

*PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL PROBABILITIES
RESPECTING THE AUTHORSHIP AND AU-
THORITY OF THE MOSAIC BOOKS.*

III. EARLY MAN AND EDEN.

WE have seen that the first chapter of Genesis, with verses first to third of the second, constitutes a complete record of a finished and perfected world, with man at its head, entering into the Sabbatism of his Creator. This is the ideal world of our narrator in its golden age, and it implies not a merely stationary condition, but a gradual development of nature in utility and beauty, under the benevolent guidance of a rational being destined to overspread, and to subdue and rule the world. Had this continued, according to him, there had been no sin and suffering on the one hand, and none of those woes or benefits which have sprung from the acquisition of the practical knowledge of good and evil. It is the short continuance of the golden age and the descent from the unruffled current of primitive innocence to the boiling rapids of the great moral fall that must next attract our attention, and I think we shall find that in no part of the Pentateuch is there more certain evidence of primitive authorship and Mosaic editing than in the history of Eden and the antediluvian age, or more exact correspondence in these respects with the facts ascertained from other sources.

To many critics the second chapter of Genesis is in part an imperfect repetition of the first, constituting a different version of creation, of later date, but found by the redactors among their material and somewhat unskillfully patched in with their work. To a scientific reader, however, it assumes a different aspect, being evidently local in its scope, and relating to conditions of the introduction of man not mentioned in the general account of creation. It is as if a

writer on primitive man were to precede his special treatment of that subject by a general account of the whole history of the earth; and, having thus fixed the geological date of the introduction of man, should then proceed to a detailed account of the early Anthropic period.

This second narrative has a special introduction, which connects it with the previous history, and at the same time marks a new beginning with the formula—"These are the generations," etc.—which reappears in subsequent portions of the book, and which implies that this new section has a human rather than a cosmical interest, and thus forms a link between the general physical and organic creation and the history of man, in connection with a particular region which it proceeds to specialize in the description of Eden. All this, as we shall see immediately, is carefully, and in a truly scientific manner, carried out in detail.

A preliminary point, however, is to inquire why the narrator introduces a new designation of God—Jehovah-Elohim,¹ instead of Elohim merely. It is clear, that, on the hypothesis of a Mosaic authorship or editorship, we cannot attribute this to a new redactor or author of different date, and must be prepared to consider the change as a part of the plan of the book, and made for some definite purpose, which may probably be learned from the book itself. It may seem at first sight that this question is foreign to our present purpose; but science and history concern themselves with names as well as with things and facts, and the origin and use of terms may often throw important light both on dates and causes. It may therefore be proper to attend very shortly here to the use of the name Jehovah as explained in the work we are considering. We shall best understand this by noting its history as stated by the author, his own personal relations to it, and

¹ I shall use the ordinary spelling of the name Jehovah, as the most familiar, though probably not correct.

the manner in which he assigns its use to his characters. He first introduces it to us in the remarkable saying attributed to the first mother on the birth of Cain, "I have gotten a man the Jehovah," or "the one that is to be." What precise theological meaning we are to attach to this saying it is unnecessary to inquire; but we can scarcely be wrong in supposing that it refers in some way to "the seed of the woman" promised in a previous passage, and that Eve connects the birth of her son with this promise. The name reappears on the birth of Eve's grandson Enos, when either Seth, the father of Enos, or man in general began to "call on the name of Jehovah," or "praised and called on the name of Jehovah," which would seem to imply that special attention was at this time directed to the coming deliverer as a Divine person. I can scarcely help connecting this with the hint of two distinct religions conveyed in the story of the marriage of the sons of God (*Beni-ha-Elohim*) with the daughters of men (*Benoth-ha-Adam*), which seems to imply that the Cainites retained exclusively the worship of *Elohim* or the God of Nature, while the Sethites, regarded as the heirs of the promise made to Adam, invoked the name of Jehovah, and that the two tribes, after remaining separate for a time, were re-united by these marriages. Of course, I cannot for a moment entertain the idea of marriages between angelic beings, whether good or bad, and human wives, and the use of the term sons of God, in Job and elsewhere, for super-human beings may be placed with the fact that men also are called sons of God, and in one passage (*Ps. lxxxii. 6*) "gods," as well as "children of the Most High." From these marriages, contracted in an unlawful way by capture on the part of the men,¹ there arose a mixed progeny, physically more powerful and energetic than either of the

¹ Compare chap. ii. 24, and our Lord's comment on it (*Matt xix. 5*). We may have to return to this curious question of the mixed marriages.

pure races, the Nephelim and Gibborim of the antediluvian time; and whose remains are probably now known to us in the gigantic skeletons of the caverns of the Palanthropic ages.

Subsequently to this we find occasional examples in Genesis, especially in the earlier part, of the use of the name Jehovah by the personages of the history; but in the more important places, as in the successive revelations to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the closing benediction of the latter, the formula "God Almighty" is used.¹ Hence when at a much later date God communes with Moses (Exod. iii.), and reveals himself by the name of Jehovah in connection with the redemption of Israel, we find Moses addressing God as Adonai, and expressing himself as if it was a question with him by what name he should introduce God to his countrymen. In harmony with this is the statement that God was not known to the patriarchs by the name or in the characters of Jehovah, and that His formal name to them was God Almighty. With this also agrees the objection attributed to Pharaoh, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey him?" and "I know not Jehovah." Had the name Adon been used, he would have known this as a Semitic name for God, and even the name of Elohim was probably known to him in the same connection. From all this it appears that while our narrator in Genesis attributes a great antiquity to the name Jehovah, and connects it with the idea of a covenant of redemption made with man, he represents it as falling into comparative disuse, and in Exodus it is again brought to the front by the agency of Moses. If this is true, who so likely as Moses to have introduced the name into the early history of man? By doing so and constantly repeating it in his narrative, he forced it on his readers' memories as a name

¹ Gen. xvii. 1, xxviii. 3, xxxv. 11, xlviii. 3, xlix. 25; also in Jacob's emotional blessing of Benjamin, xliii. 14.

not merely of a tribal and national God, but as one claiming supremacy over all men, and especially as having to do with the redemption of man from sin and slavery, and with their own special deliverance. Thus it was proper to introduce it everywhere in his narrative, but not to give it premature prominence in the language of his characters. We see also from these facts the expediency of the transition expression Jehovah-Elohim, the Lord-God. By this he marks the change from the general account of the creation to the special history of man, and from the cosmical work of the Godhead (Elohim) to the special work of election and redemption which form his theme after the fall, while at the same time he avoids the possibility of supposing that he believes in a plurality of gods, and that Jehovah is a distinct God from Elohim. All this is perfectly in accordance with the personality of Moses as previously defined, and strongly points to him as editor and author of Genesis and Exodus. Why should not the man who represents himself as specially commissioned to make God known by this name, use it in all that part of his history which refers to the chosen people? and as it designated not only the God who was and is but the God to come as the deliverer, what more appropriate than its use in those earlier parts of his story in which he represents the promise of redemption as given in advance to Adam and Eve? The whole treatment of the name is perfectly consistent with itself, and no one is historically so likely as Moses to have been at once the "Jehovist" and "Elohist" of Genesis. But the descriptive part of the second chapter of Genesis affords still more certain arguments to which we must now turn.

The statements made in the fifth and following verses are puzzling at first sight, and different from what we should have expected. "No shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there

was not a man to till the ground ; but there went up a mist from the earth and watered¹ the surface of the ground." This obviously refers to a condition of the earth, or a part of it, immediately antecedent to the introduction of man, and the picture it presents is that of an alluvial flat recently abandoned of the waters, in a rainless climate and watered by dense mists or copious dews, and thus eventually becoming clothed with such rank vegetation as may exist in such places. If Moses was the writer, was he thinking of the alluvium of the Nile as the inundation leaves it? The subsequent localization of Eden shows that this could not have been the locality in view. The picture is, however, that of the alluvial plain of a great river, at first a mere expanse of sand and mud-exhaling vapour, but afterwards clothed with plants, and ultimately converted into the Garden of the Lord. We may suppose the time to have been that following one of the later submergences of the margins of the continents, immediately before the advent of man and his companion animals. With reference to these last, it is to be observed that we are not now, as in chapter first, dealing with the whole animal creation, but with a local fauna, that of the Edenic region which was man's first habitat. The objection therefore sometimes taken that this second account of the creation of animals is contrary to the first, falls to the ground. The second description refers merely to the advent of a recent local fauna.

The idea thus conveyed to us is that man was produced on some recently elevated alluvial plain, a view quite in accordance with historical fact, since it has usually been on the latest geological formations that man has by preference settled, and that populous nations have most rapidly grown up. This was not an idea likely to have occurred to a writer or compiler dwelling on the hills and valleys of Palestine. It would better suit the Egyptian, who be-

¹ Caused to.

lieved men and animals to have sprung from the fertile mud of the Nile; or an inhabitant of the Great Idinu, Sumir, or Euphratean plain, whose people seem always to have believed that they occupied the primitive abode of man; so that if we regard this composition independently altogether of inspiration, it is likely to be of Egyptian or Mesopotamian origin rather than Palestinian. It should be stated here, however, that it has been generally admitted that, under any hypothesis as to the origin of man, he must in a state of nature have enjoyed a warm and equable climate affording supplies of vegetable food throughout the year, and free from the incursions of the more formidable beasts of prey. Such conditions are to be realized only in tropical oceanic islands, or in the deltas of great rivers in low latitudes. Hækel in his *History of Creation*, and of course without any reference to Genesis, after discussing the relative merits of various places, concludes that the human species must have originated near the Persian Gulf or on an imaginary continent now submerged to the south of it,—thus, as we shall see, agreeing very nearly with the old record in Genesis. This leads, however, to consider the actual sight selected by our narrator for the primitive abode of man, of which he gives a geographical description which we shall find has a most far-reaching significance.

“Gan Eden,” says Sir Henry Rawlinson, “answers to the old Babylonian Gan Dunya, and must have been situated on the Euphrates and three other rivers watering the plain of Babylonia.” Many of the older writers, as is well known, favour this view, and among later authorities may be mentioned Delitzsch, Pincher and Sayce. It agrees also, as we have seen, with the introductory description. Without waiting at present to notice objections, we may proceed at once to indicate the character of the geographical description, and the consequent standpoint and date of the writer.

Eden, according to our narrator, was a district or region within which, and probably in its eastern part, was planted the "Garden" intended for the primal abode of man.¹ It was irrigated by four rivers, and I think in a document so ancient it is not necessary to insist on a later Semitic usage, which would cause us to understand the word "heads" as "mouths," and so to render unintelligible the whole description from a geographical point of view. We may assume that the four rivers were confluent in the region and that the "heads" into which they were divided are their sources.

One of these rivers, the Euphrates or Perath, was evidently the standpoint of the writer, for he merely gives its name. The second, Hiddekel, or Tigris, he says, goeth in or toward the front or east of Assyria or Asshur. The third, Gihon (rushing or pushing river), is said to run around the land of Cush. The fourth, or more distant river, Pison (spreading river), being probably more distant and less known to his readers, he characterizes more fully. It runs around the land of Havilah, where there is gold, "and the gold of that land is good; there is bedolach and shoham stone." We are thus restricted to the region of the Euphrates and Tigris; and to the eastward of the latter are the important rivers Kherkah and Kárún, both flowing into the Shat-el-Arab formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, and, as modern exploration shows, corresponding with the indications of our old geographer.

Taking them now in the order of the narrative, and identifying the Pison with the Kárún, we find that this alone of the four rivers flows down from the high range of the mountains of Luristan (the ancient Zagros), which lies along the western frontier of Persia, and is the only range of granitic and metamorphic rocks near to the old Eden

¹ We need not stop to enquire as to the precise meaning of the word translated "eastward" or "beforehand."

plain. These hills have, according to the late eminent geologist, William Kennet Loftus,¹ gold washings in some of their streams, abundance of garnets, crystalline quartz and serpentine, as well as of the pure white gypsum, afterwards used so extensively by the Assyrians, and they afford also jade, flinty slate, chert and jasper, suitable for the tools and implements of primitive man. Furthermore, this is the sole region near to the valley of the Lower Euphrates which yields these treasures. I have already, in a former number of this Journal,² stated the reasons for believing that the "gold bedolach and shoham stone" of our old narrative should be regarded as intended to represent native metals, pearly or other stones available for personal ornament, and jade and its allied rocks; in other words, "gold, wampum and stone, for implements," the treasures of primitive man. I need not repeat the evidence here; but may state a curious confirmation which I have not seen noticed. In the Apocalypse, where the description of Eden is repeated and extended in that of the New Jerusalem, we find the "gold, bedolach and shoham" of Genesis represented by the golden streets, the pearly gates, and the foundations of precious stones. Thus the Kárún, the Pasi-Tigris of Greek writers, flowing from the ancient Mount Zagros, and spreading on the Euphratean plain, is the only one of the four great rivers of the region to which the description of our author can apply, and for this identification we are indebted to the labours of an English geologist, who had, however, no reference in his explorations to Biblical history. This same river Pison is said to traverse the land of Havilah; and as this name belongs to the early postdiluvian period, it proves, as we shall see, the date of

¹ "Geology of the Turko-Persian Fróntier, and of Districts Adjoining"—*Journal of Geological Society of London*, vol. x. p. 247. I have carefully examined the collections of Loftus, now preserved in London.

² March, 1887.

our writer. But in the account of the dispersion of men in Genesis x., we read of two Havilahs—one the son of Cush, of the line of Ham, the other a son of Joktan, of the line of Shem. We should at first sight be inclined to prefer the Cushite Havilah; but the author or editor of Genesis adds a note to the effect that it was the Shemitic Havilah, who had his dwelling “as thou goest towards Sephar, the mountain (or hill country) of the East, which can be no other than Mount Zagros.¹ The next river, the Gihon, which, if represented by the modern Kherkah, runs parallel to, but not from the Zagros chain,² is said to compass the land of Cush, not an African Cush or Ethiopia, but that same Cushite people which, according to Genesis, established the earliest kingdom in the plain of Shinar. The existence of this early Cushite or Turanian kingdom, and its importance and civilization, and the colonies which it sent into Arabia and Africa, are now well known from the ancient Chaldean inscriptions, especially those of Tel-loh; and Hommel has quite recently confirmed the identification of Nimrod with the old Chaldean hero Gisdubar,³ and has even published an inscription calling him the founder of Erech, the city which, according to Genesis, was the beginning of his kingdom. The connection of the Tigris from the earliest times with the beginning of the Assyrian empire is well known. Thus we identify the site of Eden by both the physical and the historical geography of our narrative.

Having, however, thus verified this unique and ancient geographical description, we may go a step farther, and find the date of the narrator himself. He is clearly not an antediluvian writer, for his political geography, according

¹ Connected no doubt with the Sepharvaim and Sippara of early times, and with the early settlement of Semitic Elamites in Persia.

² In most modern maps it is otherwise, but Loftus shows that this is incorrect, our old geographer in Genesis being more accurate than those of more modern times.

³ *Journal of Biblical Archaeology*, November and December, 1893.

to the tenth chapter of the same book, applies to post-diluvian times. But he belongs to a very early post-diluvian time—to that age when the Cushite empire founded by Nimrod was still dominant on the Lower Tigris, when the Shemites of Asshur and Havilah were beginning to establish independent kingdoms on the north and east, destined at a very early date to subvert that of the Cushites, and when Cush was a name not for an African but for an Asiatic nation. We know from the Chaldean records themselves that at a very ancient period the Elamite people, represented in the time of Abraham by Chedorlaomer and his allies, had already triumphed over the old Cushite kingdom, which was never restored to its primitive form. Therefore, just as this early writer fixes his geographical point of view on the bank of the Euphrates, he fixes his chronological standpoint between the time of Noah and that of Abraham, and probably nearer to the former than to the latter. The only other alternative would be to suppose that some later writer had contrived to place himself in imagination so closely in the geographical and historical environment of a supposed ancient author, that modern discoveries, of which he must have been entirely ignorant, would only serve to confirm his statements. This is simply incredible; but even this unlikely supposition has been provided for.

In the time to which we have referred the description of Eden, it is certain that the Persian Gulf extended farther to the north-west, and that the outlets of the four rivers of the Babylonian plain were more separated, and their banks even more low and marshy than in modern times. This was a consequence of a great post-glacial submergence, probably the same with the historical deluge. The locality was therefore less suited than even at present to be the Garden of the Lord. And much of it was probably submerged, and only in later times gradually reclaimed by the

silting-up of the head of the gulf. But in the early antediluvian time, the second continental period of geologists, it must have been higher than now, the Persian Gulf must have been in part dry land, the four rivers must have been more nearly united, and the marshy Babylonian plain may have been comparatively dry and forest-clad. Our old narrator must have known this as a historical or traditional fact, and that the site of the Garden of Eden had become greatly deteriorated if not obliterated in his time. Therefore, though he is bold enough to place the aboriginal abode of man in this unlikely locality, he makes no attempt to identify the precise site of the garden, but only of the district in which it had been situated. This is the attitude not of a writer of fiction, but of an annalist living near to the times which he describes, and rigidly adhering to the evidence before him, even when appearances were against it.

We have, therefore, arrived, on infallible evidence furnished by geology, geography and history, at the conclusion that the original author of the document of which the second chapter of Genesis forms a portion, flourished somewhere between the time of the Deluge and that of the patriarch Abraham. This conclusion cannot now be shaken by any literary criticism, and is in every way likely to be further confirmed by new discoveries. We have, further, a right on linguistic grounds to carry this statement forward, at least to the beginning of the fourth chapter, and to suppose that a writer who shows himself so careful and so accurate in his geography and history, will be equally so in the biographical details into which he next enters. Further, we cannot suppose that a document so important as this was unknown to Moses or other learned men of his time, and was left to be disinterred by later historians. If any literary evidence can be adduced to prove that it is a Hebrew translation by the great Lawgiver from a Turanian

original, or that its diction has been in any way modified or modernized, we may be prepared to listen to this; but nothing can shake the demonstration of its original date and geographical accuracy. The historical critics have thus at least one dated document from which they may, if so disposed, make a new departure in their investigations.

I do not propose to write a commentary on Genesis, and therefore in my next paper shall move onward to the narrative of the Deluge, which, if I mistake not, can now be very fully illustrated by geological and archæological facts, and referred to its true position as pre-Mosaic history.

J. WILLIAM DAWSON.

EPILOGUE.

IT is a fundamental point to prove that *Ἰουρπαίας* in *Luke* iii. 1 is an adjective; and, while I omit much that ought to be said on my side (especially as to the telling passage, Josephus, *Ant.* xiii. 11, 3), there is one argument which cannot be omitted.¹

Hitherto, in order to be quite safe, I have conceded that *Ἰουρπαία* perhaps occurs as a noun in the fourth century;

¹ It is rather embarrassing that a scholar of so much higher authority than myself as Dr. G. A. Smith should interpose in the middle of my argument, to settle the question against me, as has happened in this case. My concluding remarks were crushed out of the February number by want of space, and were intended, in their slightly enlarged form, to appear in the March number. I am sorry that, though he tells me he is so, I cannot recognise in Dr. Smith an ally in this matter; and, if the editor will permit, I shall append a note, as brief as I can, to state reasons for thinking that he has mixed up two different questions and looked from two varying points of view. My point is that *Luke* iii. 1 is right, not by a side-issue (as Dr. Smith admits to be possible), but by virtue of facts and of the customary and regular usage of the country. *Luke* iii. 1, 2 is one of the two most important passages for the future biographer of the author; and it seems strange to me that the evidence given in it to date the composition has never (so far as I know) been observed. For the controversy with Mr. Chase, the geographical question raised by Dr. Smith is immaterial. He merely shows that *Luke* is perhaps wrong geographically; but he admits the adjective in iii. 1.