are portions of the book which can be ascribed to the Mosaic age, there are passages and statements which belong to a much later date. In ch. x., for example, the mention of the Medes and Kimmerians cannot be earlier than the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. We must admit, therefore, that interpolations and re-editing were allowed down to the time of the Exile, if not later. Sixthly, there are narratives which interrupt the context, and do not harmonize with its statements. This is the case with the account of Jacob's theft of his father's blessing (ch. xxvii.), and the anticipatory blessing of Joseph and his two sons by Jacob (xlviii. 2–7), which breaks off in the middle of a sentence. Such narratives, it will be noticed, are written from the point of view of a Bedawi rather than from that of a member of a settled society. Consequently they do not admit of archæological treatment. Seventhly, whatever may be the source of the older narratives employed, they have all received a Palestinian colouring.

To sum up the general impression left upon me by the archæological evidence: Genesis is substantially a work of the Mosaic age, and has been compiled out of older written documents, the majority of which were in the Babylonian language and script. Its narratives are substantially historical, and in their earliest form were coeval with the events they record. But other and later elements have been mixed up with them, and in its present form the book contains passages, partly interpolations, partly modifications of the original text, which bring us down to the age of the Exile. Throughout it is intensely Hebraic, and written from a Palestinian point of view. Finally, the archæological facts seem to me diametrically opposed to the results and theories of the so-called critical analysis.

Some Exegetical Studies.

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The Sacred Art of Contemplation.

This is my third paper on this great subject. In the first I examined the four most interesting of the New Testament words for 'beholding.' These are: *κατοπτρίζεσθαι*, to behold in a mirror (2 Co 3^{18}); *ἐποπτεύειν*, to be like the initiated when they behold their chief religious mysteries (2 P 1^{16}); *θεᾶσθαι* and *θεωρεῖν*, to behold as men do in the theatres or at the public games (John's Gospel, 1^{14} and 17^{24}). In the second paper I postilized upon two of the four elements in Christian contemplation—Clearness and Admiration. I am now to examine two other secrets of success in spiritual study. These are Steadiness and Assimilation.

Steadiness.—In the Greek churches they have the curious practice of suspending ostrich eggs from the ceiling. The idea is, we are told, that the mother bird hatches her eggs by steadfastly gazing upon them. Southey has embodied this myth in his 'Thalaba.' The suspended eggs are a symbol of the power of continuous contemplation.

He who had been initiated into the mysteries was supposed to be a delighted and lifelong beholder of them; the spectators at the games could not see them too often or too long; life for them had lost its best charm when these were over. Beholding is quite different from a hurried glance. It is no *πάρεργον*, no *nebensache*, no by-job. Continuity is one of the secrets of what has been called 'the lost art of meditation,' or what the mystics call recollection. 'Meditate on these things,' Paul says to Timothy. To meditate is *in medio esse*. The butterfly flits over a thousand flowers, while the bee lights on one, buries itself in the middle of it with a hum of satisfaction, and remains there till it has emptied the honey-bag at the bottom. Literally the bee is *totus in illo*. To be interested (*inter esse*) has the same meaning as to meditate. As with the three who beheld Christ's glory on the Holy Mount, meditation wishes to pitch its tent near the loved object, so that it may gaze without let or hindrance. For the full appreciation of the truth, as in many chemical processes, time and the right

temperature are needed. He who wishes, not the skim milk, but the cream of any subject, must give it time to gather. Only by firing often are colours in stained glass made permanent; only by long steeping is the wool dyed in its every fibre; only by repeated impressions are pictures chromo-lithographed upon the clean page. Herein lies the philosophy of stated worship and of devout study. These are needed more than ever in this age of hurry and hard driving, of numberless committees and absorbing enterprises. We need to know better what we know; we need to feel what we know; we need the growing vision; we need a soul-bath and a life-bath in the great certainties of our faith; we need to muse till the fire burns. The angels blessed Abraham because he entertained them, it has been said; and they can't bless us unless we entertain them too. 'By daily reading and meditation in the Bible he had made his soul a library of Christ,' so said Jerome of his friend Nepotian. Mr. Gladstone said that if he differed in anything from others, it was in his power of concentration. The difference between Christians may be safely explained in the same way. The cherubim are regarded as the symbols of contemplation; and they have their eyes fixed upon the mercy-seat. The beloved disciple was known in the early Church as ἐπιστήθιος, the close leaner upon the breast; and it is he who emphasizes most the beholding of the glory of Christ. He can never be a profitable seer, some one has said, who is either never, or always, alone. Christ's example justifies the saying; for He went about continually doing good, and He often had periods of seclusion. The secret of the Lord is with those who sometimes shut the door and enter into their closet. A preacher tells beautifully how he got fresh light on this subject from his little granddaughter. She had a great secret to tell him. She entered his room on tiptoe, carefully and softly shut the door, climbed on his knee, and told her secret in his ear.

Steady, continuous study is needed for success in every department. Even the eye needs prolonged contemplation and consequent enlargement before it can 'take in,' as we say, any grand object. The Americans tell you that you must stay a fortnight at Niagara before you can see it. They are quite right. You must conquer the narrow associations of a lifetime before you can apprehend so colossal a spectacle. I have read that when painters go to Rome, they at first imagine that they may imitate the great masterpieces of painting and sculpture. But after their artistic faculties have been educated by months of converse with these great models, they despair of ever equalling them. I recently came across a statement about one of these painters, and I here give the substance of it. The noblest objects never disclose their best meaning at first. Sir Joshua Reynolds in Italy was for some time disappointed with the famous pictures he studied. He could not perceive their supreme excellence. But he persevered in his study. At last the pictures began to raise their veils, and give him an occasional peep at their beauty. By and by, in return for his devotion, they flung away all reserve, and revealed to him all the wealth of their charms. To see beauty, even on the canvas, one needs a trained eye, and a just taste. The perception of moral and spiritual beauty must demand a still higher education.

Assimilation.—Clearness, Admiration, Steadiness, and Assimilation are the four great elements in our conception of Sacred Contemplation. Beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are being metamorphosed into the same image (2 Co 3^{18}). Earthly beauty, however skilfully pictured, however constantly gazed upon, cannot reproduce itself in the beholder; but life-giving influences stream from Christ and stamp His image upon the receptive disciple. The study of His life infuses a generous heavenly spirit into the soul. Froude—is it not he?—says that for years Carlyle was to him the standard of excellence in literature, and that in all he wrote he had a tacit reference to his judgment. In this way his opinions and style were formed. To the Christian, Christ is the one standard of excellence, and it, or rather He, has a transforming power. In other regions, genius is a creator, not an imitator; here imitation and creation are one.

The soul assimilates easily all the good qualities which it heartily admires. Love secures effortless receptivity; for it adjusts all our capacities to the truth, and opens the heart-sluices to all holy influences. Admiring love always brings with it that *empfänglichkeit* upon which the Germans insist so much. John, in his Gospel (chap. $1^{14.16}$) plainly presents to us the assimilating power of devout meditation. 'And we beheld His glory.

. . . And out of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.' It was this beholding that made them the Christians they became.

David Gilmour tells us, in his *Pen Folk*, that one day the little company were discussing man's chief end. 'What is God's chief end in man?' one of them asked. The answer was, 'To make angels of the men and women He creates.'

Contemplation and action have been declared to be the perfection of man. This contemplation must secure answerable action, for the glory presented to us in the mirror of the Gospels is of One who went about doing good. There is a contemplation which is most successful on the intellectual side, and yet paralyses action. Amiel is one of the best known examples of this barren meditation. He tells us, in his *Journal Intime*, that all his life he suffered from what he happily calls 'The Malady of the Ideal.' He seems to have been aware that it was a complication of indolence and intellectual pride. He was so afraid of doing anything imperfectly, that he ended by doing nothing at all. To avoid this and that failure he made his life a failure. The love of the better stood between him and the good. He had 'the purism of perfection, which poisoned for him all imperfect possessions.' The real disgusted him; it was poor by comparison with his ideal. 'Action coarsens thought,' he says, and therefore he shunned action. He would not make the venture to which his convictions often called him. He keenly felt that he had entirely failed in life. *Omnis moriar* was his pathetic lament.

Action is the perfection of Christian thought. Study is the parent of ideas, and ideas should be the parent of deeds; knowledge is not a luxury, but a weapon and a talent. Even Christian culture may become almost as selfish as the merely academic or the pagan. The worthiest conception of life rises from culture to discipline, and from discipline to the service which is deliberately preferred and gladly chosen.

When a preacher handles a very high spiritual theme, he begins to be afraid of losing the sympathies of his hearers, and casts about for some method of justifying his doctrine at the bar of common sense. I might cite Plato's intense faith in the wonder-working, man-making power of noble and well-beloved ideas. But I shall take a much homelier illustration. Now and again English judges declare from the bench that the 'penny dreadfuls' and low novels seduce boys, even boys of good family, into highway robbery and burglary. In the mirror of these vile periodicals, the impulsive youth beholds what seems to him the glory of his lawless hero, and mistakes his evil for good. He admires Robin Hood or others of that ilk, resolves to imitate them, and is soon changed into the same image from shame to shame, even as by the spirit of the devil. Can it then seem irrational or incredible that the admiring student of the noblest of all truths should be profoundly influenced by his studies? For all the ordinary laws by which character is formed are on his side; and besides, this Christian assimilation is a work of grace and a work of God. The Spirit is the agent of this transformation. It is brought about even as by the Spirit of the Lord; that is, by all those subtle and mighty influences which are peculiarly His own. This is the blessedness of the beholder of the glory of the Lord; this is the great reward of his practice of devout contemplation.