

voracious propensities, in endeavouring to hold by the Mosaic authorship; because the insertion of these editorial comments at a later date by some such man as Ezra was just what might be expected to make the most ancient Record intelligible in matters of geography and tribal history to readers of subsequent times.

2. *The Records relate to the beginning of things.*—The early portion of Genesis has to do with the origin of human life, the development of the sense of responsibility, the outward expression of the supremacy of God over the actions of man, the uprising of sin on an otherwise fair earth, and the first symptoms of the presence of a moral disease among men. I dare say there does appear to some minds in comparison with our way of writing history, a strange simplicity in the descriptions given of the creation and the fall of our first parents. These events themselves are so very unlike the highly complicated conditions of life with which we are familiar. The seemingly formal restraints placed upon Adam and Eve, in regard to the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," are unlike anything subsequently experienced by mankind; the free, unfettered converse held between the creature and the Creator, sound to some ears more like the familiar questioning and cross questioning of equals than the communication of thought from the Infinite to the Finite; the vast age attained by the immediate descendants of the first pair make us feel as we read the scanty record of their genealogy that we are in the presence of mysterious demigods. No honest man can but confess that he often reads these unparalleled narratives with an inner questioning as to whether these things were really so. Now, I should like you to remember the wise counsels of Lord Bacon before you give heed to any suppressed feelings of disquietude as to the real sense and value of these Biblical accounts of early human history. In introducing his method by which nature is to be viewed and safely interpreted, he warns his readers, as a preliminary to truthful investigation, against the practice of falling down before certain intellectual Deities. He says there are *four* kinds of "Idola," or false deities to which the human mind has been prone to pay homage, much to the detriment of philosophy; of these, two are the "*Idola Specus*" and the "*Idola Fani*," that is to say, the false influences of human society and of human opinions derived from fashionable, approved systems of thought. I don't accuse you of idolatry. I have not witnessed your devotions to the prevalent forms of modern intercourse and modern thought. But I think you stand on the threshold of the heathen temple when you quietly and almost unconsciously reason thus with yourselves: "We of this generation are decent people, clothed in the best woollens and silks our manufacturers can produce; our homes are solid and substantial as well as ornate, far removed from those which the birds enjoy among leafy bowers, and more cosy than the soft warm lair of the hare as she sleeps with open eyes in the thick tender grass. When we are weary with a toil more conducive to national wealth than pruning olive trees or eating choice fruits, we seek the welcome society of the drawing room, or plunge heart and soul into the last racy book of the season. If we feel sad and weak and are conscious of yearning after the Invisible One, we read the wonderful Book which tells us of Him who came to give rest to the weary, or we join those like minded with ourselves in a noble

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