

ERUVIN;

OR,

MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH

THE

NATURE, HISTORY, AND DESTINY

OF MAN.

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BY THE REV.

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## ESSAY VI.

### THE FALLEN ANGELS

Common interpretation of Gen. vi. 1-4-ancient interpretation supported by, I. The title "Sons of God" II. The judgment of the Jewish Church III. The Fathers IV. Pagan Mythology V. Testimony of Scripture.

THE reader whose attention has never been drawn to the subject, would probably decide at once, that nothing can be more fanciful than the ancient opinion, now almost entirely given up, that the " Sons of God," mentioned Gen. vi. 4, were Angels. Many, perhaps, know of this opinion only from the writings of Mr . Thomas Moore (one of the writers who has thought fit to fictionize the truths of revelation), and many are not aware that it ever existed at all. Such persons, should this essay fall into their hands, I beg to assure, that it is not the love of paradox, or of maintaining an opinion

not generally held, but a thorough conviction that truth has been abandoned, and error substituted, which leads to my offering these remarks on the subject; and I would request them first candidly to consider the current explanation of that passage, and then to weigh what may be said in favour of the old opinion.

One thing more I would premise—some reader may say (for I often hear such language, and never without pain and pity), “What does it matter to us which opinion is right? Of what use would it be to us to know when, and why, and how, the angels fell? Is it not a curious speculative question, and will not one opinion do quite as well as another?” Such persons I am not anxious to answer in detail; being persuaded in my own mind that it is an important duty to get rid of error, as much as we can, on all subjects, and especially of all error, which has fastened on the Word of God; and that he who attempts to explain *any* verse of the Bible, which has been misunderstood, or to illustrate *any* fact of revelation, which has been misconceived, is well and usefully employed. The objector would, perhaps, see the nature of his objection in its real light, if he were to say distinctly, (as he does impliedly,) “What was

the use of revealing this or that? We could have done well enough without knowing it. In fact, we are so well without that knowledge, that when it is offered to us, we do not see it worth while to trouble ourselves about it.”

The passage in question is as follows :

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the SONS OF GOD saw the daughters of men that they were fair: and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants on the earth in those days; and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” Gen. vi. 1-4.

Now, with regard to what I have called the current explanation of this passage, I must say that it is not only in the highest degree *fanciful*, as being founded on mere imaginations; but also, that the fiction, when dressed up in its most plausible form, is grossly insulting to com-

mon sense. I will give it, as it stands, in three of the most commonly used recent expositions ; only taking leave here and there to interpolate a question or remark between brackets, believing that to be the most concise way of commenting, and the best mode of indicating that progress of assumption, by which error is rendered plausible.

Mr. Scott says-

“The spiritual worshippers of God are *his children*; and this honourable title is sometimes conferred on all who profess the true religion. [where?] These seem [how?] to have kept themselves for a long time distinct from such as were openly irreligious, or idolatrous; [if there were openly irreligious and idolatrous persons at that time;] the former uniting with Seth's descendants, the latter with Cain's. But at length, when the human race had greatly increased, and vast numbers of very beautiful women were observed among the irreligious or idolatrous party; [of which party, and the vast numbers of the beautiful women, we hear nothing in the Scriptures;] the worshippers of God were induced by unworthy motives, unreservedly to contract marriages with them, which made way for a rapid increase of wickedness, and an almost universal apostacy. These women are called, the daughters of *men,*' or rather of *Adam*<sup>1</sup>; [which, of

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<sup>1</sup> Why “rather!” Is it any thing more than a kind of pun, or childish quibble, on the word *Adam*? Does not the word *Adam* mean man in each of the first seven verses of this chapter! Some critics have attempted to draw such a

course, could not distinguish them from the daughters of Seth or of any body else]; as inheriting his fallen nature, “and imitating his sin, [though we do not hear of their sinning at all in the matter,] but not his repentance.”

The note in Mant and D'Oyly's Commentary is as follows :-

Chap. i. verse 2.- “The *Sons of God*. There are two famous interpretations of these words, besides that of some of the ancients, who took them to mean angels. Some understand by ‘the Sons of God,’ the great men, nobles, rulers, and judges, who being captivated with the beauty of the daughters of men, that is, of the meaner sort, [why so?] took by force and violence [of which we read not one word] as many as they pleased, [though the text does not in the least insinuate that they took more than one each.]

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distinction between אִישׁ, and אָדָם, as should give colour to this interpretation; as if אִישׁ meant men of high degree, and אָדָם men of low degree. But I apprehend this has no foundation ; and the truth seems to be, that אָדָם is commonly used to express the *human race* generally, or any individual *as belonging to it* ; אִישׁ more strictly a *man*, or *male person*. Hence it came to be used for *a husband*; and is even applied to the *male* of beasts Gen. vii. 2. There are, however, exceptions ; and one very curious one may be found Eccl. vii. 28 ; where אָדָם *Adam* is used in a sort of contradistinction to *women*; and, at the same time, in a way very opposite to that which has been suggested of its meaning the low or inferior part of mankind. As to the present case, surely “daughters of men,” means nothing more or less than “women;” just as “sons of men,” elsewhere means “men.”

“But there are other ancient interpreters, and most of the later, who by ‘the sons of God’ understand the posterity of Seth, who were worshippers of the true God, Gen. iv. 26<sup>1</sup>, and who now ‘saw’ or *conversed with* ‘the daughters of men,’ that is, the daughters of the ungodly race of *Cain*, -*Bp. Patrick, Bp. Kidder.*”

“- *of all which they chose.*] Whomsoever they liked, without regard to any thing else but their beauty. It is supposed [supposed? what a foundation for such a long story of wonders,] that the Cainites spent their time in feasting, music, dancing, and sports: this allured the children of Seth to come down from the mountainous country, which, under a solemn injunction from their godly fore fathers, they inhabited, [which mountainous country is *supposed* to have existed, in order that they may be supposed to have inhabited it, under a supposed injunction from their forefathers, who are supposed to have been godly,] and marry with the descendants of Cam. The consequence was all manner of impurity, impiety, idolatry, rape, and violence. For 'evil communications' naturally 'corrupt good manners.' And so the example of the wicked prevailed, and by degrees consumed, with few exceptions, all remains of religion in the posterity of Seth. Moses takes notice of these things, that he may give the reason why the descendants of Seth, even those who sprung from that holy man Enoch, except Noah and his family, were overwhelmed with the deluge, as well as the family of Cain, [a thing altogether unnecessary, as he

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It is scarcely worth while to notice, that some have attempted to draw in this text, to support the opinion which I am opposing, by rendering it, (as it is in the margin of our Bibles,) " then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord," a translation which it will by no means bear.

no where insinuates that the family of Seth were more holy than the family of *Cain*.] - *Stackhouse*.”

Dr. Adam Clark says,-

“Verse I, *when men began to multiply*.] It was not at *this* time that men *began* to multiply, but the inspired penman speaks now of a fact which had taken place long before, [and it is lucky that he has a commentator to explain his meaning.] As there is a distinction made here between *men* and those called *the sons of God*, it is generally supposed that the immediate posterity of Cain and that of Seth are intended. The first were *mere men*, such as fallen nature may produce, degenerate sons of a degenerate father, governed by the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. [Just, it should seem, like these eminently holy descendants of Seth- and yet] The others were *sons of God*, not *angels*, as some have dreamed; but such as were, according to our Lord's doctrine, *born again, born* from above, John iii. 3, 5,6, and made children of God by the influence of the Holy Spirit, Gal. v. 6. The former were apostates from the true religion; the latter were those among whom it was preserved and cultivated. Dr. Wall supposes the first verses of this chapter should be paraphrased thus, When men began to multiply upon the earth, the *chief men* took wives of all the handsome *poor women* they chose.

There were tyrants in the earth in those days; also, after the antediluvian days, *powerful* men had unlawful connexions with the inferior women, and the children which sprang from this illicit commerce were the renowned heroes of antiquity, of whom the heathens made their gods.”

There is no material difference between these expositors; and they only state, what may be



found in the works of many other writers. If the reader wishes for an older, and simpler, statement, of much the same interpretation, he may consult Augustine; if he prefers a poetical version of the story, he may find it in Paradise Lost, book xi. 573.

It will be observed, that, in the foregoing story, it is *supposed*,

1. That the descendents of Seth, and the descendants of Cain, formed two separate bodies. Is there any proof of this in the Scripture? Not a word about it; but we suppose it - and,
2. That Seth's descendants were holy; so holy that they were emphatically called THE SONS OF GOD: and that this title was a sufficient designation of them in writing their history. Is there any hint in the Scripture that Seth's descendants were peculiarly holy, or that this title had been given to them, or to any set of men? - Not the least; but we suppose it - and,
3. That Cain's descendants were apostates, and idolaters, Is there any hint in Scripture, that they, or any other persons, had become apostates, and idolaters?

None whatever; but we suppose it - and,

4. That the female descendants of Cain were eminently beautiful, and profligate. Are we told so in the Scripture? No, it is not even said that Cain had any female descendants at all; but we suppose it and,
5. That these holy men, notwithstanding their separation from the apostate, idolatrous, Cainites, did as a body seek wives from among these abandoned miscreants. Why? Was it because they had not women of their own tribe? This is not likely, because though, (as I have said,) it is not stated that Cain had any female descendants, it is specified of *each* of Seth's descendants, that he begat *daughters*. How then came it to pass that these eminently holy men, "such" as were according to our Lord's doctrine born again, born from above, and "made children of God by the Holy Spirit," should be so captivated with women who were notorious apostates and idolaters, and who "spent their" time in feasting, music, dancing, and

“sports,” as to take them for wives? Yet we will suppose it, and then, having supposed one thing more, which has scarcely been hinted at yet, but which requires pretty strong powers of supposition, we shall have the story complete; not to spoil it we must suppose,

6. That this intermarriage of holy men with ungodly women, produced a race of *giants*.

We have only to suppose all this, and we get a sound, rational, judicious, exposition of the text, highly agreeable to common sense, and perfectly free from all that is *fanciful*.

I appeal to the reader, whether there ever was a more absurd story made up, to meet the exigency of interpretation? And yet Christian commentators adopt such trash. In fact, there are some who will catch at any thing, and swallow any thing, however ridiculous, if it will get rid of what they are pleased to consider as “the marvellous” - especially any thing that might seem to countenance an idea of intercourse between the visible and invisible world.

I entreat the reader (if it be for only ten minutes) to lay aside the legend; to turn to the naked text of Scripture; and to give his

candid attention to what may be offered in favour of the ancient, and, in my opinion, the less *fanciful* exposition of the text.

First, however, I will just notice an objection which may arise in the mind of some reader; and which, if valid, would render all farther argumentation useless. “How *could* angels take wives of the daughters of men are they not *spirits*, and is it not *impossible*?” To this I must reply, that I know not how far the objector may be able to argue on such grounds; but that for myself, I know so little of the nature of angels, and of the limits of possibility, that I feel it safest to borrow the language of St. Augustine on this point, and say, “*non hic aliquid audeo temere definire.*” It does not appear to me more incredible, or more remote from my ideas of a spirit, than that angels should assume the human form, and eat the calf of Abraham and the unleavened bread of Lot. When the objector has explained these facts, he will perhaps be able to explain the other. This, however, is not the point. All that I contend for is, that credible or incredible to man’s wisdom—whether congenial or foreign to his conceptions of things, in which a pretence to knowledge is mere folly - whether

apparently possible or impossible, the fact is stated in the Bible, and that so plainly, that the wisest commentators have been reduced to childish absurdity in attempting to evade it. Let us then see what may be said in favour of this opinion.

I. One would really suppose, from the offhand way in which Mr. Scott says, “the spiritual worshippers of God are called his children, and the honourable title is some times conferred on all who profess the true religion,” that the title in question (אלהים בני) was one frequently used in the Scriptures, and with considerable laxity.

I believe, however, that this title is only found in exactly this form in three other places of the Old Testament, and I am not aware that in either of them it has ever been supposed to mean any thing but angels. These are, Job i. 6, ii. 1, and xxxviii. 7. There are two passages in the Psalms which are commonly considered as similar, though they are translated differently. The first is Ps. xxix. 1, הַבּוֹ לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים “Give unto the Lord, O ye *mighty*,” and Ps. lxxxix. 6, (heb. 7), "Who “in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord,” who among the *sons of the mighty*, (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים)

“can be likened unto the Lord!” I will say nothing here of the difference between אֱלִים and אֱלֹהִים, because I feel no doubt that in each case angels are meant. Indeed, in the latter, the parallelism seems to put it beyond all doubt.

I say then, that every where else in the Old Testament this title, “the sons of God,” designates angels; and I add, that it designates angels only; and we ought to have some very good reason, (if a good reason can ever be given,) for departing from the obvious meaning of words.

I need hardly add, that I do not find this title ever given to *men* in the Old Testament. That which comes nearest to it, (but which forms no ground for the interpretation which these expositors would support,) is that God was pleased to call Israel collectively and nationally his “first-born son<sup>2</sup>,” and that it is said, that they *shall, at some future time, be called the “sons of the living God,” בני אל חי*<sup>3</sup>. Taking the phrase, however, as it is used in the New Testament, where it is applied to men, I absolutely deny that it “is sometimes

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<sup>2</sup> Ex. iv. 22.      <sup>3</sup> Hosea i. 10, (heb. ii. I.)

conferred on all who profess the true religion,” in any such way as shall prevent its being a *distinguishing title* of those *men* who shall hereafter “be equal to the *angels*, and be the *sons of God*”<sup>4</sup>.”

II. The passage referred to appears to have been understood of angels by the Jewish church.

It seems that in the time of St. Augustine the majority of manuscripts of the SEPTUAGINT had οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ as the translation of בני אלהים. He acknowledges that the Seventy translated the title “Angels of God;” but adds, that it is not so in *all* copies of their version: for that *some* had only “Sons of God”<sup>5</sup> This is confirmed by the fact, that we find this reading in that most important manuscript, the *Codex Alexandrinus*.

Whether it was (as Mangey suggests) from following this reading, or from his own idea of what was meant by the title “Sons of God,” it is clear that PHILO JUDEUS under-

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<sup>4</sup> ἰσάγγελοι γὰρ εἰσι, καὶ υἱοὶ εἰσι τοῦ Θεοῦ. Luke xx. 36.

<sup>5</sup>Septuaginta quidem interpretes et angelos Dei dixerunt istos et filios Dei; quod quidem *non omnes* codices “habent ; nam *quidam* nisi' filios Dei' non habent.” August., de Civ. Dei, XV. xxiii. Selden says, “Qualem Iectionem

stood the passage as relating to angels<sup>6</sup>. In either case his testimony is worthy of notice. In the former it adds greatly to the probability that ἀγγελοι is the true reading of the Septuagint ; in the latter it shows us what a learned Jew of that early age understood by “Sons of God.”

In like manner JOSEPHUS understands angels to be meant<sup>7</sup>; and, if Bishop Laurence is right in supposing the BOOK OF ENOCH to have been written by a Jew, before the Christian era<sup>8</sup>, it should be noticed in this place, as supporting the same opinion; for the reader will remember, that my object in referring to these writers, is to show that the opinion was held by the *early Jewish Church*. Whether on this ground I ought to mention the TESTAMENT OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS, which maintains the same doctrine, I do not feel certain. Grabe, (in deference to Cave and Dodwell<sup>9</sup>.)

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etsi fuere inter patres qui non agnoscerent, manifestum tamen est antiquissimam fuisse, eo quod etiam reperiatur in codice Hellenistarum versionis summae antiquitatis, quod cimelion est Serenissimi Regis nostri ad D. Jacobi Bibliothecre, ex oriente ante annosaliquot allatum. De Jure, Nat, et Gent., Lib. V., c. 8, Vol. I., p. 534.

<sup>6</sup> De Gigant. p. 263.

<sup>7</sup> Antiq., Lib i., cap. iii

<sup>8</sup> Prelim. Dis., pp. xx, xxiii,

<sup>9</sup> See Spicileg. I. 132



places that work in the first century, but expresses his own belief, that it was written by a Jew before the Christian era, and afterwards interpolated by a Christian.

III. The same interpretation was embraced, or rather, perhaps, I should say, that no other interpretation seems to have been known by many of the fathers, and early writers of the Christian Church. Among them I may mention Justin Martyr, Athenagoras. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian, Methodius, Lactantius, Eusebius, Ambrose, and Sulpitius Severus.

I refer to these writers, not to prove the truth of the doctrine, but to clear myself from the charge of setting forth a new fancy; and also, because I think that such a reference may suggest a doubt in the minds of some readers, whether the opinion is actually absurd in itself, when he finds that it has been maintained by so many (and of some I may say by *such*) writers of the early Christian Church.

IV. Our translation says, “there were *giants* in the earth.” I have already said that this is a very remarkable, and unexpected, consequence

of the intermarriage of good men and wicked women. Yet it is impossible to say that it might not have followed; and, if it be clearly stated, we must take it as we find it. The fact, however, is, that there is nothing about *giants* (in the common acceptation of the word) in the Hebrew text. We read הנפלים היו בארץ, “the *Nephillim* were in the earth.” This word is not one of those generally used to signify what we understand by the word *giant*, in the Scriptures, though giants are often enough spoken of, and designated by various words. In fact, whoever, or whatever, the *Nephillim* might be, who were “in the earth” at the period in question, it does not appear that they were in the earth at any other time. The name occurs but once more in the whole Scripture; and that is, where the spies brought up a false report of the land, and said that they had seen the *Nephillim*<sup>1</sup>.

The word *Nephillim* is so obviously derived from נפל “to fall,” that it requires some twisting to make it signify any thing like a *giant*<sup>2</sup>; still, after the specimens of *radical* interpreta-

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<sup>1</sup>Num. xiii. 33

<sup>2</sup> “In Hebraeo ita habet; *Cadentes* erant in terra in diebus istis, id est *niphilim* ”Hieron. Qu. in Gen. Tom. iii. 71. E.

tion which I have given, the reader will not doubt that lexicographers have managed the matter very easily. We are told that giants are apt *to fall* upon other people; or that, by frightening them, they cause them to *fall*, &c.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, however, some reader who is not satisfied with such an explanation, and who sees no connexion between the name, and what we understand by a giant, may ask, “How then came our translators to give that word as the translation of *Nephillim*?” I answer, because the Septuagint and Vulgate had done the same, and had rendered the word “*γίγαντες*, *gigantes*.” The question then is, “How came the Septuagint translators to use this word?” and, in

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<sup>3</sup> “Gigantes, Gen. vi. 4, Numer. xiii. 14, sic dicti, quasi *Dejectores*, quod immani sua proceritate homines *cadere* facerunt, ut scribit Aben Esra; vel quasi *defectores*, quod per impietatem a Deo deficerent ; vel quasi *irruptores* quod violenter in homines irruerent, eosque opprimerent.” Buxtorf. “Sic appellati, quod illorum timore homines *cadant*, inquit” R. Dav. (And, after referring to the text, he adds) “ubi hoc modo scribit R. Abrah. גִּיגָנִים dicti sunt quod *cadat* cor videntis illos quia admiratur de altitudine staturre.” Pagninus. “Alii nominis rationem afferunt quod ceteri humiliores Telut coram illis *cecidisse* videantur. Alii quasi oppressores et tyrannos, ab irruendo.” Mercerus. “Such as *fall* upon others; assaulters, violent. So Aquila renders it in Gen. by *επιπιπτοντες*, and Symmachus by *βιαιοι*.” Parkhurst.

reply, I must beg the reader to consider what the word γίγας originally meant, or in other words, what a Greek, or a hellenizing Jew, would understand by the word “giant;” or rather by “*the* giants,” הגנפלים, which the Septuagint translate by οἱ δὲ γίγαντες? Every school-book of heathen mythology will tell him. Let him, for instance, turn to Lempriere’s *Classical Dictionary*, and he will find, “GIANTS, the sons of COELUS and TERRA, who, according to Hesiod, sprang from the blood of the wound which Coelus received from his son Saturn; while Hyginus calls them the sons of TARTARUS and TERRA.” The giants, it is notorious (*or noted! Ed.*), were a mixed race, of an origin partly celestial, and partly terrestrial; and it will be obvious that, supposing the seventy interpreters to have understood *angels*, by בני אלהים, (which I have endeavoured to show that they did,) they could not have better expressed in Greek, that which they must have supposed the Hebrew word *Nephillim* to mean.

This gives us a key to the heathen mythology, which is not perhaps elsewhere to be found. We may say that the heathen mythology is false and fabulous; and it is true that it contains falsehood and fable enough; but

that it should have arisen from pure invention, would be incredible, even if the idea were not altogether repudiated, by innumerable allusions to the facts recorded in the Scripture. Mr . Faber has well said- “We have no reason to think that the idolatry of the Gentile world was of a merely arbitrary contrivance; on the contrary, it seems to have been built, almost universally, upon a traditional remembrance of *real events*. These events I apprehend to be, the *destruction of the first race of mankind by the waters of the deluge*, and the introduction of the Sabian superstition by Nimrod<sup>4</sup>.”

I do not wish to enter at large upon this part of the subject<sup>5</sup>; and feel that it is suffi-

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<sup>4</sup> Dissert. on the Cabiri, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> I cannot, however, help giving an extract from what Brucker has said of the Orphic Theogony :- “Ut vero generationem rerum porro explicet theogonia Orphica, addit : *Terrae*, quae jam Dea prodierit, mistum *Coelum*, et genuisse ex ea foeminas Clothon, Lachesin, Atropon, mares vero centimanos, Cottum, Gygen, Briareonta, et Cyclopes Brontem, Steropem, Argum, quos etiam villctos in *Tartarum* precipitaverit, quum se regno pellendum a filiis intellexisset. Intelligi per hos coeli terraeque liberos partes mundi, elementa, reliquaque, quae hunc mundum constituunt, dubio caret, *ordine cosmogoniae ita requirente*; unde audiendi Platonici non sunt, qui nescio quos *daemonas* ex his fingunt, ex mundo intelligibili productos, &c.” Vol. i. p. 397. The reader will judge how far the author, or

cient to observe, in general terms, that all that is said in the heathen mythology of the gods coming down on earth in human form, and of their intercourse with women, is but the very same story recorded by tradition. The whole history of the giants, the mixed progeny of earth and heaven, as it is given by heathen mythologists - their eminent wickedness - their open rebellion against the majesty of heaven their being driven to *Tartarus*, and kept in perpetual bondage of darkness and fire; all this is the very counterpart of the history of those who, having left their own estate, have been cast down to hell (or more literally, *Tartarus*,) and delivered to chains and darkness,

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the Platonists, were right; in fact, he goes on to say-  
 “*Quid vero tota ilia Deorum progenies significaverit, admodum difficulter, et non nisi lecibus ex conjecturis dici potest,*” &c. Plato confessed that it was beyond his power to give an account of the origin of daemons, except such as had been received by tradition from the ancients, who professed to be descendants of the gods, and whom, speaking as it were of their own family affairs, he considered worthy of credit. The reader may find this passage of Plato in that part of Athenagoras’s *Legation*, where he is speaking of the origin of Idolatry, and showing that “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils,” or (as the Apostle says) to dremons.” He may also find much that is to the purpose (and much that is not) in Parkhurst’s *Lexicon* under the word *ταρταρώ*.

*σειραῖς ζόφου* 2 Pet. ii. 4.-in fact this one word, *ταρταρώσας*, thus used by the Apostle, seems to me to say much for the opinion which I am endeavouring to maintain.

V. It appears to me, that what has been already said is sufficient to raise a strong presumption in favour of the interpretation for which I contend; but another argument, which is to my own mind stronger than any which I have hitherto adduced, remains to be stated.

The sin of the angels, whatever it might be, is not, as far as I can find, very frequently alluded to, or very distinctly stated, in the Scriptures, unless it be in the passage of Genesis now under consideration. There is, however, a direct reference to it in two other passages of Scripture, which seem to me to be decisive in favour of my opinion.

The first of these is 2 Pet. ii. 4, &c., where, after speaking of the false teachers, who should bring in damnable heresies, and thus draw upon themselves swift destruction; and declaring that their judgment lingered not, and their damnation slumbered not; the Apostle adds, “(4.) For if God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be

reserved unto judgment ; (5.) and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;(6.) and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; (7.) and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (8.) (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds ;) (9.) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (10. ) but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.”

I think it will appear to every attentive reader of the foregoing passage, that the object of the Apostle was to warn those to whom he wrote of false teachers, who should arise in the Church, and cause the apostacy of many; and also to set before them the certainty of the judgment which awaited such apostates, at the same time that he comforted them with an assurance of the safety and preservation of



those who should continue stedfast in the faith. With this view, he reminds them, that on other occasions, when his wrath had been revealed against sinners to their destruction, God had manifested his power and fidelity in the preservation of his servants. Thus, when he cast down the angels, and overwhelmed the world of the ungodly in a flood, he saved Noah and his family; when he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha, he preserved Lot. The argument is plain; but unless there was some connexion between the fallen angels, and the flood, why are they mentioned? If, indeed, the Apostle had said, - "For if God spared not those angels who sinned, [but preserved those who had not sinned, in the judgments which fell upon the guilty,] - if he spared not the old world, but saved Noah - if he spared not Sodom, but preserved Lot, - it is manifest, that he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished;" - if the Apostle had said this, the argument would have been plain, and the consequence would have followed rightly; but the case of the angels, as it is commonly understood, is so far from illustrating the doctrine which the

Apostle is maintaining, that it is, in reality, one of unmixed severity. The fact, that God did not spare the angels, whatever else it may prove, is not a proof that he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, as well as to reserve the unjust for punishment, however true that doctrine may be in itself; and, as the passage now stands, there is evidently something wanted to complete its meaning, unless we connect it with the following verse :- “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell,” - What then? The Apostle draws no inference. Will it be said, that he meant us to draw the inference, that, if God spared not the angels, he would not spare these apostates? Why, he had just declared in plain terms, that their damnation slumbered not; and, besides, this evidently was not the scope of the Apostle’s reasoning, which runs through that long (but single) sentence which I have quoted, - “For if - the Lord knoweth,” &c. (v. 4-9.) As I have already said, if we take the passage in the common view, and divide the 4th and 5th verses, there seems to be no inference drawn from the case of the angels; and no reason why they were referred to. Taking it on the supposition, that those angels were

the instruments of bringing on that flood or vengeance, in which Noah and his family were wonderfully preserved, the sense is obvious, and the case is precisely suited to the Apostle's argument. The reader will also observe, the nature of the sin to which the heresies here denounced should lead, and which is specified in the 10th, 14th, and 18th verses.

Farther light, however, may, I apprehend, be thrown upon this passage, by comparing it with another part of Scripture. The parallelism which exists between the second epistle of St. Peter, and the epistle of St. Jude, has been commonly noticed, and is sufficiently obvious; and it may be worth while to place in parallel columns those parts of these epistles which relate to this subject.

ST. PETER	ST. JUDE
2 Epistle, chap. ii.	
There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. v. 1.	There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, v.4.
See verses 10, 14, 18.	turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. v. 4.

denying the Lord that  
bought them. v. 1.

and denying the only  
Lord God and our Lord  
Jesus Christ. v. 4.

I will therefore put you I  
in remembrance, though  
ye once knew this,

How that the Lord,  
having saved the people  
out of the land of Egypt,  
afterward destroyed  
them that believed not. v.  
5.

For if God spared not the  
angels that sinned, but  
cast them down to hell,  
and delivered them into  
chains of darkness, to be  
reserved unto judgment.  
v. 4.

And the angels which  
kept not their first estate,  
but left their own  
habitation, he hath  
reserved in everlasting  
chains under darkness  
unto the judgment of the  
great day. v. 6<sup>6</sup>.

And turning the cities of  
Sodom and Gomorrha  
into ashes, condemned  
them with an overthrow,  
making them

Even as Sodom and Go-  
morrha and the cities  
about them in like  
manner, giving  
themselves over to  
fornica-

<sup>6</sup> “My spirit shall not always strive [or, judge eternally לֹא יִדּוּחַ לְעַלְמֵי] with man [or as it regards the human race בְּאָדָם], for that also [or truly] is flesh.” So Jerome has translated; he says, “In Hebraeo scriptum est; Non judicabit Spiritus meus homines istos in sempiternum quoniam caro sunt” Quaest. in Gen. vol. iii. 71. D. Is there in this any reference to the eternal judgment of those who were not flesh?

an example unto those that after should live ungodly. v.6.

Chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. v. 10.

Whereas, angels are greater in power, and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. v. 11.

But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption. v.12.

Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor,

tion, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. v. 7.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. v. 8.

Yet Michael the arch. angel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." v.9.

But these speak evil of those things which they I know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. v. 10.

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for re-

who loved the wages of  
unrighteousness. v. 15.

Spots they are and  
blemishes, sporting  
themselves with their  
own deceivings while  
they feast with you.  
v. 13.

ward, and perished in the  
gainsaying of Core.  
v. 11.

These are spots in your  
feasts of charity when  
they feast with you.  
v. 12.

The parallelism of these passages is obvious; but it is important for our present purpose to notice one difference between them. St. Peter, as I have already stated, while he denounces the judgment of God against these apostates, who should turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, at the same time asserts the fidelity of God in the preservation of his servants, and adduces examples of it. This latter point is not insisted on by St. Jude. He says nothing of the preservation of the righteous, but confines himself to the denunciation of the wrath of God against the apostates. While, therefore, he adduces the same instances of judgment which had been referred to by St. Peter, he says nothing, in either case, of the accompanying mercy. He mentions the destruction of the angels, but says nothing of the preservation of Noah ; he states the destruction of Sodom, but not the deliverance of Lot. It

will also be remarked, that he says nothing parallel to what is said by St. Peter of the destruction of the old world, unless, indeed, (which I think is obvious,) he considered what both he and St. Peter said of the angels, as referring to that event.

But we must observe farther - St. Jude's object is to warn the Church against men, crept in unawares, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; and his discourse, as well as St. Peter's, is pointedly and especially directed against that particular offence. He, therefore, reminds them of the recorded instances in which that sin had brought down the divine judgment. First, in the case of Israel - then in that of the Angels - and then in that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, who had "in like manner" given themselves over to fornication, and going after "strange flesh." This expression, "in like manner," has given a good deal of trouble to critics. Certainly, even as the passage stands in our translation, it looks as if the Apostle meant to say, that the sin of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha resembled that of the angels; but that idea may be avoided, by supposing the similarity to be predicated

of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the other cities; and reading as if the Apostle had said, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner to Sodom and Gomorrha,” &c. This, however, will not do in the Greek, where the expression is plain, and much stronger than it stands in our version.

It is, τὸν ὁμοίον τοῦτοις τρόπων “after the same manner as *these*.” And who are *these*? Not the cities, as must be evident to every person capable of referring to the original; for then the word employed must have been feminine, and not, as it is, masculine. We are told, indeed, by some expositors, that by “these” the Apostle meant the cities, but used the masculine word because, though he spoke of cities, he meant their inhabitants; but it is really too absurd, and I think cannot be maintained by any man who reads the verse in Greek. Glassius honestly confesses that “these” refers to the Israelites, and the Angels; and *does* predicate a similarity of crimes; and how does he avoid the consequence which seems naturally to follow? The reader will scarcely credit it, but it is true, that this great critic tells us, that in speaking of the Israelites, and of Sodom and Gomorrha, the Apostle *only* meant to refer to apostacy



from God, and *spiritual* fornication<sup>7</sup>. A critic who goes so far as this, must be indeed hard pressed; and becomes, in the eyes of every reasonable person, the greatest adversary of his own opinion. If it can only be defended at this rate, it had better be given up.

Let the unprejudiced reader reflect on these passages of St. Peter and St. Jude, and I think he will scarcely doubt that, in the minds of those Apostles, the sin of the angels was connected with the offence of “going after strange flesh,” and with the deluge; and duly weighing these passages in connexion with the arguments which have been adduced, I think he will decide that the interpretation, which I here endeavour to support, is the true one; and that the popular and prevalent opinion is erroneous.

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<sup>7</sup> *Philologia Sacra*, p. 505.

