

stricken official paused in his profection, aghast as was the clerk in England, for whose proper psalm a wag had substituted 'Chevy Chase,' when he came to the words 'woful hunting.' He looked at the manuscript again, and after a thorough examination, exclaimed, 'Yea! it is Indian devils!' A burst of indignation from the grave sanhedrim, long, loud, and deep, followed this declaration. They would all have better brooked to have been called by the name of any pestilent heretics, than to be branded as the very heathen whom they had themselves never scrupled to compliment, by calling them children of Babel. If I remember aright, the venerable Cotton Mather notes, in his biographies of the eminent divines of his day, that the innocent offender was, in this instance, roughly handled by the secular arm of justice, for insulting the dignitaries both of church and state, before he had an opportunity of convincing his brother dignitaries that the offensive epithet, *Indian devils*, was a pure mistake in their manner of reading his epistle; inasmuch as he meant to employ the more harmless phrase, *Individuals*. The apology was accepted; though I observe that the latter word is, at present, deemed impolite, if not actionable, in Kentucky; and is as provoking to a citizen of that state, as it was to Dame Quickly to be called a woman, and a thing to thank God on, by Sir John Falstaff.

I knew a gentleman, who would have been very well pleased to have received a lucrative appointment, in a certain state of the Union; because his patrimony was naught, and his professional profits, to speak mathematically, were less. His joy was unbounded, therefore, on reading a letter from a very great man, who wrote a very little and a very bad hand, responsive to his application for the post which he coveted. He deciphered enough of the letter to make out, that many were soliciting the station for which he had applied, and that his testimonials had been received. But the concluding sentence was that from the favorable augury of which the young ambition of the aspirant ran at once, in imagination, to the top of its ladder. 'Though last not least,' were the cabalistic words, by virtue of which he founded many Spanish castles; destined, alas! like those of Arabian enchantment, to vanish or fly away at the spell of a more powerful magician, or the loss of the talisman which summoned the goni to erect them. He might have launched into dangerous prodigality on the strength of his anticipated promotion, if a friend had not succeeded in convincing him, that the flourish with which the great man had terminated his honourable scrawl, if it was not a verso from the Koran, in the Arabic character, must have been meant for that very insignificant and unfruitful expression, 'Yours in haste.'

No executive sunshine ever beamed on him. But being of a philosophic turn of mind, he devoted much of this time, for some years after this disappointment, to an analysis of the precise meaning of these three unlucky words, and read all the writers on our language, from the Diversions of Purley to the last wonderful discoveries on the subject made in this country. I suppose that he passed his time pleasantly in these researches, but not, I should think, very profitably: for the only result of all his reading, which I ever heard him utter, was, that 'yours, in haste,' is a most unphilosophical, ungrammatical, and nonsensical expression; involving a confusion of time, place, and circumstance. He said, it was a sort of bulls; a metaphysical absurdity; a moral insult to good sense and good feeling; and that he never would continue correspondence with any person who had used it in addressing him.

It is very easy to conceive what sad consequences may result in affairs of love and matrimony, from careless scribbling, by which idons may be suggested directly the reverse of those intended to be expressed by the writer. In insinuating the delicate question orally, much ambiguity may be allowed for, on the score of anxiety and embarrassment; and it has always been understood, that the lady's answer, like a certain character in algebra, which combines the positive and negative signs, must be interpreted by accompanying circumstances; or rather, that it is like the adverb of answer, in some of the dead languages, which is both *yes* and *no*, and requires an inclination of the head, or the expression of the countenance, to make it intelligible. Lawyers say, too, that it is difficult, in many cases, to prove a verbal promise of marriage. But equivocal writing has not the advantage of being illustrated by tone, glance, feature, or attitude, and may lead to very dangerous consequences.

In that department of the post-office, of which Cupid is master, the mails should contain only perfumed and gilt-edge billets, written in fair, soft, legible characters, like the correspondence of Julie and St. Preux, as conducted by their inspired amanuensis. I perceive these remarks have run to a greater extent than I had anticipated; and for this reason, but more particularly because I would not encourage fraud or deception, in any form or under any pretext, I will not even hint at the possible advantages which may flow from bad or ambiguous hand-writings.

I can conceive no instance in which sound morality will tolerate the commission of such a thing, with malice afore-thought, or from sheer carelessness: unless it be where the ingenuity of the writer is taxed for common-place complimentary flourishes,

or at the conclusion of an epistle. It is sometimes a very perplexing thing to make a proper obeisance at the end of a letter, when we are at a little loss about etiquette, or fear to be too formal or too familiar, too cold or too tender. Whether an imitation of the Chinese or the Sanscrit characters may be employed with propriety, in any such dilemma, is a case of conscience, which I will not undertake to decide. I must refer the reader to an excellent work by Mrs. Opie, with a most unfashionable name; and if such an evasion is not classed by her among the peccadilloes which she has denounced, it may be safely resorted to by the most scrupulous precisian.

From Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise.

GEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE,*

OR THE CONSISTENCY OF GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY WITH SACRED HISTORY.

A third opinion has been suggested, both by learned theologians and by geologists, and on grounds independent of one another; namely, that the days of the Mosaic creation need not be understood to imply the same length of time which is now occupied by a single revolution of the globe; but successive periods, each of great extent: and it has been asserted that the order of succession of the organic remains of a former world, accords with the order of creation recorded in Genesis. This assertion, though to a certain degree apparently correct, is not entirely supported by geological facts; since it appears that the most ancient marine animals occur in the same division of the lowest transition strata with the earliest remains of vegetables; so that the evidence of organic remains, as far as it goes, shows the origin of plants and animals to have been contemporaneous; if any creation of vegetables preceded that of animals, no evidence of such an event has yet been discovered by the researches of geology. Still there is, I believe, no sound critical, or theological objection, to the interpretation of the word 'day,' (a) as meaning a long period, but there will be no necessity for such extension, in order to reconcile the text of Genesis with physical appearances, if it can be shown that the time indicated by the phenomena of Geology may be found in the undefined interval, following the announcement of the first verse.

In my inaugural lecture, published at Oxford, 1830, I have stated my opinion in favour of the hypothesis, "which supposes the word 'beginning,' as applied by Moses in the first verse of the book of Genesis, to express an undefined period of time, which was antecedent to the last great change that affected the surface of the earth, and to the creation of its present animal and vegetable inhabitants; during which period a long series of operations and revolutions may have been going on; which as they are wholly unconnected with the history of the human race, are passed over in silence by the sacred historian, whose only concern with them was barely to state, that the matter of the universe is not eternal and self-existent, but was originally created by the power of the Almighty. A very interesting treatise on the Consistency of Geology with Sacred History, has recently been published at Newhaven by Professor Silliman. The author contends that the period alluded to in the first verse of Genesis, "In the beginning," is not necessarily connected with the first day, and that it may be regarded as standing by itself, and admitting of any extension backward in time which the facts may seem to require.

I have great satisfaction in finding that the view of this subject which I have here expressed, and have long entertained, is in perfect accordance with the highly valuable opinion of Dr. Chalmers, recorded in some passages of his Evidence of the Christian Revelation.

In Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses will be found a vindication of the popular view, that the six days of creation were six natural days. And in Faber's Treatise on the Three Dispensations an ingenious reply is given to the assumption of Bishop Warburton; and in opposition to it, the Rev. G. S. Faber contends that they were six periods each of vast though uncertain length. This he observes may be proved by four several arguments. 1, By analogy of language;—2, By the necessity of the Mosaic narrative;—3, By the tenor of ancient tradition;—and 4, By the discoveries of modern physiologists. Dr. Mason Good in his Book of Nature contends for the uncertain length of the first three or four days that marked the great work of the creation. "For all that appears to the contrary," he says, "they may have been as long as the Wernerian system, and the book of nature, and I may add the term *generations* employed by Moses himself seems to indicate." Nor do we see how an individual can (with any degree of consistency), believe otherwise, who assumes that the sun was not created until the fourth day. For with this hypothesis how can he decide that each of the three days was the same length of time which is now occupied by a single revolution of the globe, when there was no sun to indicate the division of day and night. For our part we are of the opinion, that the six days were six natural days, although we cannot but perceive that such a view is beset with many difficulties. Let any plain reader of the Bible observe the number of different transactions assigned to the sixth day, and we think he will not decide in an authoritative manner on the term 'day' as being twenty-four hours only.—Ed. Pearl.

It has long been matter of discussion among learned theologians, whether the first verse of Genesis should be considered prospectively, as containing a summary announcement of that New Creation, the details of which follow in the record of the operations of the six successive days; or as an abstract statement that the heaven and earth were made by God, without limiting the period when that creative agency was exerted. The latter of these opinions is in perfect harmony with the discoveries of Geology.

The Mosaic narrative commences with a declaration that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These few first words of Genesis may be fairly appealed to by the geologist, as containing a brief statement of the creation of the material elements, at a time distinctly preceding the operations of the first day: it is nowhere affirmed that God created the heaven and the earth in the first day, but in the beginning; this beginning may have been an epoch at an unmeasured distance, followed by periods of undefined duration, during which all the physical operations disclosed by Geology were going on.

The first verse of Genesis, therefore, seems explicitly to assert the creation of the Universe; "the heaven," including the sidereal systems: [The Hebrew plural word, *shamayim*, Gen. i: 1, translated heaven, means etymologically, the higher regions, all that seems above the earth. Professor Pusey] "and the earth," more especially specifying our own planet, as the subsequent scenes of the operations of the six days about to be described: no information is given as to events which may have occurred upon the earth, unconnected with the history of man, between the creation of its component matter recorded in the first verse, and the era at which its history is resumed in the second verse; nor is any limit fixed to the time during which these intermediate events have been going on: millions of millions of years may have occupied the indefinite interval, between the beginning in which God created the heaven and the earth, and the evening or commencement of the first day of the Mosaic narrative. [To this part of the chapter is appended an elaborate note by Professor Pusey in which the important sanction of Hebrew criticism is given, in support of the interpretations by which we may reconcile the apparent difficulties arising from geological phenomena, with the literal interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis. The criticism is to the following effect—the Hebrew word *bara*, created, does not signify necessarily "created out of nothing," although it may in some cases bear such an import. The English word *created* does not signify this necessarily, and hence the addition of the words 'out of nothing.' Whether *bara*, created, should be paraphrased by "created out of nothing," or "gave a new and distinct state of existence to a substance already existing" must depend upon the context. The word *bara* is, however, stronger than *asah*, made, as *bara* can only be used in reference to God, whereas *asah* may be applied to man. *Bara* and *asah* are so constantly interchanged in the Mosaic narrative, that they may be considered synonymous (although the former is to us the stronger of the two)—and hence it is probable *bara*, *create*, as being the stronger word, was selected to describe the first production of the heaven and the earth. That the two first verses of Genesis contain an account of an act of creation, and not merely a summary statement of what is related in detail in the rest of the chapter, and a sort of introduction to it, the Hebrew Professor shows from the following reasons: first, because there is no other account of the creation of the earth; secondly, as the second verse describes the condition of the earth when so created, and thus prepares for the account of the work of the six days; but if they speak of any creation, it appears to me that this creation "in the beginning" was previous to the six days, because the creation of each day is preceded by the declaration that God said, or willed, that such things should be, and therefore the very form of the narrative seems to imply that the creation of the first day began when these words are first used, that is, with the creation of light in the third verse. The time then of the Creation in ver. 1. appears to me not to be defined: we are told only what alone we are concerned with; that all things were made by God. Professor Pusey also in his note gives incontrovertible proof that the above is no new opinion.]

The second verse may describe the condition of the earth on the evening of this first day; (for in the Jewish mode of computation used by Moses, each day is reckoned from the beginning of one evening to the beginning of another evening.) This first evening may be considered as the termination of the indefinite time which followed the primeval creation announced in the first verse, and as the commencement of the first of the six succeeding days, in which the earth was to be fitted up, and peopled in a manner fit for the reception of mankind. We have in this second verse, a distinct mention of earth and waters, as already existing, and involved in darkness, their condition also is described as a state of confusion and emptiness, (*tohu bohv*), words which are usually interpreted by the vague and indefinite Greek term "chaos," and which may be geologically considered as designating the wreck and ruins of a former world. At this intermediate point of time, the preceding undefined geological periods had terminated, a new series of events commenced, and the work of the first morning of this new crea-