

Flint and Chalk? I trow not. Yet you may be sure that they had some general notions, expressed in their common forms of speech, of the source of all things from the hand of God; and, consequently, when Moses was authorized to give an authentic and truthful account of the origin of the world, he would do it, not in words you would select, or that would suit the precision of British and American scientific thought in the 19th Century, but in phraseology then commonly used, and so far accommodated to unscientific ideas and modes of utterance, as might be consistent with enforcing the main truth,—namely, that God was the author of the material universe. In as much as the Apostle John in the Apocalypse enables us to know the certainty, and get an approximating apprehension of the Heavenly Home, by speaking of golden streets and pearly gates, because otherwise, we with our present modes of thought—materialized, conventional, limited by our organism—should not be able to rise to the absolute conception of the invisible world,—do we not see a wise propriety, a kindly consideration for man's weakness, in Moses being directed to frame the account of creation so as to ensure to ordinary unscientific minds, as they traversed the desert towards Canaan, the conviction that the order of the universe was the outcome of the power of the one true God, and also, enable them to think of that order as the result of a steady progress from a state of chaos? I wonder what sort of account of creation some people want. It would be instructive if those who do not think the Mosaic account sufficiently precise, would just write what he ought to have said, remembering that in doing so it must be in the phraseology not of Canadians, nor of Americans, and not for your guidance merely, but in the phraseology of the Israelites on their way to Canaan, and for the instruction of them and of all untutored men in all lands and times. I have the impression that they would scarcely be found, before the bar of public opinion, to have successfully competed with Moses the Man of God.

Thus, also, it would follow from the extreme antiquity of the Records *that great gaps would be likely to occur in the History; and that in subsequent ages, the document would be amended by such editorial insertions as might be considered necessary to render allusions intelligible to later readers.*—You are aware that ancient chronology, whether Biblical or Monumental, is attended with some degree of uncertainty, in consequence of the great variations that ensue upon very slight modifications of the Hebrew system of numeration, and the diverse judgment arrived at as to the classification of distinct or contemporaneous Egyptian dynasties. But taking the ordinary chronology as correct, you must remember that the book of Genesis covers the history of 2315 years, as long a period as from the days of Plato to the present time. If you couple this fact with the circumstance that that was not a literary age, you will see at once how natural it is to expect in the History just such an absence of detail for centuries as is observable in the ante-diluvian and post-diluvian narrations. And when we find critics feeding themselves, as the hungry wild asses of the desert may be supposed to do after a weary search for congenial food, upon such expressions as Gen. xxxi. 31, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the land of Israel."—we need not be dismayed, by such