, "To every animal of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, . . . I have given every green herb for meat." But we forget to ask how the beasts and birds of prey were on their creation to be supported, their teeth, stomachs, and their whole bodily conformation being quite unsuited to the eating of herbs; nor do we heed the geological record which shows us that ravenous creatures preyed upon their fellow-creatures and lived upon flesh in all ages of the world's past history just as they do now.<sup>1</sup>

But if in Genesis we have a history, or rather two accounts, of the Creation, it is not the only history of this mighty work which has come down to us from ancient days. Egypt, India, Persia, Greece, had each its story of Creation, and most of them also of a deluge; and we commit ourselves not only to a

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 108.

perilous but to a ludicrous position, if we assert that they were all borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. It is manifest that they were not so; and of intercourse between Jews and Canaanites and some of these countries there is not a shadow of evidence. The Bishop cites from Von Bohlen the Zend representation of Creation;<sup>1</sup> and it is quite open to any one to say that the Hebrew story is grander and more impressive. Longinus considered as sublime the expression, "Let there be light, and there was light;" but Von Bohlen remarks that the Vedic phrase, "He thought, I will create worlds, and they are there," is not less sublime. It is, in fact, a phrase re-echoed in the words of the Hebrew psalmist, "He spake the word, and they were made." If in some few points the Hebrew cosmogony seems to correspond with the geological record, the same remark applies with greater force to some parts of the *Theogony* which bears the name of Hesiod.

If, however, the geographical, ethnological, or other statements in Genesis, or any other of the Old Testament Scriptures, become absurd and contemptible when they are brought forward as the highest scientific standards, they are neither contemptible nor absurd when viewed in reference to the knowledge of the writers. We shall not be greatly tempted to laugh at the notion that the moon was probably of the size of a large plate or salver, when we remark that it was an hypothesis put forward to account for phenomena, and that these hypotheses pointed to and insured the true growth of mind, and led to the accumulated knowledge which is our inheritance.

According to Kosmas Indicopleustes, the earth was an oblong, with a mountain inhabited by gods in the north, the sea flowing round it on all four sides, with the Paradise in India beyond the sea, toward the east. Under the intervening sea, which was caused by the Flood, and crossed by Noah, the

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 113.

Euphrates and Tigris continue their course, and appear again in the western world, while Gihon, the Ganges, becomes the Nile in Egypt. In its essential features the geography of the second chapter of Genesis is the geography of Kosmas.

Nor is the zoology less hopelessly out of joint with facts now known to all. In the Jehovistic narrative all living creatures without exception are brought before Adam to be named by him.

“But how could the white bear of the frozen zone, and the humming-bird of the tropics, have met in one spot? or, being assembled, how could they have been dispersed to their present abodes?”<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop may well speak of the handling of such a question as this as both a painful and ludicrous task; but he felt that he had no alternative when the “harmony” of Scripture with science was supposed to be established by the surmise that those parts of the earth which are “far from the boundaries of man’s first residence,” have become the scenes of creative power at epochs subsequent to the six days’ work, in the teeth of the assertion that on the sixth day the heavens and earth were *finished* and all their host; and that the animals brought to Adam to be named must have been those only in the neighbourhood of Paradise, in the teeth of another assertion that he gave names to *all* the cattle and to the fowl of the heaven, and to *every* animal of the field. The same necessity compelled the Bishop to deal with the question of the origin of species. All recent geological researches establish, for instance, the fact that the sloths, armadillos, and large ant-eaters, have, in Professor Owen’s words, “ever been, as they are now, peculiar to America,” as likewise “the two species of orang are confined to Borneo and Sumatra,” and “the two species of chimpanzee to an inter-tropical tract of the western part of Africa.”

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 131.

But, if this be so, what grounds have we for holding that all types of the great human family are resolvable into one only? For such a notion there is absolutely no warrant, apart from an old Hebrew tale which is shivered into fragments as we handle it. To adduce in support of it the statement of St. Paul, that God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the earth, is to bring in a wholly irrelevant consideration. No one disputes this truth; but it would be not less true to say, that God has also made of one blood all the brute beasts of the world, and that we owe duties to them. No one denies the humanity of the Bushman, the Andaman islander, and the Australian savage, and assuredly they have a right not less than that of Englishmen or Germans to be treated as men; but the assertion of this fact is not the assertion that they all descend from Adam, or rather, it should be said, from Noah.

The superstitions which traditionalism has raised on the story of the third chapter of Genesis are not less ludicrous and painful, but immeasurably more repulsive, than any others. Without attempting to determine the meaning of the very peculiar phraseology of this chapter, the influences under which it must have been written, and the lessons which it is intended to enforce, the readers of the narrative jump to the conclusion that it speaks of some ophidian creature, or of the devil as disguised under its form. The Bishop cites at some length the remarks of the highly orthodox critic Delitzch on the subject. Few criticisms could be more contemptible. Delitzch says that in the Elohist story the brute animals and other creatures are made before man, while man in the Jehovistic tale is made before the animals. To reconcile or get rid of these contradictions he actually commits himself to the following astounding assumptions: (1) "the Creation was a struggle between the Divine Creator and the might of evil"; (2) the Evil one prevailed so far as to "mislead" the

animals created in the fifth day (i. 21), and in the sixth before the creation of man (i. 25); (3) hence all these animals were to be swept away with the vegetation created on the third day (i. 12); (4) a new creation of plants and beasts and birds took place on the sixth day after the creation of man; (5) the evil spirit tried to corrupt this last creation also, and therefore "made use of a beast" in order to deceive the woman.

On such principles of interpretation the Hebrew Scriptures, or any other writings, may be easily made to yield whatever results we please; and there is no answering for the conclusions into which the speculators may be drawn. Delitzsch acknowledges that the descriptions given of the Deity are anthropomorphic; that he walks in the shade in the cool of the day, and puts together aprons from the skins of beasts; and that this anthropomorphic intercourse, which is itself the consequence of the Fall, "culminates in the Incarnation." Having so stated, he plunges into a weedy sea. He has already treated brute animals as moral beings: he now goes on to say that sin may deform the body of a brute beast even though it has been only the instrument of a spirit.<sup>1</sup>

"The serpent," he goes on to say, "was before made otherwise; now . . . it is, as it were, the embodiment of the diabolical sin and the Divine curse."

But there is no "as it were" in the matter. It either is this embodiment, or it is not. He has only just before said that the serpents brought into existence before the creation of man were all swept away, and another race was formed after man came upon the scene, so that with these, at all events, there was a second failure. But there is absolutely nothing more than impudent assertion in the statement that the serpent was not made as it is now. There is no deformity whatever

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 140.

in the serpent, and its shape is as wonderful and beautiful an instance of adaptation of means to ends as is to be found in any created organism. But we may multiply words to any extent on the habits or the shape of serpents, and we shall be as far away as ever from catching even a glimmer of meaning from the narrative of Eve's temptation. If the tale is not genuine history, it may be symbolical; and if ever there have been such things as symbolical narratives, this surely is likely, or rather certain, to be one of them. We are well enough aware that there has been, and that there is still, tree and serpent worship in the world; and they who have bestowed any thought upon the subject, are also well aware that the tree so worshipped is a stem or stock—in other words, it is a symbol or sign; that the tree is the serpent and the serpent is the tree in different aspects; that the garden is not only a geographical paradise, but the garden of the human body, the field in which the enemy sows tares; and that the tree is the Asherah or grove for which the Jewish women wove hangings in later generations. But if these are symbols, then the whole language of this narrative is symbolical. The transgression cannot be committed by the man or the woman alone, and it is the serpent which leads to the Asherah, the Phallos, or the Linga. It follows that the biting of the heel and the bruising of the head are also symbolical phrases, which like the nudity of the serpent are somewhat disguised, perhaps not without purpose, in the Septuagint, the Latin, and the English versions; and further that the death which is the consequence of the transgression is not the physical change which we denote by that word. In this instance Mr. Maurice's method of dealing with the Old Testament led him right. He could not bring himself to believe, he could not allow any others to believe, that when Adam received the warning of immediate death, the sentence was not to be executed for many centuries. The writer was not therefore speaking of that which is called the

death of the body ; he was speaking of the only real death, the death which is the wages of sin, of disobedience and self-will.<sup>1</sup>

With this story of the temptation the Bishop had to deal to show that, whatever it might be, it was not an historical narrative. It might have been a happy thing for the progress of English religious thought if he had been led to apply his perfectly straightforward and incisive critical method to the symbolism as well as to the history of this passage. But the subject is one from which we may be glad to escape, although sooner or later a thorough examination of it cannot be avoided. Dr. Donaldson has thrown over it the veil of what is supposed to be a learned language ; but they who would have the origin and meaning of the tale fully drawn out will find the task admirably done in the pages of his *Jashar*.<sup>2</sup> Seen in this light the narrative becomes a subject of supreme interest. It is found to be the expression of a theological philosophy which has slowly taken a very definite shape. This philosophy has its own difficulties ; and the difficulties of the subject itself may be insurmountable. We have, however, nothing which is either ridiculous or contemptible. For utterances which may excite a stronger feeling than that of mere disapproval we have to turn to the comments of modern critics. Thus Delitzch tells us that

“ Man in consequence of sin needs a covering to hide his nakedness. He himself has made the attempt to cover his nakedness by his own contrivance : however, he has not succeeded ; before God he cannot present himself with his vileness. Only God prepares for him a covering which may serve for man to appear in before God, and that from the skins of slain animals, and therefore at the cost of innocent

<sup>1</sup> See p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> I may also refer the reader to my *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, Book II. chap. ii. section 12.

life, at the expense of the shedding of innocent blood. This blood was an image of the blood of Christ, this clothing an image of the clothing of righteousness in Christ."

Talk such as this may be meant to be orthodox ; but it is (whatever the motive of the writer may be, and of this we do not judge) rank blasphemy, and they who love the truth may be grateful to those who provide the antidote. It is not here only that the Bishop cites the words of Dr. Thomas Burnet, long Master of the Charterhouse. Of the fig-leaf aprons Dr. Burnet says :—

"Here we have the first step in the act of sewing, but whence had they a needle, whence a thread on the first day of their creation ? These questions may seem to be too free ; but the matter itself demands that we act freely when we are seeking the naked truth. When, however, they had made to themselves girdles, God gave them, besides, coats made, forsooth, out of the skins of beasts. But here again we run into difficulties. To soften the matter let us substitute in the place of God an angel. An angel, then, slew and skinned the animals, or stripped the skin from innocent or living animals. But this is the business of a slaughterer or butcher, not an angel. Besides, through this slaughter whole races of animals would have perished, for it is not believed that more than two of each kind were created at first ; and one without the other would have had no offspring." <sup>1</sup>

But in truth it is not a stray sentence here and there in the book of Genesis which becomes in the hands of modern commentators a fountain of perennial nonsense. The old Hebrew book speaks throughout of men who start with living for something like a millennium ; but the span of human life has grown, and so has the standard of human size and weight. It is absurd to waste time on attempts to explain or to reconcile. The wall is plastered up in one part, only to reveal

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 151.



many more and worse rents in another. The duration assigned for human lives renders utterly uncertain the whole history, down at least to the establishment of the Jews in Canaan, even if all other difficulties could be removed. In fact, however, the Jewish stories are found for the most part everywhere else, and it is amusing to find Virgil fancying that the process of diminution in the human height and bulk is to go on, and that the Pharsalian ploughman centuries hence would be astonished at the relics of men who had fallen in the ranks of Cassius. The Great Pyramid may look like a work of giants ; but the entrance admits a man with difficulty, and in the centre is, or was, a sarcophagus about six feet long.

Of the Noachian flood it is useless to say anything except in reference to the strange temper which delights to waste time by attempts to reconcile plain contradictions and account for sheer impossibilities. The Bishop has examined these attempts<sup>1</sup> with his usual patience, and shows that on any hypothesis the whole story falls to the ground. No command is given for the preservation of the fish ; but the fresh-water fish must have died as soon as the salt water of the sea broke in, and the sea fish must have likewise perished as soon as from the preponderance of the rain water the waters of the sea began to lose their saltness. The same ignorance of facts is shown by the incident of the olive-leaf which is brought, plucked apparently fresh and green, from a tree which had been immersed eight or nine months, under water many thousands of feet in depth, if it was found by the dove at the greatest height ever reached by a myrtle plant. We may be forgiven if we turn with a feeling of loathing from the lucubrations of Dean Wilkins, who coolly calculates the animal food needed by the beasts of prey at 1825 sheep, which are accordingly to be stowed in the ark along with the pair or

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. chap. xvii.

pairs to be taken in for the preservation of their kind. Others in our own day, who have no difficulty in multiplying marvels or natural impossibilities, have seen no reason why the beasts of prey should not have been preserved in the ark in a state of torpor ; but neither, if this be so, is there any reason why all other living things should not have been preserved in the same condition, and thus all trouble in gathering food have been spared to Noah and his children. If we turn to the chronology, we find that there are forty days of rain at the beginning, and forty days during which the ark rests after grounding ; and this number of forty meets us everywhere—in the fast of Moses, in the searchings of the spies under Joshua and Caleb, in the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, in the reigns of David and Solomon. The figures are not real in any instance, and it is but wasted toil to prop up a history which has no foundations. This is the fate of all attempts to show that the Deluge was partial, not universal.

“ It is,” the Bishop says, “ just as inconceivable that the worms and snails and grasshoppers should have crawled into the ark from different parts of some large basin in Western Asia as from different parts of the world. One small brook alone would have been a barrier to their further progress.”<sup>1</sup>

But the language of the story points unmistakably to a universal flood, in the destruction of all flesh and every living thing, in the covering of all the high hills under the whole heaven. Modern traditionalists go on to “ reconcile ” laws of gravitation or any others with this old tale, and it is as easy for them to suppose that a universal or partial deluge might pass away leaving no signs of its occurrence behind it as to assert that the appearances of stratification in the earth are

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 202.

mere snares placed by God Himself to deceive geologists. But let the Deluge be reduced within the smallest limits, let the species taken in be limited to twenty of clean animals and sixty of unclean, and what is the result ?

“ Let any person picture to himself what would be the condition of a menagerie, consisting of four hundred animals, confined in a narrow space under these circumstances for more than twelve months ! We must first suppose, of course, that Noah and his wife and children were occupied every day, and all day long, incessantly, in taking to these four hundred creatures, two or three times a day, their necessary supplies of dry food and water, bringing fresh litter and cleansing away the old. But shut up together closely in this way, with scarcely any light and air, is it not plain that in a very short time every part of the ship must have been full of filth and corruptive matter, fever, and pestilence ? But the ship may have been kept clean, and the air pure, and the animals healthy, though shut up without light and air, by a miracle ! Yes, certainly, by multiplying miracles *ad infinitum*, of which the Bible gives not the slightest intimation—which, rather, the whole tenor of the story as plainly as possible excludes—if this is thought to be a *reverent* mode of dealing with Scripture, or at all more reverent than a course of criticism of the kind which I am now pursuing, while thus endeavouring to set the plain facts of the case in a clear strong light before the eyes of the reader.”<sup>1</sup>

The modern traditionalist deserves no indulgence. For the old Hebrew writer it should in all justice be remembered that he was innocent of all conscious offence against truths or facts of science ; that he lived in a world of which he knew nothing ; and that he fancied it to be a flat surface of no very great extent, round, square, or oblong. But the story of the Flood, like that of the Creation, is found in many lands, in

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 207.

some points resembling, in others wholly unlike, the Noachian narrative. The dove and raven incident is found in the legends of the Mexicans and the islanders of Cuba; and Delitzch seizes on this circumstance as showing that these legends are all most probably derived from one primæval historical fact. The inference, the Bishop adds,

“would be justified, if the other chief details of the story were found repeated in the legends; otherwise it might be just as fairly argued that the primæval fact involved also the changing stones into men, which appears so prominent in these South American legends as well as in that of the Greeks.”<sup>1</sup>

But, leaving the subject of the Flood and all that relates to it, leaving also the lists of tribes and nations which give the ancient notions of ethnology, we come to a point of greater importance in the Hebrew language. The Pentateuch is written throughout in pure Hebrew. When then was it written? and could it possibly have been written in this dialect before, at, or soon after the time of the Exodus? What, in short, was the Hebrew language? It was not allied to the Egyptian, for Joseph's brethren when they stood before the supposed Egyptian ruler, address him through an interpreter; but

“we find Abraham conversing freely with the Canaanite King of Sodom, and with Melchizedek, the Jebusite King of Salem.”<sup>2</sup>

So Rahab, in Jericho, is represented as talking freely with the Hebrew spies, and the Hivites of Gibeon with Joshua. Could this language, then, have been the speech of men who had been for many generations exiles in Egypt? It certainly had not been the language of Abraham when he came out from Aram; nor was it the language of Laban, who gives an

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 247.

Aramaic name to the stone set up by himself and Jacob, while Jacob gives to the same stone a Hebrew name of like signification. But this shows that in Abraham's new home Hebrew had become the mother tongue of his children and descendants that Jacob had retained it during his sojourn with Laban, and used it again on his return to Canaan. But here difficulties come thick and fast. His wives, and all the servants, male and female, which he brought with him, must all have been Aramæans, and therefore must have spoken the Syrian or Aramæan tongue; and the young children, the eldest not then above twelve, must have spoken Aramaic also. Thirty years later they are settled in Goshen. In this short time, then, they must have changed their language altogether, and the Hebrew tongue must have taken upon them a hold so marvellous that, going down into Egypt, and living there under the circumstances described in the Book of Exodus, they maintained this dialect for two centuries at least in perfect purity; inasmuch as the books which are said to have been written before, or soon after, this time, exhibit no intermixture of any foreign element. Indeed, if we allow that the seventy souls who went down with Jacob into Egypt spoke Hebrew, we can scarcely suppose that they spoke pure Hebrew. Yet the story of the Exodus, which is asserted to be a contemporary narrative, is written in the purest Hebrew; and this purity has been maintained through a long period of exile, in which they would be peculiarly exposed to the influence of Egyptian speech, and afterwards through a long period of servitude.

"It may, perhaps," the Bishop remarks, "be alleged that the language of the Pentateuch is sufficiently explained, if Moses spoke and wrote Hebrew perfectly. Yet, how should Moses—who for the first forty years of his life was brought up in Pharaoh's house, in all the learning of the Egyptians—who may of course have spoken Hebrew as well as Egyp-

tian, but could only have learnt it from the speech of his fellow-countrymen when they had already been living in Egypt under the circumstances above described for 130 years to the day of his birth—and who spent the next forty years of his life in the deserts of Midian—have maintained all along the perfect Hebrew tongue, pure and simple, without the slightest adulteration from any foreign influences, neither vocabulary nor syntax being in the least degree modified ?”<sup>1</sup>

That they should have maintained a speech learnt in Canaan only during thirty (*Pentateuch* thirty-two) years,

“amidst the joys of their prosperous and the oppressions of their miserable days in Egypt, without adopting a single idiom or a single term, even the name of a common article of food or dress, tool, implement, &c., from the Egyptians,”

must seem fairly incredible. But the special miracles invoked by the defenders of the Noachian flood story may be introduced here also. Nothing is said or hinted about any such miracle ; but, if it was wrought, for what end, the Bishop asks, was it wrought ?

“To maintain in its purity among the Hebrews the language, not of the primitive home of the Hebrew race, but of the idolatrous tribes of Canaan,”<sup>2</sup>

whom it is said they were solemnly commissioned to extirpate. The Bishop notes this fact as a strong confirmation—many no doubt will regard it as most cogent proof—of the conclusion that the *Pentateuch* was written

“not at a time when the tribes were just fresh from their long Egyptian sojourn, but at a much later period of their national history, when the language of Canaan had become after several generations the common tongue of the invading Hebrew, as well as of the heathen tribes whom they deprived

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 262.

of their possessions in Canaan, and whom they were unwilling to acknowledge as brethren, although it is plain the language of the Canaanites belongs to the same group as that spoken by the collateral branch of the Hebrew family in the 'city of Nahor.'"

Philological facts, like most others, are stubborn things. The evidence of artificial chronology is not less conclusive. The Book of Genesis professes to give the life-time of the so-called Patriarchs. According to the details thus furnished,

"Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, &c., in fact *all* of Abraham's progenitors, were living during many years of Abraham's life, and Shem, Saleh, and Eber outlived him. Shem, Arphaxad, Saleh, Eber, Serug, Terah, were living at the birth of Isaac; and Shem and Eber lived, the one during fifty, the other during nearly eighty, years of the life of Jacob. Yet we do not find the slightest intimation that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob paid any kind of reverence or attention to any of their ancestors, more especially to their great ancestor Shem, who had gone through that wonderful event of the Deluge (except indeed on the strange supposition that Melchizedek was Shem), or that Abraham ever paid a visit to Noah, who, however, is supposed by some (without the slightest warrant from Scripture) to have colonised the extreme East, China, &c., and so to have gone out of his reach."<sup>1</sup>

More than this, while the Patriarchs of the Deluge still live, the kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt have risen to be large, powerful, and populous. In fact, this chronology was set down (we can scarcely say that it was put together) simply by way of magnifying the ancestors of the Hebrews. It shows no method and no skill, and thus stands out in marked contrast with the very skilfully framed chronology of the early Roman kings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, *Credibility of Early Roman History*, vol. i. p. 528.

On the supposition that we have in the Pentateuch a really contemporaneous history, the treatment of these five books in the later Hebrew literature becomes astonishing indeed. The primæval history of the Book of Genesis, on which according to modern traditionalism the whole of the so-called "scheme" of Christianity is made to depend, seems to have passed clean away from the memory of the Hebrews. Of the first man and of his fall, of the garden, of the forbidden fruit, of the expulsion from Paradise, and of the Deluge, we never hear again.

"One single certain trace of the story of Adam's fall is," in Langkerke's words, "entirely wanting in the Hebrew canon. Adam, Eve, the serpent, the woman's seduction of her husband, are all images, to which the remaining words of the Israelites never again recur."

"At all events," the Bishop adds, "there is not the slightest indication that in the teaching of the Hebrew prophets the account of the Fall was quoted and dwelt upon. . . . And, as to Noah, his name is never once mentioned, nor is any reference made to the Deluge by any one of the psalmists and prophets, except in the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, and in Ezekiel, by writers undoubtedly living after the Captivity."<sup>1</sup>

It is not here only that we have this same phenomenon of a general belief or dogma resting on no foundation. The Pentateuch is supposed to have been the written Bible of the Jews from the time of the invasion of Canaan, familiarly known to the people, and beyond all things precious to their teachers and rulers; and we have seen that the former were wholly unacquainted with it, and that the discovery of the Book of the Law filled Josiah with humiliation and shame. So we have grown up with the idea that the poems to which we give

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 286.



the name of Homer existed in their present form from pre-historic ages, and that our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were, in short, the Bible of the Greeks. According to Colonel Mure, they were the acknowledged standard or digest of early national history, geography, and mythology. In the judgement of Baron Bunsen they formed "the canon regulating the Hellenic mental development in all things spiritual, in faith and reason, worship and religion, civil and domestic life, poetry, art, science." The claim advanced for Homer here is the same precisely with the claim urged for the Pentateuch; and for it there is no more warrant in the one case than in the other. Writers before the age of Perikles refer to a poet whom they call Homer, but the poems of which they speak are not our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Of these the Greek lyric and tragic poets know nothing. The versions which they give of the ancient mythical history are altogether different from those of the poems to which we give the name "Homeric." Only in the rarest instances do the Greek dramatists take their subjects from episodes included in our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; and with the pictures of personal character there given their own are quite inconsistent. This fact could not escape the notice even of Homeric traditionalists; and to account for it they have resorted to assumptions substantially identical with those of the self-styled orthodox Biblical commentators. The Greek Bible was too sacred a thing to be wantonly touched; and the Greek lyric and tragic poets refused from a mere feeling of reverence to draw their inspiration from the "acknowledged standard or digest of early national history, geography, and mythology." This is a complete contradiction and a not less complete delusion; but the method followed by those who seek to maintain it is as little creditable as that of Dr. McCaul, or of Kurtz, or of Delitzsch.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I may refer the reader who wishes to see the evidence for these conclusions to my *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, Book I. chap. ix. ed. 1878.

In neither case however is there any difficulty, if we will but look facts steadily in the face. Thucydides quotes from "Homer," but he cites passages found in poems which are not now commonly called Homeric. It could not be otherwise, as our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* assumed their present form after his time. So with the evidence before us on the composition of the Pentateuch, it is

"impossible to believe that the devout prophets, priests, and kings, and pious people all along, were thoroughly conversant with the written Law, were deep in the study of it, and practising its precepts daily, were reminded annually of its existence by the sacred ordinances, which the more religious minds among them faithfully observed, and were also summoned once in seven years to hear the whole Law read at the feast of Tabernacles."

But the fact of their ignorance is at once accounted for when we remember that the story of the Fall was written not earlier than the latter part of David's reign,

"and was known to them as only a narrative, written for the edification of the people, by some distinguished man of that age. Probably one or two copies may have been made of it, or perhaps only one, which remained in the charge of the priests, and may have been added to from time to time."<sup>1</sup>

But a great fascination leads some men to kick against the pricks. The Pentateuch came in a late age to be regarded as the work of Moses: therefore it was his work. Moses, so Mr. Kingsley would have it, was

"far the most likely man to have written them of all of whom we read in Scripture"; and "if Moses did not write the Pentateuch, who did?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 291.      <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 294. See also above, p. 450.

The authority which came to be ascribed to the so-called Mosaic books has nothing to do with this question. The book of Enoch was composed, according to Archbishop Laurence, in the latter half of the century immediately preceding our own era. But this book, even in so late an age, could

“acquire among the Jews in a very short time—within perhaps fifty, or at most a hundred and eighty years—the reputation of a veritable authentic document, really emanating from the antediluvian patriarch, and either written originally by his own hand, or at least handed down by tradition from those who lived before the Deluge.”

This is a matter really of vast importance for those who adhere to the position taken by Bishop Gray and his supporters. The judge and his assessors, with the accusing clergy at the so-called Capetown trial, all spoke in vehement indignation against the reckless criticism—or, rather, profanity—which dared to question the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, when this authorship was vouched for and guaranteed by Christ Himself. To doubt this was to impute deliberate falsehood to the eternal Son of God. The references to Moses in the New Testament settled the question of the genuineness and authenticity, as well as the canonicity, of the Pentateuch. But the Epistle of St. Jude distinctly quotes a passage from the book of Enoch as a prophecy of “Enoch the seventh from Adam”;<sup>1</sup> and St. Jude was, of course, in Bishop Gray’s belief an inspired Apostle. The book of Enoch is therefore both genuine and authentic; and being thus apostolically attested, it ought to be included in the Canon of Scripture. Unfortunately it is not; and Bishop Gray is therefore at variance with those by whom the Canon was determined.

*Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 311.

This is the conclusion on the hypothesis that the Epistle of St. Jude itself is genuine. Otherwise

“It would follow that a book (that ascribed to St. Jude) received in the Church as canonical, could be regarded also as apostolical, under a mistaken opinion as to its authorship, and therefore that the fact of other books (as the books of the Pentateuch) having been received as canonical and ascribed to a certain author (as Moses) is no guarantee of their having been really written by him.”

It is scarcely necessary to say that the Second Epistle bearing the name of St. Peter<sup>1</sup> must follow the fortunes of the Epistle of St. Jude. Both the Epistles contain a considerable amount of matter, of a most peculiar kind, which is *verbatim*, or as nearly as may be *verbatim*, the same. But the influence of the book of Enoch is not limited to these two Epistles.

“In the language attributed to our Lord Himself, in that of St. Paul, especially in his early Epistles, . . . we can distinctly trace an intimate acquaintance with it and recognise its forms of expression. But, above all, this is true of St. John in the Revelation, where, it is plain, very much of the imagery has been distinctly adopted from that of the book of Enoch.”<sup>2</sup>

Nay (and this fact is of the greatest moment),

“almost all the language of the New Testament in which the judgement of the last day is described,—the eschatology, as it is called, of the New Testament,—appears to have been directly derived from the language of the book of Enoch. The ‘everlasting chains’ in which the fallen angels are ‘kept under darkness,—the ‘everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,’—the ‘Son of man sitting on the throne of His glory,’ choosing for the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 323.

righteous their 'countless habitations,' and destroying the wicked with the word of His mouth,—the 'Book of Life' opened before the Judge,—earth, hell, and the grave 'giving up their dead,'—the joy of the righteous, the shame and confusion of the wicked, who are led off by the angels to punishment,—the 'new heaven' and the 'new earth,' old things having passed away,—the 'furnace of fire' and the lake of fire,—all these appear in the book of Enoch ; and the last, the 'lake of fire,' is manifestly a figure introduced with distinct reference to the Dead Sea ; and accordingly, in the same connexion, we find the angels which kept not their first estate coupled with 'Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them.' Nay, those awful words spoken of Judas, 'It were good for that man if he had never been born,' find their counterpart also in the language of this book."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part IV. p. 326.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PENTATEUCH : ITS GROWTH.

So far as the work of proving the composite and non-historical character of the early Hebrew records is concerned, the Bishop's task had been substantially brought to an end. But other points remained which a truth-loving critic could not allow himself to neglect. If several writers have had a hand in shaping the Book of Genesis, the signs of the Deuteronomist are also stamped on the Book of Joshua ; and therefore the Deuteronomist must have lived after the days of Moses.<sup>1</sup> Words and expressions of a most marked and striking kind occur in the Book of Joshua and in Deuteronomy, and nowhere else in the Pentateuch.<sup>2</sup> But these formulæ occur only in certain portions of the former book, and in the other parts we have the peculiar phrases of the older writers of the Pentateuch, which are never used by the Deuteronomist.<sup>3</sup> In the original narrative of Joshua there is a good deal of matter interpolated by the Deuteronomist, and some also by other writers. It is impossible to reproduce here the tables in which the Bishop has disentangled the conglomerate mass of the Pentateuch. What has been said already can scarcely fail to give a sufficient idea of the irresistible cumulative force of his whole analysis and argument ; and it is therefore unnecessary,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* pp. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 6.

even if it were practicable, to go into the minuter details of the investigation.

The results are very remarkable. More than a hundred different formulæ, each occurring on an average more than ten times in Genesis, are found only in those portions of it which remain after the removal of the Elohistic passages, while with a curious accuracy these very formulæ pass by all the sections belonging to the Elohist ; and these in their turn exhibit also their own peculiar phraseology, which we never find repeated in the rest of Genesis.<sup>1</sup> There is, further, a wide moral difference between the several writers. With a deep sense of sin and of its fatal consequences, the Elohist speaks of a renewed blessing on the earth, and knows nothing of any woe inflicted permanently on either man or woman. The Jehovist multiplies curses and speaks of the sweat of the brow, the very privilege and pledge of human health and happiness, as a sign of man's guilt and shame.<sup>2</sup> We are not surprised therefore, to find that those stories of impurity which blot so many of the chapters of Genesis are all due to the hand of the Jehovist. But from the Jehovist comes the story of Joseph ; and the story of Joseph has been lauded by Mr. Maurice as a fountain of the highest spiritual instruction, while Joseph himself is for him all but the highest embodiment of unselfish love. Yet it is hard to see this, the Bishop remarks, in those parts of it which represent him as having lived for the seven fruitful years in possession of all the power of Egypt, yet never having sent during that time a single messenger into Canaan to comfort his father's heart with the tidings of his own existence, or to learn whether his father still lived, and how he and his brother Benjamin fared.<sup>3</sup>

“ It is just as difficult,” the Bishop adds, “ to explain consistently the fact that, when Joseph knew by his brothers’

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 41.

report that his father still lived, he, such a dutiful and loving son, allowed his old father to remain for twelve months longer in entire ignorance of his own fate, and made no provision whatever to supply him or his family with food during all that time amidst the straits of that terrible famine, except by sending them, free of expense, as much corn as the ten asses could carry. It is still more impossible to believe that such a tender-hearted son and brother could have left it to the mere chance of his brothers' coming again in the following year, whether he should ever hear of his brother Benjamin again, or, when they did come again, could have made the attempt, by lying himself and teaching his steward to lie, to steal Benjamin from his father, as he himself had been stolen, and to send his brothers back to Canaan to carry to the aged Patriarch the heart-breaking tidings that his darling son was seized by the Governor of Egypt and condemned to be treated as a slave for theft."<sup>1</sup>

What the Bishop says is, indeed, all true; but we can scarcely blame the Jehovistic writer for not having perceived it, when the eyes of critics thousands of years later are closed to the real character of the tale. When he came to the story of Joseph, he came within the charmed region of mythical narrative. He found here certain materials ready to hand, which the laws of mythical history would not suffer him to set aside. The youngest and the darling son, the child of the wife who was the heart's love of his father, Joseph is, like David in his youth, unheeded, despised, or hated, by the crowd of his elder brethren; but, like David, he is the man born to be prince or king. His coat of many colours, his visions of future greatness, his temptations, the seducements of the maiden to whom tradition gave the name Zuleika, the selling into slavery, the false tidings of his death, his wisdom and sagacity, his exaltation,—are all features which appear in a hundred popular tales of all lands, of which the most familiar type is the youth

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 42.



who sits among the ashes, destined in the issue to dazzle all men with his wisdom, his benignity, and his splendour. Seemingly weak and often despised, he has keener wit and more resolute will than all who are opposed to him. Slander and obloquy are to him as nothing, for he knows that in the end his truth shall be made clear in the sight of all men. His brethren's sheaves shall be made to bow down before his own ; the sun, moon, and the eleven stars shall be brought to do him honour. This could not be, if he should be made known to his kindred before the great manifestation. He is the revealer of secrets ; but his main function is to provide food from the earth, to nourish, and to sustain. This is his mission from his birth. He is Joseph, the "multiplier," and his life-work is to give fertility to a dry and thirsty land. This is the character assigned to him from the first in the blessing of the heaven above, the blessing of the flood that lies below, the blessing of the breasts and of the womb.<sup>1</sup>

In the Joseph story there is, then, the difficulty arising from the laws of mythical narrative, to which the tale-teller finds himself compelled to adhere ; but in most of the other narratives in the Book of Genesis there is the further difficulty which arises from two or more sets of interpolations by later writers.

"We often hear, for instance," the Bishop says, "the character of Abraham set forth as a model of excellence for the imitation of all ages. But *what* Abraham? *Which* of the Abrahams whose doings are mixed up in such utter confusion by the different writers concerned in the composition of the story in Genesis? How perplexing it is to find in the account of the father of the faithful the record of conduct so mean and unworthy as that narrated in xii. 11-20, and then to find, after an interval of twenty years, the very same base act repeated by him. . . . But all this confusion and

<sup>1</sup> Goldziher, *Mythology of the Hebrews*, p. 166.

contradiction is explained, when we consider that the story of Abraham, as we now read it in the Bible, is not a simple story by one single writer, but the composite work of two or three, or it may be . . . . of even four or five minds, writing each from his own point of view in very different ages. The original Elohist story, in its grand simplicity, represents the Patriarch . . . . without any flaw. He migrates of his own accord, . . . . carrying out merely the purpose of his father ; . . . . he dwells in the land of Canaan, and there appears as the highly honoured servant of Elohim ; . . . . he receives the promised son, and circumcises him. His wife dies, and, with inimitable courtesy, he makes the purchase from the sons of Heth of the burying-place in the field of Machpelah ; and then he dies and is buried by his two sons. . . . And this is all the genuine original story of Abraham. This is the real Abraham of the Bible, the Abraham of the Elohist. . . . Abraham receives no promise for his seed of all the land. But then, on the other hand, his character is not lowered by having ascribed to him the miserable subterfuge in the case of Pharaoh, or the still more reprehensible repetition of this fault in the case of Abimelech. All the additions which are made by the writers to the original story are mere refractions and distortions of the character of Abraham as viewed through their own atmospheres.”<sup>1</sup>

But although there is abundant and irresistible evidence of the fact that the Book of Genesis is a composite structure, there is none for the notion that the several authors whose hands may be traced in it were independent original writers. The matter which they added was in each case merely supplementary to the Elohist story.<sup>2</sup> But when was this Elohist story put together? Certainly not by a writer older than Moses, for the first chapter of Genesis is beyond doubt the work of the same writer who records the revelation of the name Jehovah to

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 67.