

Glanville took up a paper of notes and began : "The main reasons for our disbelieving in these events are three. I'll begin with the most familiar. We get to it at once by considering the ground on which we have been asked to believe them. This has been the authority of the Bible, regarded as a miraculous book, the substantial accuracy of whose statements is admittedly beyond all doubt ; and the world's most obvious reason for not believing in these events any longer begins with the fact that modern literary criticism has completely deprived the Bible of its old supernatural character. It has shown us, by the most laborious and astonishingly minute analysis, that all the Biblical writings have been just as much conditioned by the temperaments and the circumstances of the writers as the histories of Livy and Herodotus, or as Dante's vision of hell. Thus, to take the classical case of Genesis, this book was assumed popularly, till the middle of the nineteenth century, to have been written by Moses, under the direct dictation of God, about fifteen hundred years prior to the birth of Christ. Well, not only sceptical scholars, but Christian scholars likewise, admit now that it is a patchwork of different pre-existing legends—and of legends, moreover, which embody different and conflicting mythologies. Even Jeffries has managed to pick up as much as this at Newmarket."

"But," interposed Mrs. Vernon, "it is possible, surely, to argue that the Bible may still be true, though it may not have been written miraculously?"

"Yes," said Glanville, "it no doubt may, so far as merely literary criticism is able to prove the contrary. That's what I'm now coming to. Literary criticism by itself hardly does more than this—to destroy every vestige of the old presumption that it *must* be true ; and leaves us to ascertain whether its statements are true or not in reality by inquiries of a different kind. Now of the four groups of statements with which we are alone concerned, let us begin with the first. These are the statements contained in the Book of Genesis, to the effect that we are the fallen descendants of parents