

league with Satan. They said, "He casts out devils by Beelzebub."<sup>1</sup> He is but an embodied falsehood, speaking lies, working a lie, professing to cast out Satan, that He may the better serve him. But the charge was as unwise as unvarnished. The answer was easy: "If Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand? If he work against himself, how can his works serve him? Then, if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your disciples cast them out? By Beelzebub, too? Let them be your judges."<sup>2</sup>

The cycle was completed; fanatical resistance to the light had become fanatical denial of its existence. It was little wonder that Jesus met the deputation from Jerusalem with the question, "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? . . . Ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."<sup>3</sup> "O ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"<sup>4</sup>

A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

"AS OLD AS METHUSELAH:"

A CHAPTER IN ANTEDILUVIAN CHRONOLOGY.

GENESIS V.

ACCORDING to the generally accepted rendering of the fifth Chapter of the Book of Genesis, the lives of our antediluvian progenitors are to be reckoned by centuries, the oldest of them completing a period of nearly a thousand years. Many suggestions have been ten-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xii. 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xv. 3, 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. xvi. 3.

dered with the laudable object of rebuking our surprise and checking the impulse to incredulity. We have been reminded that the race was then in its infancy, and had not yet succumbed to the deteriorating influences which shorten the term of individual and national life; that man originally was of gigantic build, and so qualified to bear without oppression the otherwise crushing and overwhelming weight of years; that it was the Divine expedient for peopling rapidly the newly-created earth: and that it seems a law of nature that life shortens as civilization advances, and the average term of human existence contracts as we recede from the primeval sources. Such reflections are not without their weight and value, and they are generally accepted for want of better evidence in favour of the popular view of the subject. Yet, with all our desire to be patient and unprejudiced in the investigation of a deep and difficult problem, we cannot help reading between the lines of these arguments a certain distrust of their conclusiveness, and a clearly implied though tacit admission of the reasonableness of further research. "Let no one," says Josephus,<sup>1</sup> "upon comparing the lives of the ancients with our lives, think that what we have said of them is false, or make the shortness of our lives at present an argument that neither did they attain to so long a duration of life; for those ancients were beloved of God, and (lately) made by God Himself; their food was fitter for the prolongation of life; and, besides, God afforded them a longer time of life on account of their virtue (!), and the good use they made of it in astronomical and geometrical discoveries (!!), which would not have

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq.* i. 5.

afforded the time for foretelling (the periods of the stars), unless they had lived six hundred years." And he mentions Manetho, Berosus, Mochus, Histiaëus, Hesiod, and others, as witnesses to the truth of what he had written. "But," he adds, "let every one look on them as he thinks fit."

It may, however, fairly be questioned whether the half-conscious misgivings of intelligent and candid students of Scripture extend to any degree of disbelief in the accuracy of the Sacred Narrative. Our faith in the inspiration and Divine authority of the Bible rests upon too secure a basis, and has been too firmly established by the results of previous trial and scrutiny, to be lightly shaken by the fact that it contains, or seems to contain, statements, or records of events, which are at variance with modern experience. It is not of the text, but of the careless and superficial exponents of the text, that we are at present sceptical. Once and again it has happened that, at the suggestion or demand of scientific criticism, we have been forced to reconsider, modify, and even alter, the long-held interpretations we had attached at first reading to the letter of the Word; while our faith in the accuracy and truthfulness of the narrative, seen in a new light by profounder study, has only been deepened by the process. We all know, for example, how the ancient popular theory as to the age of the world and the six days' work of creation has been recast under the influence of geological and astronomical discovery. The testimony of the rocks and the mechanism of the stars made our traditional creed of interpretation untenable, while a closer and more enlightened scrutiny of the narrative only brought about a nearer approximation

of Science to Revelation. So with the Deluge. In our passion for minute and exhaustive dogmatism, we overlooked the fact that the narrative was written in popular, not in scientific, phraseology, and that its universal terms—"the whole heavens" and "the whole earth"—must necessarily be limited by the conceptions of the eye-witnesses, guided though they were by the help of the Spirit, and interpreted by the *usus loquendi* of that age. Has the Bible suffered by the ordeal? Has it not rather acquired new authority and reverence in our minds as evidence has multiplied that the Author of the book of nature is the Alpha and Omega of the written Word; and these "contradictions," apparent only and fanciful, have disappeared under the investigation of those who had the mind of his Spirit? We have seen how human theories, however ingenious and ancient, may be shattered; how principles of interpretation have to be remodelled; how systems must be changed to suit the requirements of the ages; while free from these mutations the Word standeth sure—"the scriptures cannot be broken."

It will not therefore be regarded as irreverent, or as betraying any scepticism of the facts of Revelation, we venture to dispute in these pages the accepted theory of Antediluvian Chronology. The common saying, "As old as Methuselah," is founded, we hope to shew, on a mistake. We suggest that another interpretation of this famous Chapter, more in accordance with Bible usage and phraseology, beset with fewer difficulties of an extraordinary, I will not say of an insuperable, character, and making no needless demand upon our credulity, is at all events possible. Professor Newman, in his "Phases of Faith," has pointed to

these almost inconceivable ages of the Antediluvians as an early stumbling-block to his acceptance of the Scriptures as an inspired book. Others who have shared his scruples have satisfied themselves that, as in the account of the Creation which precedes, and of the Deluge which follows, a probable solution has been found, so, in this case also, light will arise in the darkness; whilst many, doubtless, of easier temperament, are fain to adopt Lord Melbourne's mode of treating a difficulty—"Can't you let it alone?" If we can, therefore, remove any hindrance to the study of the Sacred Text, displace any prejudice that may lurk in the minds of its enemies, or lift any obstacle from the path of younger students or weaker believers, we shall have done service by questioning the pre-eminence of Methuselah.

The theory, then, advocated in this paper is, that, of the two dates which are given in this chronological Chapter of Genesis in connection with the name of each of the patriarchs, the former represents the age of the individual, the natural period of his life, the latter the age of the dynasty or sheikship which bore his name. Thus the natural life of Adam was 130 years, while the dynastic life of Adam—each successor taking that name—was 930 years. So with Seth, who lived only 105 years, but whose official title extended to 912 years, when it became extinct, the last of his name having died. This we take to be the simplest and true interpretation of the following verses:—

This Book : the generations of Adam.  
 In the days God made Adam,  
 In the likeness of God He made him ;  
 Male and female He created them.  
 And He blessed them.

“AS OLD AS METHUSELAH.”

And He called their name Adam in the  
days of their creating.

And Adam lived thirty and a hundred years.

And he begat (one) in his likeness, and  
according to his image.

And he called his name Sheth (Appointed).

And there were days of Adam after he had  
begotten Sheth : eight hundred years.

And he begat sons and daughters.

And all the days of Adam which he lived  
were nine hundred years and thirty years.

And he died.

And Sheth lived five years and a hundred years.

And he begat Enosh.

And Sheth lived after he begat Enosh :  
seven years and eight hundred years.

And he begat sons and daughters.

And all the days of Sheth were twelve years  
and nine hundred years.

And he died.

1. There are certain expressions in this narrative that appear to favour our theory of interpretation. “He called *their* name Adam in the days of their being created.” Here, evidently, the word Adam is used in a generic sense, to designate, not only the individual, but the family or race which God had created in him. “Adam” was the name of the clan or dynasty. The race of the “red earth” was the first to bear rule in the world. The successive chiefs, or heads, or fathers of the tribe had, doubtless, distinctive appellations of their own, marking the order of their descent from Adam, the first of his race, as well as the patronymic; but in the lapse of ages this has been lost. There are many parallel cases in Scripture—Abimelech, Amalek, Og, Cæsar, &c. The most striking instance is that of Pharaoh. This official title—from P-RA, “the sun”—was borne by the kings of Egypt during a period extending to 1,600 years. Ten Pha-

raohs are mentioned in Scripture. The Pharaoh of Abraham's day is supposed to have been the first of the fifteenth dynasty, Pharaoh *Salatis*, B.C. 2081. The Pharaoh of Joseph, the last of the shepherd-kings, was Pharaoh *Apophis*. This dynasty lasted, according to Josephus, 260 years. Manetho says the Israelites left Egypt in the reign of Pharaoh *Menptah*, B. C. 1732. He reigned forty years, and was of the seventeenth dynasty. The others are less difficult to identify in profane history. The Pharaoh of Zedekiah was Pharaoh *Hophra*, second successor of Pharaoh *Necho*, who reigned about 590 B.C.<sup>1</sup> The sacred writers speak of them all simply as "Pharaoh," giving merely the official title, and adding nothing, except the death of Menptah at the Exodus, to forbid the belief that Pharaoh had lived for 1,500 years. Would it not therefore be strictly in accordance with Eastern and Scripture usage to say that "Pharaoh (*Salatis*) lived so many years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Pharaoh were so many thousand years, and he died"? Nay, may we not go further, and say, This is to a large extent the custom even of modern historians? Take a page from the index of Carlyle's history of Frederick the Great, the line of the Hohenzollerns, or from the chronicles of the House of Plantagenet, or Tudor, or Stuart, or the line of Bonaparte (Napoleon) or the Guelphs, and it becomes easy to understand the process of simplification, and how such phrases as "the Hohenzollern or the Hapsburg of that day," "the Lord Derby of that time," "the Douglas of that age," originate and become stereotyped. The names of successors are forgotten, but the founders of the race are

<sup>1</sup> Smith's "Bible Dictionary."

"engraven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever."

2. It is likewise noteworthy that, to the dynastic names in this Chapter, two distinct dates are attached. "And Adam lived thirty and a hundred years. And he begat . . . Sheth." "And all the days of Adam were . . . nine hundred and thirty years." "And Sheth lived five years and a hundred years. And he begat Enosh. . . . And all the days of Sheth were twelve years and nine hundred years." If we are to understand "the thirty and a hundred years" as the term of Adam's natural life, while the "eight hundred years" measure the duration of his dynasty, the significance and propriety of the two periods specified become at once apparent: on any other supposition they are meaningless repetitions. Has the age of Adam after the birth of Sheth been so distinctly chronicled and added to the previous years, and the result given, simply to record the age of one individual? This is barely credible. Mark, too, the force of the uniform division of these patriarchal lives throughout the Chapter into two periods. Sheth was certainly not the firstborn of Adam, and it may well be doubted whether Enosh was the firstborn of Sheth; nor is it probable that more than a century should have elapsed before many of these patriarchs were blessed with children. Why, then, should the birth of these particular descendants be a dividing-line in the chronology of their father's life? If their birth is to be understood as marking the date of a new dynasty, or sheikship, whilst the old stock continued its government, as with England and her colonies—*e.g.*, the United States—the double chronology and elaborate summing-up of



the result becomes intelligible : it is otherwise pointless and unnecessary.

3. The names given in "this book of generations" are evidently the official titles of Eastern chiefs, or, as the Bible designates them, "fathers of nations." There is a striking parallelism between the first and second and third verses of the Chapter. God made Adam "in his likeness, and called their name Adam." "And Adam begat (a son, but the words are not in the Hebrew text, and may be rendered an heir, or successor) in his likeness, and according to his image, and he called his name Sheth." Now it is held by many expositors<sup>†</sup> that the phrase, "God created man in his likeness"—literally, "after his shadow"—refers to the headship of Adam over the creatures. Being in his Maker's likeness, he held dominion. The "image" has reference to character, the "likeness" to government. The "image" was broken at the Fall, but the god-like quality of command remained. He still retained dominion over the creatures, though they had fallen in him. He was federal chief of a fallen world. It is said of the Second Adam in Hebrews i. 3: ὡν ἀπαύ-  
 γασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως. In the Hebrew Version of the New Testament the χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως is rendered, *u-tselem panav*, "the image of his presence," or countenance. When we read, therefore, that Adam begat (an heir) in his likeness, and called his name Sheth—the Appointed—we may naturally infer that Sheth inherited from him his power to rule. The other "sons and daughters," who lived and died in obscurity, are not mentioned ; but these builders of cities, founders of kingdoms, "fathers of nations,"

<sup>†</sup> See also Mr. Darby's "Synopsis."

left their mark in the old-world history, and thus purchased for themselves everlasting remembrance.

The conjecture is further strengthened by the study of the records of post-diluvian chronology. Here only the heads of the great Noachian families are chronicled. Thus the sons of Ham were Cush, Seba, Havilah, and Raamah. "And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born and Heth." Shem is spoken of "as the brother of Japheth *the elder*."<sup>1</sup> Now Japheth was not the elder brother of Shem, nor was he the *greater* (תַּבְּרִיגִּיל) in Noah's family; for Shem was the father of Heber and Abraham, and it was said of him, "God shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."<sup>2</sup> Shem was therefore the brother of Japheth "the elder," or chief of the tribe, so called to distinguish him from others of his race who were not "elders" at the time.

If we are right, therefore, in supposing that the names in this ancient catalogue are official and dynastic, we can hardly resist the conclusion that the later date, comprising many centuries, indicates, not the lifetime of an individual, but the duration of his dynasty.

4. The average natural life of these Antediluvians—supposing it expressed in the former of the two figures—accords with the reservation which God makes when He threatened, on account of inherent depravity, to withdraw his Spirit, and destroy the ancient world.

And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not contend in man for ever, inasmuch as he also is flesh: *but his days shall be—v'hayu yamayv—an hundred and twenty years.*<sup>3</sup>

He would humble their pride and punish them for their sin, yet He would not shorten their term of days. This is the fair and obvious meaning of the words;

<sup>1</sup> Gen. x. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. ix. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. vi. 3.

nor would any other have been sought had we not been under the spell of immemorial tradition as to the ages of the preceding patriarchs. The idea of Josephus, that they refer to the 120 years yet to elapse before the Deluge, is ingenious, but will hardly be deemed satisfactory. Assuming, however, that the words imply that six score years were to constitute the allotted span of human life—the "three score and ten" probably relating to Israel in their exceptional circumstances in the wilderness, and mentioned only in the Song of Moses<sup>1</sup>—we find that this is the actual average of the antediluvian patriarchs, allowing 150 years to Noah, whose ark-building alone occupied 120 years.

5. Another argument for this method of interpretation may be drawn from the unmistakable marks of age on those post-diluvian patriarchs whose biography has been more fully transmitted to us, who reached the allotted average of human life. It was considered miraculous that Abraham should have a son when he was a hundred years old, although he was, if the popular theory be accepted, a contemporary of Shem and Japheth.

And these are the days of the years which Abraham lived.

He lived a hundred years, and sixty years, and fifteen years.  
And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, *an old man*,  
and full of years. And he was gathered to his people.<sup>2</sup>

And Isaac, who lived a hundred and eighty years (and he was blind with age when Jacob deceived him), expired and died,  
and was gathered to his people, *an old man*, and full of days.<sup>3</sup>

Jacob lived a hundred and forty and seven years, and the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see.<sup>4</sup>

Terah, indeed, according to the Septuagint Version, lived 205 years, and if so, the palm of age belongs to him rather than to Methuselah. The Samaritan copy,

<sup>1</sup> Psa. xc.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxv. 7, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. xxxv. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. xlvi. 10.

however, with a higher degree of probability, gives 145 years, when he died in Haran.<sup>1</sup> But if these men, at a hundred, were stricken with age, how shall we think of them holding intercourse with the builders of the ark, those men of mighty frame and herculean strength, "familiar," like Wordsworth's mountains, "with forgotten years," and believe that the contemporaries—for so tradition represents them—were of the same stock, inheritors of the same flesh and blood? The lion and the lapdog are more akin, the cheetah and the domestic kitten have more in common, than the gigantic Shem and his Mesopotamian descendants, could we suppose them to have met in friendly conference "between the rivers."

If we add to these arguments the absolute silence of Scripture upon the subject, the singular fact that, while the curse of the Fall, the loss of Eden, the Deluge, the destruction of Sodom, and other judgments betokening the Divine anger against sin, are again and again referred to in the Sacred Volume, this appalling shortening of human life from a thousand to a hundred years, the heaviest of all temporal penalties, is never, once mentioned, our conviction deepens that the average from the beginning was 120 years. True, we cannot raise a simple negation to the rank of positive evidence; yet this most significant silence, where every circumstance and motive invited utterance, will not be without its influence with earnest and candid students of this problem of the past.

It would extend this paper unduly to anticipate and answer the objections that may be urged against our theory of interpretation. The discrepancies between

<sup>1</sup> Smith's "Bible Dictionary."

the Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint Versions, at which we have hinted, that indicate substantial agreement upon the facts; the distinct statement that Noah (one of his name and race) was 600 years old when he entered the ark; the apparent gradual diminution in the ages of the postdiluvian races till the days of Abraham—till Moses, according to Josephus; these and other difficulties, that take their rise chiefly in preconceived opinion, may form the subject of another chapter in *postdiluvian* chronology. Meanwhile let us not forget the words of Coleridge, “A theory—*θεωρία*—only helps *investigation*; it cannot invent or discover.”

R. BALGARNIE.

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WIND AND FIRE MINISTERS OF GOD.

PSALM CIV. 4; HEBREWS I. 7.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, “And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

The Greek is: *καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει, Ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα.*

This agrees exactly with the Septuagint Version of Psalm civ. 4, from which the quotation is taken, except in the substitution of *πυρὸς φλόγα* for *πῦρ φλέγον*, a substitution which in no way affects the sense. The English Version, however, is clearly wrong in translating *πνεύματα* by “spirits,” for such a rendering entirely destroys the parallelism. It is plain that the words ought to be translated, “Who maketh his angels winds, his ministers a flame of fire.” The two clauses are thus in strict parallelism. But the question