

SERMONS IN STORIES.

BY A BANKER.

The persistent assaults of the so-called Higher Criticism upon the Mosaic account of the Creation, having raised doubts in the minds of a few as to the authenticity and truth of that portion of the Bible, perhaps a brief investigation as to any agreement which may exist between geological facts and the biblical description of the sequence in which the earth, and the life upon it, was created, may help to dissipate the fears of those who would regard with regret any apparent victory of the Critics over the old Book.

Now none of the Critics would aver that geology as a science was ever initiated, or that there existed the slightest knowledge of palaeontology when the book of Genesis was written, what ever the date may have been to which in their wisdom they have been pleased to assign it; therefore it can be incontrovertibly proved that the successive order of creation as detailed for each succeeding "day" or, agrees absolutely with the facts as revealed by geology, we are fully entitled to our belief that such an exact and accurate synchronism could only have been narrated by Divine inspiration. It is conceivable that if written without that inspiration perhaps one or two of the "days" might have been in their right place, but that that should have been so in the case of all seven, is certainly not conceivable for the chances against it would be no less than 5,040, that being the number of changes in which seven figures are capable of being transposed.

We may in the first place premise that few educated people understand the word translated "day" to mean a solar day of twenty-four hours, but that each "day," was an æon of very prolonged duration. This is indicated in almost as many words in Genesis ii, 4. "In the 'day,' (not days) that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant, etc., the whole seven æons being alluded to as one day.

We read that "In the beginning" God created the heaven and the earth, and that darkness prevailed over the earth. Now geology shows that the primary strata or plutonic rocks, as they are called, were at one time in a state of confusion, and that necessarily an enormous volume of dense and impenetrable vapor must have arisen from the molten basalt and other igneous rocks, which entirely obscured the sun's light, causing absolute darkness to prevail.

To prove this, it is only necessary to observe the workmen paving a street with asphalt (one of the primary rocks), and remark the dense fumes arising when the heated irons are applied. Subsequently, as the earth cooled down, these fumes and vapours became more attenuated, and although the sun was not yet visible, yet it exerted sufficient influence through the mists to cause the alternations of day and night. On the "fifth day the spirit of God "brooded" (R.V.) upon the face of the waters, and geology tells us that Life, at first of a low type, now appears on the earth. Throughout the second and third periods the earth continues to cool down, the vapours rising now and forming dense clouds which will obstruct the sun. During this latter period the earth produced vast quantities of rank and luxuriant vegetation, almost solely cryptogams and other plants not requiring the direct rays of the sun, the coal measures being then in course of formation. Geology reveals absolutely no traces of animals or birds at this epoch. In the course of the fourth day the mists and vapours which had hitherto enveloped the earth cleared off, and the sun which had been created in the beginning causing the days and nights of the first day at length appeared. "God made the two great lights." Now the Hebrew word translated here, "made," viz, 'asah,' has quite another meaning to that describing the creation of the heavens and the earth, *bara*, which means to make or create out of nothing, the former word not bearing that interpretation. For instance, it is employed in the sentence "Jeroboam made priests of the lowest class." This does not of course mean that Jeroboam made the men but only caused them to perform certain functions. In like manner the sun now performed the function of "ruling" the day and the night.

The fifth day was the day of the great amphibious "monsters" (R.V.), viz, the iguanodons, megatheriums, ichthyosaurs, and innumerable other great saurians, whose remains are now being unearthed in such profusion, geology proving that until after the close of the coal period not a trace or vestige of these animals existed on the earth. And on the sixth day "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, etc." Geology now shows us that after the age of those great monsters, — cattle, horses, deer, lions and tigers, etc., which had hitherto been absent, now appear in vast quantities over the face of the earth. As the great geolo-

gist, Geikie, speaking of this period remarks, "The great reptiles, too, which were the dominant animals of the earth's surface . . . now wane before the increase of the mammalia" (Text Book of Geology, page 836)

And lastly "God created man in His own image," geology confirming this by the entire absence of any human remains until the late tertiary period; at this time causing to grow "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food"; to which Science remarks that "the principal flowers, fruit trees, and cereals appeared only a short time previous to the human race" (Agassiz). Finally "God ended His work which He had made," and Science again confirms by remarking "As far as our present knowledge goes, no fresh species of plants or animals were created after man." (Kinns)

Thus the sequence of creation, as detailed in the Bible, is absolutely confirmed by the discoveries of science, the very rocks themselves bearing witness with their ancient testimony to the verity of its pages, enabling us (if such testimony were needed) to believe in the Holy Bible as being the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

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THE MIND.

BY A BANKER

Mankind is composed of body, soul, and spirit. Now the soul is not the spirit, any more than is the body, though more closely allied, the soul and spirit, it appears certain, never being parted; though it is equally certain that both these elements of the human being are parted from the third or corporeal element immediately the principle of "life" ceases to exist in the latter. Man appears, therefore, to be, like his Creator, if it be permissible, with the deepest reverence, to use the simile, a sort of trinity: three different and distinct essences or elements composing one human being. And it is conceivable that in those cases where children are born absolute idiots, that is with an unformed and undeveloped brain, involving the complete absence of any mental faculties, in other words, without spirit, that they also do not possess souls.

The body therefore appears in one sense to be the most important of the three component elements of mankind, for not only is the power and vigour of the spirit subject to the quality of the brain; but, more important, the fate of the soul, the ego, is determined, for indefinite æons, by the acts of the body. It is probable that the soul is but passive during its connection with the corporeal body; the spirit, however, exerts very great, though not complete, authority over it.

Now, the reason why the spirit does not exercise complete control over the body is that extraneous members of the spirit world, either angels or fallen angels, also, as it were, dwell around us or within us, prompting us either to good or to evil as the case may be; and although it is not given to them to have absolute control over us—for in that case man would no longer be a free agent—yet the power they are able to exert is very great indeed; so great, in fact, that even a St. Paul lamented that the good he would do he could not, on account of the sin which dwelt in him, causing him to cry out for deliverance from the body of this death. Now, if the spirit gives way to these fallen angels, it becomes in the course of time completely subject to them; they absolutely control it, and cause it, from a pure and holy state, to degenerate into a depraved and wicked condition. It is true that even a fallen angel can be, apparently, transformed into an angel of light if by so appearing, wrong-doing can be promoted. In fact, in many cases men are perhaps even prompted to do acts of charity, and to abstain from more flagrant sins, in order that they may be lulled into a state of false security, and be deterred from transferring their homage to their Creator.

The possession of mind is not limited to man, for those brilliant created beings, the angels, have doubtless powers of mind beyond those which are conferred upon him in the primary and corporeal stage of his existence. Possibly when the soul and spirit at the great general resurrection are re-united to the body, raised from corruption to new life, and all its grosser and earthly nature by a sudden transmutation transformed into ethereal incorruption, then the powers of the mind will be very largely augmented; for what we know now we shall know hereafter; and many a problem which to our limited understanding is at present a profound and unintelligible mystery, will then be altogether within our grasp; in fact, we shall then be equal to the angels, and possibly even we may have many of their high functions to perform. To them will be assigned the duty of severing the wicked from the just at the Last Day (Matthew xii, 39). To us however will be allotted a similar duty, for it is stated that we shall judge (fallen) angels (1 Cor. vi, 3). But at present we are a little lower than those angelic beings, for we are tied and bound with the chain of our sins, whereas they are pure and holy; we are temporarily subject to infirmity, they cannot know pain or sickness; our powers of body and mind are limited by our earthly nature, they know no such bounds. Both angels and men, however, it rebellious against their Almighty Creator, are hurled into the same dreadful place of punishment, there in common to suffer a terrible penalty for their crime. But happily for man, His supreme love has provided a Substitute, upon whom all our sins may be laid if we only will. Wether the death of the Son of God will avail in any way for the remission of the sin of rebellious angels, it is not for us to know: all we know is, that He took not on Him the nature of angels but was made like unto us.

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THOS. J. DILLON,
Dairy Supt.

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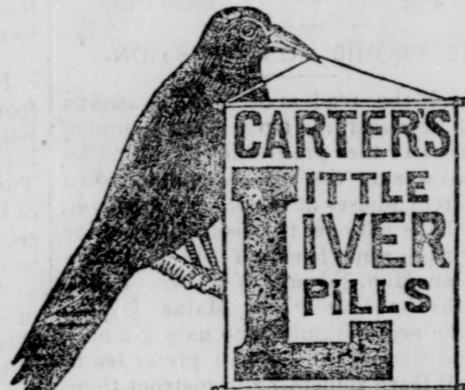
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