

they found the plains of Shinar. Profane history teaches the same fact.

That oldest race we now call by the name of Sumerians. Now I would ask you to fix in your minds four periods of time, very easy to remember and appreciate. Some 1900 years will take you back to the Saviour on earth; a second 1900 years will take you from that to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; a third 1900 years will take you from Abraham to the settlement of the Semitic races in the country about Mesopotamia; and a fourth 1900 years will take you back to the already long established Sumerian kingdoms in Mesopotamia, then in full development. This,

will observe, brings us back to some 7,000 years from now. In this it would appear that the Sumerian civilization was in existence 8,000 or 10,000 years ago, long before the advent of the Semitic races in Babylonia; or of the Egyptians, who clearly are not an aboriginal African race, on the banks of the Nile.

Now, please, do not let the dates I am speaking of disturb your minds in respect of the Book of Genesis. I, for my part, find no conflict between geology and history on the one hand and the Bible on the other. On that point I shall, therefore, only remind you that the Bible was never given us as a text book on geology or on geography. Nor, in my humble opinion, was the Bible ever meant to furnish us with a complete history of the world, or even of mankind. Unfortunately there is a want of intellectual flexibility in our northern natures, a deficiency in the power of appreciation of figurative language. In interpreting the Bible we bring to bear a superabundance of arid, barren logic, and dry, rigid realism, without a due sense of simile and metaphor, which are exuberant in the oriental mind.

For my own modest individual part, I am coming to regard the Bible as an introduction to the culminating event in our religion, the Life of Christ on Earth. The first part of the Old Testament leads up to the call of Abraham; the rest of that volume is a history of the Hebrews; the perfecting of our religion is related in the four Gospels. All that precedes them is only to prepare us for the redemption of mankind as there set forth.

The portion of the Bible that leads up to the call of Abraham is thus an introductory sketch to enable us to form an idea of the state of that part of the world at that time. I have said of that part of the world. It does not appear to me that we are intended to understand what is said there to apply to the whole world. Here we have an example of the rigid realism with which we are sometimes taught to approach the Bible. In Genesis iv. 14, Cain says: "Any one that finds me shall slay me." He went to the land of Nod, he married, and he built a city. In Genesis vi. 2: 5 the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men; and there