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so dark and difficult, that I have not wondered if some have missed it.

As I draw near to the eternal world, I must confess I feel an increasing, perhaps I should say an alarming, indifference to the niceties of mere speculation. The spirit of the gospel is all: a spontaneous, an all-absorbing love, is the best light when we tread the dark passage. O, blessed Redeemer, beam on my dying hour with thy light, and I can adjourn all my speculative difficulties to the world where I shall *know even as I am known.*

ARTICLE IV.

SPECULATION AND THE BIBLE.

BY REV. JAMES W. M'LANE, D. D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THERE is much bold adventure, at present, in some departments of intellectual effort. A draft is frequently made upon the belief of the Christian, which he cannot honor. A possibility is pushed into the place of certainty. A mere *perhaps* has given to it all the importance of an undoubted fact. In many of our popular lectures, and in much of the current literature of our day, there is a departure from that which should be regarded as the legitimate domain of the scholar; a divergence from the course of a safe and salutary exercise of human reason; a non-observance of that "temperance over appetite," which, as Milton intimates, should be regarded by us in the pursuit of knowledge. There are boundaries in the domain of truth which must be recognized; lines, where certainty to us must, in the nature of the case, cease, and where mystery must begin; limits, we may add, within which man has his safety, his intellectual freedom, and his moral elevation. When he goes beyond these, and draws

upon his imagination for his facts, and affects to feel "at home where angels bashful look," he is no longer free. His reason is in bondage. His mind is warped and fettered by its own action. The attempt to convert what is speculative or visionary into important truth, reacts with injurious influence upon him. The cravings of a man's intellectual nature, which draw him in this direction, require restraint just as really as those of any other passion or appetite. Hence the great English lexicographer was wont to pray that his mind might be kept free from the disturbing influence of "things vainly curious."

There is danger, indeed, from the opposite extreme. Men may be affected by a lethargy that is *unthinking*, as well as by an activity that is unscrupulous. In our search for truth, we have to sail between Scylla and Charybdis; and we may be just as really perilled by *not doing* as we are by over-doing. The sunken rock may sometimes be even more dangerous than that which rises above the surface. No stirring, wholesome influence, at least, can come from any blind worship of the past; from the action of those who turn their back to the future, and reject all free and manly thought on subjects of legitimate inquiry, and who, through fear of going too fast or too far, are unwilling to move at all. Such men insist upon a blind, implicit faith, and would tie us down in bondage to the past, and have us look upon the fossil remains of man's wisdom found in the strata of "the dark ages," as of equal authority with God's own imperishable truth. But while we have no sympathy with any such senseless homage to fallible human authority, we have still less with that proud, defiant *rationalism* which exalts reason above revelation, or with that *philosophy* which builds its house on the sand, converts hypotheses into facts, and turns the Mosaic narrative into a "myth," and the miracles of the Bible into a "burden," that the truth has to endure, not the argument of omnipotence by which it is triumphantly established. As much as we dislike the stagnation of a *Dead Sea* in the moral world, we dread even more the influence of these cold, dreary, and barren summits of intellectual pride and boastful human

reason. We cannot, indeed, find the golden age of this world in the centuries of ignorance and oppression, nor can we suppose that we shall enter upon its elevations in adopting many of the conclusions of modern speculation. Our hope for man is neither in the wisdom of the past, nor in the inspiration of the present. We can see nothing indicative of progress in any blind homage to human authority, or in any apotheosis of human reason. Advancement lies in avoiding both these extremes; in opening the Bible, and in opening also the field of nature; in encouraging free and full inquiry, and in guarding, most carefully, the enthusiasm awakened in the pursuit of truth, by those great considerations which a proper prudence will ever throw around such action.

There is spread out before man, in this world, a wide and rich domain for intellectual effort, in which "every power may find sweet employ." But it must be remembered that there are metes and bounds in this work which must be recognized; certain termini, which limit all mental effort—at which, therefore, men must consent to stop in their speculations. One of these boundary lines is the *limited grasp of the human intellect*. Man soon reaches what is ultimate to him. He cannot escape from himself, or fly without wings. However philosophy may boast of her powers, the fact of this limitation meets her at every step. A seraph has his mysteries. Man finds his. He soon comes to a point where his knowledge ceases, to depths which he cannot fathom, to heights he cannot climb. The difficulty is in himself, in the constitution of his own mind, in his limited understanding. Many things are thus hidden from his view. Vast fields of truth are fenced off from him by barriers which he can neither scale nor remove. He may, indeed, affect to see all, to "look through the universe, and into regions beyond;" but a higher wisdom will teach him that he can know only in part.

Another great fact which should underlie all human inquiry is *the entire, absolute truth of the Bible*. Here there should be no possible doubt, not a moment's hesitation. Beginning with this, others of great importance will follow from it. This assumed, the Bible will be regarded as con-

sistent with itself in all its parts, and as a unit in all its teachings. For, if God is the author of the book, then its harmony must, of necessity, be complete. There can be in it no clashing of sentiment whatever. Its light may and does differ *in degree*, in different portions of it. There is in it the dawn, the sunrise, and the noontide of its glory. But the light all comes from the same orb, and the difference is owing to the position of man, not to the source whence the light comes. There is no contradiction, no collision, in the Bible. We should just as soon think of finding it in nature as in God's word; just as soon expect to find contradiction among the stars; to see Mazzeroth coming forth, in his season, against Orion. The idea is utterly impossible upon any Christian postulate respecting the scriptures. It should, therefore, be regarded and treated by the friends of truth as a great weakness in any one, and as utterly unworthy of any manly intellect. The supposition ought to be as offensive to Christian sentiment and feeling as the suggestion, that God can be false, or that he can deceive.

A third great landmark in all human inquiry is the fact that *the testimony of the Bible is the highest that we can have of the truth of anything*. It is the testimony of him who is omniscient, and who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Our business, therefore, is simply to ascertain what the Bible does teach. When we have found this, we have found *the truth*. There is, and can be, no clearer light, no higher evidence, no greater certainty. To look for any such thing, is to look for that which can be added to what is infinite. When God speaks, the question is settled. The testimony is complete, the truth is known. Here, then, we reach the ultimate; and here, therefore, men must stop, and be satisfied. Action beyond this is weakness, is arrogant presumption. Men sink in any attempt to rise higher. They put out the light in their efforts to kindle it into a brighter flame.

There is yet another conservative element of influence, which should be thrown around all human inquiry, namely, the fact that *the Bible and Nature agree perfectly in their*

teaching. The only difference is in *the degree* of light, and in *the extent* of the illumination. In the one, the light comes to us directly from God, and is full and clear; in the other, it also comes from him, but is *reflected* to us from his works, and, consequently, is less clear and abundant. Nature, when compared with the Bible, is like the outer bow which spans the bosom of the cloud, where the colors, though less distinct and beautiful, are yet essentially the same with those of the inner and more perfect glory. The harmony, therefore, between the greater and lesser light, in which God has revealed himself to us, is complete. The agreement is perfect. Hence it follows that science, which is simply a general collection of the facts or principles in a particular department of nature, can never contradict the Bible, and that the Bible, when rightly interpreted, can never be arrayed against science. Both are from God; and, therefore, there can be no antagonism between them. If there seems to be collision, then one of two things must be true: either the facts are not as they are stated, or the Bible is not rightly understood in its language relative to those facts. If, for example, geology can demonstrate that the flood was *not* universal, then the language of Moses, which, as generally understood, asserts that universality, must have a *limited sense* given to it. God's word and works must harmonize. There can be no discrepancy between them. The divine perfections make it impossible.

We have tarried thus long on the threshold of our subject, because these great conservative facts are not recognized in much of the speculations of the present day. It will be said, we know, that the Bible was not given to teach natural science; that its object is not to explain to us the mechanism of the universe, or to make known even the structure of our globe. Its great object, we admit, is a spiritual one — is to reveal to man the grace of God through a Redeemer. But, while this is its chief end, yet in effecting this, the Bible must necessarily touch upon many things collateral with it — upon all that have any bearing or influence, friendly or adverse, upon the accomplishment of its own

great purpose. It must reveal God to us in his true relation to man, and to all around him. It must therefore speak, as it does, of the heavens and the earth, and of God as the Creator of all things, as the Being who spoke and it was done. It must have much to say about *his works*, must point to them as showing his eternal power and Godhead, and as evincing, by a necessity of logic, that design so manifest, that mechanism so complete, and that harmonies so universal, must have their origin in a Being of infinite intelligence. Constituted as man is, made to trace back effects to their cause, to look for a doer in what is done, the Bible must meet this demand of man's intellectual and moral nature. The first chapters of Genesis, therefore, are a necessity in the revelation of God's grace to man. They are essential to its main object. The Bible would not have been complete without them. Aside from this portion of the sacred volume, we would have had an effect without its cause, a world without its maker, a shadow from nothing, an unfolding apocalypse from no beginning.

We may say in this connection that, if there is any part of the Bible further removed from the deductions of human reason, or more fully a matter of pure revelation than another, it is these first chapters of the Pentateuch. What could any man know, or reason out for himself, about the beginning of this world? Where was he when the heavens were stretched out, and when the foundations of the earth were laid? Aside from revelation, what could any one know with certainty here? Where in the height above or in the depth below is it to be found? Who has ever ascended so high as to bring it down, or descended so far as to bring it up? Man might, indeed, have inferred the existence of the Creator from the evidence of design everywhere apparent in his works. But the scriptural idea of creation could never have been reasoned out by him. It is entirely above his reach. If there is, therefore, in all the Bible, a place where the sacred writer was simply an amanuensis; a place where the thought and the expression of it are both from God, and where, consequently, men

should feel that the ground on which they stand is holy, — it is here on the threshold of the Bible, where everything is so full of mystery and of miracle, and where man could know nothing except it was given to him from above. And yet, strange as it may seem, it is here that men have speculated most, and made demands upon the friends of the Bible, which many at least cannot in anywise concede. To some of these we shall presently advert.

It is not strange that these speculations have awakened fears in the minds of good men. The Christian has a deep interest in the Bible. He cannot consent to have any part of it treated as an oriental myth, or twisted in its interpretation to suit the theories or opinions of men. It is God's word. The whole of it is from him. While it is human in the hand that wrote it, and in the dress it wears, yet in *that hand*, and in *that dress*, no less than in the priceless truth thus conveyed to us, it has *the mark* of God upon it. It is his truth — his in its sentiments and in its language, his in its whole being and character. The Christian cannot let it go. He has an eternal interest in it. And he has an interest in science also. He does not regard it as "a foe to grace," though it has often been pressed into the ranks of the enemy. But this was *forced* work. Science is from God, and cannot, therefore, be in conflict with his word. The naturalist and the student of the Bible worship, indeed, in different parts of the great temple of truth; but they have substantially the same object before them. Both are seeking for truth. The one searches for it in the things which are made; the other, in the clearer light of inspiration. The former sees it in the outer court, the latter finds it in the inner sanctuary; both may, therefore, exult together in the vision and the glory.

The Christian, we know, is sometimes regarded as living in a very small enclosure. Some seem to look upon him as precluded from free inquiry, as cramped and fettered by his faith, and as unwilling, therefore, to allow science to have any influence over him in the interpretation of the Bible. But, whatever reason there may be in certain cases for such

an opinion, there is, as it seems to us, often just as little expansion in the other direction. If we are not greatly mistaken, the naturalist is quite as much wedded to his theory as the student of the Bible is to his exegesis. He is just as much disposed to live wholly within his domain, and to exclude all biblical influence from his conclusions. Indeed, there seems often in scientific men a determination to reason about facts in nature just as if there was no greater light, and to form their conclusions without the slightest recognition of the testimony of the Bible on the subject. There is an entire rejection of all counsel or influence from that quarter. The Christian has therefore, as it seems to us, the most reason for complaint here. The greater light, in this case, is excluded. It is just as if a man were to examine some piece of intricate mechanism by moonlight, and to form his opinion about it without once looking at it in the daytime, or allowing that illumination to affect his judgment in the matter. The man who sees things only in the light of nature, and who forms conclusions about them which rest only on probability, and which would be set aside at once if the Bible were allowed to speak, is certainly not a *free man* in the wide domain of truth. And he who, "in weighing probabilities, will not permit the moral influence of his decision to affect his judgment in the case," sets aside a law of the moral world, and unhinges one of its great fundamental principles. We can see no freedom, and no philosophy, in adopting any conclusion which rests only on a possible peradventure, and which contradicts the plain and obvious meaning of the Bible. There is no intellectual elevation, and no wisdom in such action. The Christian is willing to meet the man of science on *fair and equal* ground. He is willing to look at *his facts*, his various formations, his stratified rocks, his fossil remains, and to allow them to affect his mind in explaining the Bible. But the Christian has *his facts* also, which must be taken into the account in the explanation of natural phenomena. He has as clear and positive a testimony respecting the order of creation, in the Bible, as the naturalist has in the rocks. And while he

ought not to adopt hastily a meaning given to the words of inspiration, which is seemingly in conflict with the deductions of science, he has a right to claim from the student of nature an equal, if not greater, reluctance to draw any conclusion from his facts which is contrary to the obvious teaching of the Book of God. Wisdom will ever be cautious here.

It should be borne in mind that there is a vast difference between *fact and speculation*, between truth and the mode of explaining its why and wherefore. It is a fact that the earth moves, that man breathes, that fire burns; but the explanation of these facts is theory, is the opinion of a fallible human judgment, and may or may not be the true one. And hence we contend that sound philosophy will not allow any one to explain natural phenomena in a way which plainly contradicts the statements of inspiration. A human hypothesis can never, in any right-thinking mind, be arrayed against the evident meaning of the divine record. Here is the trouble in the domain of nature. We admit the facts stated by the naturalist. We recognize with him the torn and shattered appearance of our globe, its different strata, and the varied testimony in "the museum of the rocks." Our difficulty is not with the facts in this case, but with *the mode* of explaining them. The superstructure is broader than the foundation. The conclusion drawn demands a much wider basis of *facts* than has yet been constructed. What we complain of, therefore, is, that men judge here before the time; that they hasten to conclusions before they have gathered up and considered all the facts which bear upon them. They reason and theorize here, just as if the whole field of this vast subject had been thoroughly explored by them; just as if they actually had in their grasp all that was concerned in producing the phenomena which they would explain. But the fact is, they are as yet only on the threshold of investigation here; are at work only in a little corner of this immense field, and have as yet only dug through the crust of the earth here and there. And what is stranger still is, that in their speculations they have virtually

excluded from their basis of calculation the presence of *any divine power*, and seek to bring all things into their present state and position through the operation of natural causes. They take for granted that *the same laws* of formation existed in the beginning which operate now, and that things were produced then as they are at present. The exertion of any direct omnipotence is not taken into the account. All miracle is excluded; and phenomena, which owe their existence to the fiat of God, are explained upon principles which remove them from any connection with the word of his power, and bring them down into line with a uniform, natural causation. But miracle pervades the whole framework of our globe. God spake, and it came into being. To set aside this fact, to adopt a theory which does not recognize the presence of this power in giving existence and form to things, and to attempt to explain the structure of the earth as one would the growth of a plant or the formation of a hailstone, is, in our judgment, far aside from any principle of sound philosophy. We go further, and say, with a master in scientific attainments, that we deem it "presumption in man to theorize where everything is recorded as a matter of fact, and where the mode and the order of creation are ascribed to the will of God as their immediate cause." Just as well might we enter the field, covered with the omnipotent mercy of Jesus, and undertake to account for the results which followed his bidding, upon natural principles. It is surely some proof of the justice of these remarks, that the men who indulge in such speculations are not agreed among themselves as to how the phenomena in question are to be explained. One has this theory, and another that. Proof enough is it that they want *more facts* upon which to plant the fulcrum of their lever, before they attempt to pry up this world into the light in which it was when spoken into existence. Here is the trouble. Speculative men are "impatient to doubt," are unwilling to wait, and, as one of their own number confesses, are prone to make "hasty generalizations, founded on *mere negative evidence*." Hence the demands that are now made

upon the Bible and upon the faith of the Christian. They all come from *the theories* started by men to explain the facts of science, and are advocated aside from any direct recognition of Omnipotence in producing the phenomena of our globe. To some of these demands we will now call attention. It is not strange that they have excited alarm in many minds, and that they are sternly opposed. There is reason, we think, for such opposition. We are willing, indeed, to have "the torch of history and of science held up to the Bible;" but let it be *the torch* of history and of science, and not some deceptive light of man's kindling.

Some, in order to harmonize the Bible with the discoveries of geology, maintain that the first chapters of Genesis are not to be considered as a *true historical narrative* of the creation. They tell us that this part of the sacred record is a *mythic poem*, a *vision*, a *pictorial representation*, which has in it, indeed, the idea that all things were created by Jehovah, but that all else is mere shading and embellishment; and that the narrative, therefore, is not to be received as an exact historical statement of what took place in the creation of the world; that it is true as *poetry*, but not as *prose*. They would have us believe that Moses gathered up this account of the creation from *tradition*, from the myths and fables of the Orient, the drift-wood that had floated down through the centuries, and had lodged somewhere in Egypt, or in the wilderness, where the great Hebrew lawgiver found it, and from it constructed his narrative. The inspiration of Moses, therefore, was, as they assert, not that of suggestion, but simply that of superintendence. He took what he found in the drag-net of time — the myths and fables respecting the creation, the fall of man, and the deluge, which tradition threw in his way — and "winnowed out the chaff," and preserved the wheat. Thus they make a highway for geology through this part of the Bible, and thus they would produce harmony between them. They profess, indeed, to believe in the inspiration of the Mosaic narrative, and some of them even tell us that these traditions, from which Moses derived his information, were inspired, and yet they affirm that from

this inspiration he "winnowed out the chaff." It is useless to ask what ground there is for all this. There is none. The theory is itself a myth, a vision. It is of no possible benefit as a theory, and when put forth as a fact, as it has been, we regard it as positively mischievous. It fails utterly to solve the difficulty, and does injury to the truth in the vain attempt. It tends to lower the Bible in the estimation of men, and is calculated to undermine all confidence in its specific statements. It turns the prose of Moses into mythic poetry, in order to make it true, and strips the whole narrative of all meaning, except that which is symbolized to us in the flowing oriental costume in which it is arrayed. Such a theory mocks all our convictions. The first chapters of Genesis are simple but sublime prose. "The whole," says Dr. Pye Smith, "is in the style of plain narrative, evidently intended to be understood as a simple, straightforward, unadorned history;" and, he adds: "it would be indicative of a deplorable want of taste for the beauty of language, to put a patch of poetic diction upon this face of natural simplicity." The reasoning that would turn it into allegory and patchwork, is certainly in strange and painful conflict with the assertion of an inspired apostle, that Moses wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

Another demand made in modern speculation respects *the antiquity of the earth*. The Bible does not, indeed, fix this point with any great degree of exactness, and yet it furnishes certain data which do not allow us to give to the earth a very great longevity. The universal impression which its teaching has made on this subject is, that this world has not existed *very many* thousand years. But very unlike this is the teaching now in the speculations of men. In this, the earth has existed, in one form or another, for millions of years. Long ere man was created, it passed through successive "dynasties of gigantic vegetable and animal life," and was "rolling down through gulfs and fiery cataclysms," undergoing great changes, and being revolutionized under each separate dynasty. At first there is "*coelum undique et undique pontus*;" no land appears; and for thousands of ages fish of peculiar

form and size swim through those pre-Adamic waters, and prey upon each other. Ages roll on, and these fish cease to exist, and their remains are embedded in the mud and sand at the bottom of the ocean, which harden into rocks, and gradually rise and become the dry land. Then a new era begins, and an immense vegetation covers the land, and the fern grows up like trees. Again the ages roll on, and this vegetable kingdom dies, disappears; and the dry land sinks, and the sea sweeps over it; and in that sea strange forms appear; huge reptiles, terrible monsters, more hideous than those of fabulous memory. These have their day, and then the period of reptiles ceases, and what was above the waters again sinks, and the land becomes sea, and the sea dry land. Thus elevations and submersions succeed each other; and thus the treadles in this geologic loom go up and down for millions of years, until at length the web is woven, and the earth becomes a fit habitation for man. *Tantæ molis erat terrarum condere orbem!*

But while many geologists demand a kind of "geologic eternity" for the production of the phenomena found in the earth, they are by no means agreed as to *where*, in the Mosaic narrative, the chasm occurs for the introduction of their immense time-drafts. Some, with Chalmers, find the opening between the first and second verses of Genesis; while Hugh Miller and others see none there, and convert the six days of creation into so many periods of immense length. When asked for the proof of such periods, they point us to "the testimony of the rocks," to what they are, and to what they contain. These are their chronometer. They measure the thickness of the rocks, and, judging from laws now existing, they tell us how long these rocks must have been in forming. They examine the organic remains found in the rocks, and, in the same way, they make out a similar draft upon time. The rocks are their chronicle, their proof. But there is in all this reasoning a postulate which is not granted, and which requires demonstration. We admit the facts stated: the thickness of the rocks, and the fossil remains found in them. But the conclusion drawn from these facts we cannot

receive. There is a hiatus in the reasoning, which must first be filled up. The proof would be conclusive if *the same causes* operated in the beginning that operate now in the formation of such things; but until this is proved, the whole argument rests on *mere conjecture*. If rocks were formed at first as they are formed now, then their size would be a true chronometer. But if they were not thus formed, if they then came into being at the bidding of God, then this measurement determines nothing. It now requires some twenty-one years or more for the human frame to attain its full growth and development; but how long was the body of Adam in coming to maturity? The great mistake in all this speculation is the supposition that *the same causes* operated at first which operate now in the production of such phenomena—a supposition that is contrary to fact. Omnipotence was concerned in laying the foundations of the earth. The difficulty with the geologist, therefore—the reason why he wants so much time for these formations—is, that he does not take into the account the fiat of God. All things are based upon the action of natural causes. Hence their development runs through such unmeasured, creeping ages. This theory, therefore, virtually excludes God from the work of his hands; is an investiture of nature in the place of divine power. It sweeps away the reason given in the fourth commandment for the Sabbath, and leaves us absolutely without any account of the creation of this world as it now is. Reason and the Bible, therefore, alike oppose it. It is unlike him who speaks and it is done.

Another point which speculation now calls upon the Christian to give up is, that there was *any change or deterioration in nature, consequent upon the fall of man*. He alone, it seems, was affected by the transgression in Eden. There was no fall of nature with him, no change in this world in consequence of his act of disobedience. The idea of such a fall has, indeed, long been held by men; but they have all been mistaken; and Milton was dreaming when he represented the earth as feeling the wound, and nature as sighing, and through all her works as giving signs of woe that all was lost.

Such antiquated notions, it seems, can no longer be held. That darkness is past, and the true light now shines out from the earth upon this subject, showing that the order of things was not changed by the incoming of sin; that nature was not affected by man's disobedience. There was no backward movement. From the beginning, the work of preparing the earth for the existence of man went steadily on. Nature continued to improve in form and feature until man sinned. Then its progress was arrested. It was then good, but not perfect; good for the end designed, but, as it is now, an imperfect thing. All this, we are told, science now demonstrates to be true. But this is mere assertion. There is no such demonstration. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me; neither is it found in the land of the living. It is all a mere theory, and weak even as such. How any one, with the Bible before him, can adopt such a conceit, is indeed a marvel. It is in direct antagonism to the statements of Moses and to the reasoning of Paul. It makes nothing of the curse upon the ground—nothing of its thorns and thistles, nothing of the wail of nature. He who can set aside the testimony of the Bible on this point, or construe it as a poetic embellishment, can easily free himself from all trouble or constraint from the scriptures, and turn any part of the book of God into an oriental myth.

Many geologists, however, who have searched further and seen more, do not receive this "progressive theory." It is disproved by facts. Instead of progress, they find, as they tell us, *increasing deformity, confusion, and derangement*, as they travel down, through the rock-chronicled centuries, towards the period of man's creation. They see such evidence of convulsion, such proof of "a general world-lapse," as compels them to admit the disturbing influence of sin upon our world. But they invert the order of occurrence. They put the effect before the cause. They make the ruin precede the fall of man, and the sequences of transgression a preparation for its appearance. They will have it that the framework of our globe was riven a thousand ages before the thunderbolt of

offended Majesty struck the earth ; that, for high moral considerations, the consequences of man's disobedience were made to anticipate his existence ; and, consequently, that all the disturbance and deformity found in nature and registered in the rocks are simply "the epic in stone of man's great history" before the time. Their theory therefore is, that nature was made to assume its present form and condition ; that fish, fowl, and beast, that tree, plant, and flower, were formed as they now are, in order to suit what would be in the future ; and that even the serpent, "whom the motherhood of nature," for this reason, refused to finish, "was thrown from her lap *without feet*, and doomed to creep upon the earth," a mean, abortive creature, cursed above all cattle, in order to be a type to man of the evil of sin, when created and when crushed by its influence. All was proleptical — was made to anticipate the fall of man, and his wants when in that condition. Nature was formed to suit that great forthcoming event. Through long, unmeasured periods before the existence of man, everything was converging into its present broken, disordered condition, in order to prepare a fit place for *man as a sinner*. A far-off country was fashioned for a future starving prodigal ; was filled with swine and with husks a thousand ages before that prodigal was born, that when born, and when a wanderer from his father's house, he might see in the character of that country, in its swine and in its husks, a full and fitting picture of himself, of his degradation and wretchedness. The difficulty, however, with this theory is in its *postulated inversion* of God's method of acting, and in its utter contravention of the great law of sequence in the whole economy of his providence. The lightning strikes the earth before there is anything in or upon the earth to call it down ; and the Creator gives existence to a pure and perfect creature in a torn and disordered world !

But there is yet, it seems, another step to be taken in this direction ; another and deeper eclipse of the truth, to which we must submit. Nature is not only in the same condition in which it was before the fall of man, but *suffering and*

death, we are told, were here, and had been for thousands of ages, before that event. The teaching that covers the earth with innocence and peace until man appears, and by transgression "darkens the whole face of nature," and thus introduces suffering and death, is all wrong. "The testimony of the rocks" sets it all aside as a dream, and proves that for uncounted ages before man's creation the present type of things existed in this world; that from the very beginning, almost, death reigned over all; that then, as now, the animals were savage in their disposition, and that the strong preyed upon the weak. The position is even taken that "organic life necessarily involves suffering and death." Such is the theory. It does not recognize the influence of sin in producing the present aspect of things. It sweeps away its curse from the ground, and all its disturbing force from the framework of the earth, and turns into hyperbole and embellishment the wail and lament of a bleeding, dying world. Nay, it makes the whole creation groan and travail in pain while in a condition which God pronounces *very good*, and over which the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy; a condition in which the savageness of the hyena and the ferocity of the shark are in full exercise, and in which the kid writhes in the grasp of the lion, and the lamb utters its piercing cry within the crushing coil of the anaconda. All this is good, yes, very good.

Such is not the teaching of the Bible. According to this book, nature in the beginning was perfect. All things were very good. Suffering and death were unknown until sin marred the work of God. The fall of man drew everything after it. He was at the head of creation here; had dominion over all. His act affected himself, his race, the whole world in which he existed. "The earth felt the wound." The ground was cursed on account of his transgression. Nature in him, and around him, fell in his fall; was changed; was subjected to vanity; was made to exhibit to man the evil he had brought upon himself; to reflect from its own disturbed, torn, and ruined condition, the deeper ruin wrought in him. This is the teaching of the

Bible, and here the church of God has hitherto planted her feet. Through long centuries of opposition she has contended that the condition of things in this world was affected by the incoming of sin into the domain of peace and purity; and that the great objection to the *goodness* of the Creator, drawn from the existence here of suffering and death, is met by the fact that these things are *the consequence* of sin; that they show its character, and help to check its baneful influence over man. But this new teaching sets aside this argument; rejects what Moses asserts, what Paul affirms; tears down and sweeps away this great breastwork, and leaves us in the open field, exposed to the enemy's fire, and compelled to defend the character of the Creator in a world declared by him to be very good, and yet full of suffering and death, of agony and blood. We can stand on no such ground. We turn away from it, as we would from the brink of a yawning chasm.

One step more and we reach the top of the ladder in this modern speculation, and look out upon a world as it was before sin entered it, and with *no unit* in the origin of its inhabitants, and with *no common blood* as the bond of their brotherhood. The unity of mankind is denied. Science, it is claimed, proves that we have all been mistaken in believing, with Moses and Paul, that God made of *one blood* all the nations of the earth. This antiquated idea has also to be given up. Diversity in form and complexion demonstrates plurality of origin; shows that each distinct race now on the globe had in the beginning an Adam of its own; that the African, the Asiatic, and the European, had each at first a parentage peculiar to himself. The theorizers here differ in their object. Some would thus overthrow the authority of the Bible, while others wish in this way to break down the brotherhood of man, in order to find in the inferiority of a portion of the human family a reason for their enslavement.

We need not say that such teaching contradicts the plain and positive statements of the Bible. It subverts the doctrine of our common apostasy in Adam, and our common redemption in Christ. To put it forth as *truth*, to dignify

it with the name of science, is, in our judgment, a dishonor to the intellect and the heart of the country, and a direct assault upon the faith of Christendom. The reasoning here is exceedingly shallow. It looks only at the outward appearance, at the form and figure of flesh and blood; just as if these things constituted the whole man, or formed the peculiar elements of his being. The advocate of this theory takes what is common to man with the animal world, and reasons about him just as he would about a monkey or a horse. But, in considering this question of identity, we must look at *the spiritual* in man, as well as at the physical. It is "the *mind* that makes the man." Within, all men are alike. The spiritual is the same. All have understanding, memory, conscience. All think and feel and speak. The state of this inner man, this immortal inmate of the body, is everywhere the same. All are in a fallen condition. All are moved by the same hopes, are agitated by the same fears.

The diversity among men in form, figure, and complexion, no more proves a diversity of origin, than a difference in stature among the members of a family demonstrates that they have not all had the same parentage. There may be a great diversity in all these respects, and yet a unity of origin. Men may differ from each other in many particulars, and yet in all that separates them we may not have a single element of their higher nature. It is in that higher nature that we are to find their unity, not in the form and figure of the body. There is a *spirit* within. This is the man; and all who have this are men, and of the same household of being. Put this in any inclosure of flesh and blood, and you have man, immortal man, "with reason throned upon his brow." Yes, put that which thinks and feels and acts — put the human mind, into any body, black, white, or red, and you have a member of the human family, one for whom atoning blood has been shed. This is the bond. This constitutes the unity of mankind. And this is the brotherhood of earth, which scepticism and oppression are trying to break up. But before they can do this, Moses must be set aside, the statements of an inspired apostle must be dis-

proved, and the whole book of God be turned into an unmeaning fable.

Such is *the spirit* in much of modern speculation, and such the demand made by it upon our faith. If this spirit is not checked, it will certainly undermine the confidence of many in the Bible, and lead young minds, especially, into "a cold, dark, surging sea" of doubt. The danger from such speculation is in its warfare upon the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Sacred Record; an inspiration which, while it admits the peculiarities of each individual writer, and employs his memory, thought, taste, and feeling, has still running through all its words and statements an infallible divine guidance, which places it above the reach or possibility of mistake or error. The question, therefore is, whether we shall continue to stand upon the old ground of such inspiration, or shall betake ourselves to that which is *pictorial and symbolic*. This is the question of the age. The great battle-field is the threshold of the Bible, and the contest between young speculation and old theology is, whether the Mosaic narrative, the genesis of the earth and of man there given, is to be received as simple historic truth, or is to be construed into mythic poetry, into vision and allegory, and be regarded as a piece of patchwork from tradition. This is the issue that is now made, and the friends of the Bible should understand it, and gird themselves for the encounter. And, while we would cleave most firmly to the word of God, we would maintain our hold upon his works also. They are full of his goodness, of his wisdom, and of his creative power. His hand is in the deep places of the earth, and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hand formed the dry land. We would, therefore, have the earth unbosom to man the treasures of his wisdom and power, and thus praise the Lord. We would have all his works so speak of him and of his word, as to magnify that word in our esteem, as he has magnified it, above all other manifestations of his name, and thus make us feel that we have in the Bible a sure word of prophecy, — the truth, and nothing but the truth, — a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.