

## NOTE C.

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PELEG means "*disrumpere in partes*," and this, literally translated, has given rise to a curious and wild hypothesis, supposing America to have been a portion of the old world, but suddenly sundered from it by a violent convulsion of nature, carrying its proportion of inhabitants with it. The greatest supporter of this theory is the Rev. Mr. Catcott of England who follows the celebrated biblical critic, *Bengelius*, whose words are these, in his *Ordo Temporum*: "*Peleg* was named from the division of the earth, which happened in his days. The earth, after the deluge, was divided by degrees, by a *genealogical* and *political* division, which is expressed by the word נפצה and נפרדו. But a very different kind of division is meant by the word נפלגה (*sepelegē*), namely, a *physical* and *geographical* division, which happened at *once*, and which was so remarkable, and of such extent, as suitably to answer the naming the patriarch therefrom. By this word (*peleg*) that kind of division is principally denoted, which is applicable to *land* and *water*. From whence, in the *Hebrew* tongue, *Peleg* signifies a *river*; and, in the *Greek*, *Pelagos*, the *sea*." From this meaning of the word, Mr. Catcott says, we may conclude that the earth was *split*, or *divided asunder*, for a very great extent, and the *sea came between*, in the days of *Peleg*. Now, he thinks, from the disjunction of *America* from this part of the world by a great sea, it may be allowed, that this was the *grand division* intended by the passage under consideration. And, therefore, he supposes, with *Bengelius*, "that soon after the confusion and dispersion, some of the sons of *Ham* went out of *Africa* into that part of *America*, which now looks towards *Africa*: and the earth being *divided*, or *split asunder*, in the days of *Peleg*, they, with their posterity, the *Americans*, were, for many ages, separated from the rest of mankind, &c." Mr. Catcott, in order to strengthen this explanation, brings two quotations from two ancient writers; one from *Plato*, and another from *Ælian's History* of various things. *Plato* introduces an event, which happened in the most early ages of the world, in his *Timæus*, of a vast tract of land, or an island greater than *Lybia* and *Asia*, situated beyond the bounds of *Africa* and *Europe*, which, by the concussion of an earthquake, was swallowed up in the ocean. *Plato* introduces this fact, as related by *Solon*, who, while he was in *Egypt*, had heard it from an old *Egyptian* priest; when he discoursed with him concerning the most ancient events. The priest informed him, "that this island was called *Atlantis*, and was larger than *Lybia* and *Asia*; that it had an easy passage from it to many other islands, and from these to all that continent, which was opposite; that, within the mouth or entrance of the ocean, there was a gulph, with a narrow entry; but that the land, which surrounded the sea, called *Pelagos*, where the division was made, might justly be called a continent. In after times, there happened a dreadful earthquake and inundation of water, which continued for the space of a whole day and night, and this island, *Atlantis*, being covered and overwhelmed by the waves, sunk beneath the ocean, and disappeared, &c."

The other narrative, from *Ælian*, is as follows, which corroborates this, and, indeed, would incline one to believe the tradition of so great a catastrophe could not arise without some just foundation; he says: "*Theopompus* relates a certain discourse, that passed between *Midas*, the *Phrygian*, and *Silenus*,