

The Standard

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NOTICE OF THE CHARLES MURRAY'S ARTICLE ON GEOLOGY. "HOW OLD ARE WE?" St. Patrick's College, San José de Flores, January 7, 1865. To the Editors of the "Standard." Gentlemen,

I have just looked over the first number of the "River Plate Magazine," and whilst I express my warmest regards to the editor, I cannot refrain from saying, that it would be well if the editor exercised a little more discrimination in the insertion of papers from the pens of contributors.

It is to be presumed, that all the readers of the magazine are Christians, and such being the case, articles calculated to unsettle man's belief in the authenticity, veracity, or inspiration of the Scriptures, might, without inflicting an injury on the readers, be left out; or, if deemed to give full scope to freedom of opinion and freedom of discussion, it may be advisable that contributions, having even indirectly such a tendency, should not be unnoted.

I allude, in particular, to a paper which appears in the magazine, from Mr. Charles Murray, and read in September last, before the Argentine Philosophical Society, and which was received apparently with much favour by that learned and enlightened body. It was published in the magazine in October 1st, 1863; at least so the author tells us.

I am disposed to think that the act of the Philosophical Society, in accepting and approving Mr. Murray's theory, based, as it is, on a false assumption, and sustained by logical reasoning, is not calculated to exalt them in the mind of the thinking and educated portion of society.

Mr. Murray seems to think that there is a contradiction between the Bible and Geology; that up to a recent period we were in a state of profound ignorance as to the age of the world and the age of man, and that we were led into this error by believing the teaching of a certain book called the Bible, and that those learned men, such as Tiro, Salin, Tournemine, Perron, Usher, and Linclet, our best and most learned writers on biblical chronology, were only a set of fools unworthy of any credit. Now, I mean to show that Mr. Murray is wrong in asserting that there is a contradiction between the Bible and geology, and that he has not proved his case.

Had Mr. Murray paid but half as much attention to the teaching of the Bible, as he seems to have done, he would not have fallen into such gross errors. In fact, he appears so charmed with their geological discoveries, and regarding them as new and irrefragable against the Bible, that he seems not to have opened the Sacred Volume at all. Had he read the first chapter of Genesis, he could not have been so much in error as to suppose that the creation of the earth and the creation of man are two distinct facts, which are not stated to have happened at the same time. He would have fallen into the mistake, that the creation of the earth was instantaneous. In the work of the six days, and would have been spared the trouble of investigating that the days mentioned in Genesis were periods of almost unlimited duration, which has done, no doubt, with the charitable intention of preserving the Bible from the reproach of an antiquated fable, fit only for the dust-basket or chandelier's shop. Mr. Murray asserts that geology says one thing, and that the Bible says another, and assumes that geology is right, and that the Bible is wrong; but when he examines the subject a little better, he will change his opinion, and admit with me, that the Bible is right, and that the geologists are wrong. Now, what can we collect from the Scripture? Simply this, that in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, and afterwards, but how long afterwards we know not, the earth was shapless and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. God was pleased to fashion it for the habitation of man. The Bible does not say what time elapsed between the beginning and the work of the six days, on the last of which man was created. We are at liberty to suppose that myriads of years must have elapsed in this undefined time, and that time all those changes may have taken place, traces of which geologists have discovered.

In truth, the Scripture assigns no date for the creation of the earth; not so, however, for the creation of man. Mr. Murray says, "the greater portion of men believe that the world was created some six thousand years ago, and give, as the basis of their opinion, the first chapter of Genesis, which says it was formed in six days, and their chronology makes out that time to have been six thousand and odd hundred years ago."

Now, if Mr. Murray wished to speak more accurately, he would have said, "the greater portion of men, if questioned on the subject, would reply, 'we know little about it'; but if he questioned them, who state given that the world was created in six days, and that the earth was created in the beginning, but how long ago they could not say, and that it was nowhere said

in Genesis that it was formed in six days, as Mr. Murray falsely assumes, and on which false assumption forms an argument against the veracity of the Sacred Volume itself. They would also tell him, that six thousand years have not yet elapsed since the creation of man, and that neither he nor any other has as yet made a discovery to prove that the human race is of higher antiquity."

Mr. Murray says that "geologists require a greater space of time than six thousand years, in order to account for the traces of revolutions and phenomena discovered in the internal conformation of the shell of our globe, and that the earth must have existed for millions of years." Now, the Scripture does not, in any place, assert the contrary. All this required time may be found in that indefinite period which elapsed between the beginning and the end of the six days. Now, then, can any one assert that there is a contradiction between Geology and Scripture?

Mr. Murray is not satisfied with the age of the world, and still more so with the age of man. He wants to show that the human race is much older than is imagined; and if antiquity of family is considered as honourable as it is generally thought, we have every reason to be obliged to him for his kind intention. His mode of increasing the age of man, brings to our mind a story told by Mr. Charles Mathews, the celebrated comic actor. —Matthews, it appears, on one occasion, having no engagement on hand, rambled into the northern counties of England to look after his relatives, and not content with the living specimens he met with, he entered the church yard to look after the dead, and he saw, to his great astonishment, by the record on the tomb stone, that one of his family lived to the ripe old age of 845. He naturally inquired after the matter, and the following explanation was given: After the good old man had been consigned to the dust, a stone cutter was employed to place a tombstone over him, and on which were inserted all his virtues, and aged 84 years. An old kinsman, coming to see if all just, had been done to his departed friend, found that the stone cutter, who was five years older, and mistaken that the stone-cutter should add that number to his work. The simple tradesman took him to his word, and added five to eighty-four. Thus, one figure made the good old English woman a patriarch, who died at the age of 845 years, and so it stands to this day.

Mr. Murray is quite right in his assertion, that the Bible is not intended to enlarge our longevity. It brings forward a few bricks found in the bed of the Nile, and a few bones found in France; and on these two facts he builds up a theory to show that man, instead of being about six thousand years old, must at least be twelve thousand years old. These bricks were found at the depth of seventy feet, in the bed of the Nile, and thus reasons Mr. Murray on this geological fact: — "If the Nile deposited in ancient times, at the same rate as at present, that is, five inches in every hundred years, then the bones and bricks must have lived twelve thousand years ago." Now, if Mr. Murray imposed on himself by such a system of rationalism, he should be able to impose on others. To establish his conclusion, he should first prove, beyond a question of doubt, that the Nile in ancient times did deposit only five inches per hundred years. But this he does not prove, or even attempt. His theory, then, must fall to the ground. All calculations, made on the overflowing of the Nile, must be wrong, in the uncertainty of the foundations of the river. I would have expected, from a man of Mr. Murray's research and taste for antiquarian lore, that he would have quoted some authority on the subject; or would I have been astonished, if he had favoured us on this subject with the opinion of the representative of Egyptian science, viz., Dr. Brugsch.

The burden of proof lies on those who propose an alteration, and as Mr. Murray has not thought proper to give us any, I must leave his theory as I found it—a useless fable. The blunder by which the simple stonecutter converted the honest Englishman into a patriarch, and our learned friend into a man like Mr. Murray, holding a position requiring at least common sense, and implying some literary acquirements, jumping, with unbecoming fluency, at a conclusion which doubles the age of the human family, bases it on a hypothetical assertion, and which implies the truth of Scripture is enough to make us sail. The verdict against Mr. Murray on this count is "Not proven."

Let us now examine the other fact, viz., the fossil jaw found at Abbeville, and on which he truly relies to prove the existence of man prior to the time that common theory gives out. Mind, this "common theory," as he calls it, is taken from the Bible which we were taught to read in our childhood, and of God, and which theory we are called on by Mr. Murray to abandon, and adopt his, based on a few old bricks and a jaw-bone. It is clear that in his

brick case he broke down, and I am prepared that he is not likely to be more successful with his jaw-bone; nor is he more likely to rival that of Sampson, acquired by wielding a weapon superior in strength.

In the first place, it was doubted by many if it was a real fossil; and it was said that the person who claimed the honor of the discovery was imposed on by the workmen in his employment.

Such a doubt naturally suggests itself in such cases, as we all know how antiquarians and geologists have, from time to time, been imposed on. We all know the story of the discovery of the shield, as it is supposed, by Martinus Scythianus, and which he so highly prized, covered as it was with marvellous ruts. Whilst he was thinking over what its appearance was when bright and new, his officious old housemaid one day scoured off the ruts, and turned out to be an old pot-lid. Well it appears that, after a sharp controversy, the jaw-bone was pronounced to be a true fossil. I could scarcely question the opinion of Dr. Carpenter on such a point, as I long enjoyed the honor of his acquaintance, and know him to stand high as a physiologist. He could not be mistaken as to the bone itself, but I am quite sure that he would not, like others, infer from this fact that man is older than Bible chronology makes him.

Mr. Murray states that the fact of this fossil being found in sedimentary deposits of considerable depth, demonstrates that man existed when that part of the country was covered with water ten feet deep, and hence he leaps at the conclusion that man is much older than Bible chronology has led us to believe. Here Mr. Murray reasons much the same as those who wanted to prove that the Tenterden steely caused the Goodwin sands. I can see no connection whatever between the conclusion at which he arrives and the fact from which he deduces it. He does not say, nor is it stated, how deep the sediment was in which was found this bone, but merely it was "considerably deep." We know how soon valleys are filled to a considerable depth with sediment washed down by heavy rains from the surrounding hills, and how easily bones and other things might be covered in a short time. But Mr. Murray asserts, without giving us any reason, that "man existed when this part of the country was covered with water ten hundred feet." Nothing but a hundred feet of water will suit his purpose. Well, be it so. Mr. M. should not forget the deluge, for I am sure he has not the least notion of the deluge. He is there, sold that all the mountains under the heavens were covered with water, and that the water was fifteen cubits over the highest mountains in the land. We ought not to give Mr. Murray the hundred feet of water required, and save him a world of conjecture? Now, in truth, Mr. Murray is quite right in supposing that man existed when the gravel pit at Abbeville was covered with water one hundred feet, and that he is sustained by Scripture, which tells us that man was created before the deluge; but he is not justified in saying that therefore the human race is older than we are told it is by Bible chronology.

Now, I would ask Mr. M., how does the discovery of the bone "prove the existence of man prior to the time that common theory gives out?" To account for it he requires one hundred feet of water; and here he finds, according to Scripture chronology, that this part of the country was actually covered with more than one hundred feet of water 1650 years after man was created. Here again his second part goes for nothing.

Nature says Mr. Murray has written over his history in the tablet form. Very true. Mr. Murray, but here in nature it is one thing to write a book and another thing to read it. How very few can read our printed books, or how few there are who really understand as they read in a book. Much more difficult is it to read the book of Nature and learn in mind that an acquaintance with facts is unprofitable to one whose mind has not been trained to receive the volume of nature. But neither to Mr. Murray nor to any other man has the book of Nature as yet been fully opened; and truly has the inspired writer said, "God has delivered the truth for their consideration for disputation, but that they might be able to work that God has made, from the beginning to the end." Many, like Mr. Murray, have looked at the title-page of the book of Nature, and have not seen the world that they knew it all by heart. As to the theories of ethnologists and philologists, I have read much of them, but I have not seen Mr. Murray on geology, and they all seem to have the same foundation as the old Scotchman's theory about Antichrist. I'll tell the story by way of elucidation.

An old Scotch gentleman, who lived the Pope once to foretell, took it into his head to visit his Holiness. On his way he was caught in a storm, and in due time obtained it; and when in the presence of the Pope, he looked at him for some moments fiercely, and then more calmly, in a quiet tone, he said, "Pope, you are Antichrist." As soon as his Holiness found out what his visitor had said, he calmly asked him his reason for saying so; and again

the Scotchman exclaimed, "I love, you are Antichrist; take my word for it, take my word for it, man, you are Antichrist." So, take my word for it, was the old bias of the poor man's flattery; and indeed I don't see any other for Mr. Murray's theory, and many others that I have read on similar subjects. I must do Mr. Murray the justice to say, that in stating his opinion that "the Supreme Being created the atoms of matter, and that these atoms, by natural laws, gradually united," he is sustained by Cassiodorus, an ancient philosopher of the highest merit, who has left a work on natural philosophy, in six volumes. Whether Mr. Murray read this work of Cassiodorus, and took the idea from him, I know not; but if he never saw the work to which I allude, it only verifies the French saying, "Les grands esprits se rencontrent."

Mr. M. started by saying that he would dissipate the clouds that have "overshadowed the age of the world, and bring forward facts to throw light on this difficult subject." How has he done this? From the two or three solitary facts which he adduced he was not able to draw a legitimate conclusion in favour of his theory. Geologists often create difficulties where there are none; and the clouds and shadows of which they speak envelope their own intellects rather than the subject of investigation.

Many of them belong to the class of writers designated by Archbishop Whately, "the children of the mist," who bring forward their speculations—often very silly, and not seldom very mischievous—under cover of twilight, and hence they are called "the children of the mist." At the same time it must be admitted that many have devoted themselves to the study of geology committed our respect, and have deserved well of society; but they are men who follow the teaching of those pursuing their studies, and do not pile up fanciful systems based on crude conjectures or imperfect knowledge, but who, according to his advice, attend to the "interrogation" and "interpretation" of Nature in collecting and arranging well-ascertained facts.

Mr. Murray, like all good writers, sets out by giving a definition of his subject. He tells us that geology is the science which treats of "the mineral and paleontological structure of the globe." Now, this sounds well, but unfortunately there is not an atom of truth or meaning in it. Geology, in the strict sense of the word, is not a science at all. It is merely a common Greek word, signifying "a knowledge of the state and nature of the earth, but which knowledge unfortunately we do not possess." Geology "teaches us nothing. It is only in its infancy, and we are only striving to find out what geology, or, in other words, what the nature of the earth is, following a method recommended by Bacon, viz., by the patient investigation of facts carefully arranged with order and method. And we will add to it, if his solemn warnings against unmethodical inquiry, and careless and ill-considered reasoning were more attended to by those who would be geologists, the science which they profess to follow would be a more useful one.

If a science, where are its principles, postulates, or definitions? It has no primary truths, which may be developed by demonstration, and from which secondary truths may be deduced. It is not strictly a science. Art and science are too often confounded. Speaking on this subject, a French philosopher remarks, "Nature has her mysteries, and proceeds to her end by ways, to us imperceptible. And after our strictest inquiry, we are left in the same ignorance as we were at first." We really know so little of that which we embrace with the firmest persuasion that the study of geology alone is sufficient to humble and mortify human pride. And again he says, "It is an abstruse and profound study, in which we scarcely meet with one determined point or certain conclusion."

I have now done with this subject, and must observe in conclusion that though Mr. Murray has not, in my opinion, advanced any new and valuable efforts to improve himself or instruct others must be admired. It would be well, however, if he had attended to the excellent admonition addressed to all engaged in the pursuit and acquisition of Physical science by that truly great and Christian philosopher, René Descartes, who has said, "Let us contemplate Nature with modesty and caution, with awe and reverence; let us not be too bold in announcing upon what we have seen, but let us be content to judge of what we have not seen. For to criticize upon nature, the work of God, is in effect to criticize upon God himself, and to subject the greatness of his power to the weakness of our censures. True philosophy, even at the height and top of perfection, always judges with timorous caution, and when it treats of the Divine work, it imposes silence on its reasonings, and submits its lights, as the cherubim in the Temple, to the silence of the Divine work, it imposes silence on its reasonings, and submits its lights, as the cherubim in the Temple, to the silence of the Divine work, it imposes silence on its reasonings, and submits its lights, as the cherubim in the Temple, to the silence of the Divine work."

I have the honor to remain, Dear sir, Your obedient servant, P. FITZMAURICE.

IRISH CHAPEL CHASCONUR, Feb. 3, 1861.

Gentl. Men,

The follow. list is a list of the subscribers and their "subscriptions for the Irish Chapel Chasconur, collected by Mr. Mullady's estate, collected by the Rev. Mr. Connolly. I hope you will give it room in your valuable paper, and stating that the list remains open as yet, and that subscriptions will be thankfully received and acknowledged as a year off. Hoping you will interest yourself in the matter.

Your obedient servant, A. SUBSCRIBERS.

Rev. M. A. Connolly	£500
Mr. Joseph Graham	300
Mr. Thomas Gardiner	200
Mr. Robert Wilson	3,000
Mr. James Farrell	400
Mr. Richard Wheeler	400
Mr. Edward Ward	400
Mr. Martin Griffin	400
Mr. John Boulard	400
Mr. William Brown	200
Mr. Andrew Nelson	1,000
Mr. John Farrel	400
Mr. John Lynn	100
Mr. John Boulard	400
Mr. William Jordan	400
Mr. Edward Jordan	400
Mr. Thomas Farrell	400
Mr. Thomas Ward	300
Mr. Andrew Nelson	400
Mr. Martin Mullan	400
Mr. John Duffy	200
Mr. John Dervin	200
Mr. James Farrel	100
Mr. Peter Keene	100
Mr. Patrick Cormack	100
Mr. Peter Mitchell	50
Mr. Doncho Hernandez, J.P.	200
Mr. Thomas Mullan	100
Mr. John Jordan	100
Mr. Michael Farrell	100
Mr. George Alvarez	200
Mr. John Dervin	100
Mr. John Harger	1,000
Mr. Thomas Mullady	1,000
Mr. Francis Gardin	100
Mr. Malin Macnamara	100
Mr. Anne Cardiff	100
Mr. Mrs. Leary	100
Mr. George Cardiff	100
Mr. Thomas Kirk	100
Mr. Paddy Sauch	100
Mr. Edward Kirk	100
Mr. Michael Killian	300
Mr. John Killian	300
Mr. John Dillane	300
Mr. Andrew Hanson	1,000
Mr. Andrew Bardon	500
Mr. Patrick Gardiner	500

As yet we require twenty thousand dollars. It is the Irish Chapel ever erected in the country. The Irish have subscribed for St. Africa, and why not subscribe for their own church. Father Connolly has collected \$22,000 in this neighbourhood during the last fortnight.

IMPORT OF BULLION.

During the week ending 30th Jan., the following bullion was imported: Buenos Ayres from different places. 461 gold ounces. 41,040 Bolivian dollars. 37,224 Hard dollars.

MARKETS.

The following produce has been introduced into the different plazas during the 4th and 5th of this month.

Cowhides	290
Calfskins	196
Sheepskins	14 doz.
Horse-cs	314
Butter	27 lbs.
Feathers	331
Tallow	331 ar.
Wheat	827 tangas
Barley	28
Wheat's grease	57 ar.
Wool	29,377
Firewood	1,6 carboards
Straw	4,000
Quinins	4,000

EXPORTS.

On the 3rd inst., three vessels cleared out for foreign ports with 57 hives mules, 69 hives fowls, 1,000 feet pine, 3,532 cowhides, 280 hives wool.

The Postmaster—The "Progres" of Friday has a short paragraph on the inconvenience caused by the delivery of the French mail bags at the Reguado. It asks, whether it is to oblige the employees of that office, by a first view of the letter-press contents, or to prevent any smuggling? The latter is scarcely probable, as the despatchers of mail-bags are not noted for trying to evade the laws. It is not many years ago since "Punch" was prohibited from entering France, and now St. Caton may have the same ideas about the "Chaurat," as they have the "People," then entertained with regard to the London publication.

Housebreaking.—The watchmaker's shop, Calle de la Cruz, No. 46, has been broken into and robbed some few days ago. "The watchmaker, an old man, has lost, it is said, \$14,000, the whole of his little fortune."

ON CHANGE.

Patrons opened at 28 7/8; sold up to 28 80 and closed firm. Cash sales 28 1/2. The market was steady at 28 70. For the end of the month 28 80 at 28 70. For various dates 28 80 at 28 75. Total sales 207,813. The business in specie has been very

limited, and trade in general is not so brisk.

The cargo of flour per Volante has not been sold, although native flour is going up very steadily—as we hear that the price asked is 0 pnts.

The Paven arrived yesterday, bringing 34 oz., 610 pnts 685 + bol. 8 marks silver, 800 dots mte. The news from the interior is unimportant. Things look very quiet in the Province.

Money is in good demand, but not so tight. Any money we hear is very plentiful. The Maun Savings Bank has now one hundred and fifty thousand silver dollars in small deposits. This is the most decided proof of the great utility of the institution. It is now only open four months, and yet the deposits amount almost to ten thousand ounces. Exchange on England is still quoted at 67s. 6d.

PRODUCE SALES.

400 dry cow hides	\$120
80 do do do	117
600 do do do	118
200 do by lump	125
500 arr. wool fine merino	80
400 do do good do	75
800 do do mixed	82
60 doz sheepskins by lump	105
10 do do do	165
14000 ox hides salted at 60 lbs. 37 s. 11s.	
1500 dry cow hides	132 do
600 arr. wool Entre Rios	
without remembrance 26 1/2 do	
80 arr. long hair, salado 8 140	
200 do do do cow	105
90 do do do	70

FREIGHTS.

The Belgian Barque Curia, to load in the Uruguay sailed hides 3 s. 6d. and 8 per cent.

The barque Dinah Maloch has been placed on the berth to load for Liverpool by some unknown ship-broker.

The Dutch barque Dorothea Henrietta, New York, at the same price.

Ship broker or brokers, unknown.

M. Rossi, the well-known ship-broker, has placed on the berth the French barque, Maria Louise, to load for Harter.

DIED.

On February 10th, of apoplexy, at his residence in the partido of Cañuelas, Doctor Julia Knight Omea, in the 85th year of his age. He was a native of Glamorganshire Wales, and had resided in this country for the last 13 years. The body was brought to this city and interred in the English cemetery on Saturday the 9th inst.

MARITIME NEWS.

ARRIVALS.

6th.

Liverpool, English steamer La Plata. Bordeaux, French ship. Hamburg, Dutch steamer. Rosario, National steamer Pava.

SAILED.

8th.

Uruguay, nat. steamer Salto. Ensenada, English brigantine Elizabeth.

Montevideo, Dutch sch. Geovera. Boston, brigantine schooner Henrica Huisman.

River Flot. Steamship Company.

The Steamer L A PLATA.

1050 Tons. Reg. str. Capt. FARMER.

This steamer, which is now discharging in Montevideo, and is fully expected in this port, will be despatched hence at the end of the present month of February. The exact date to be announced on her arrival. For passengers as to freight or passage, apply to the agents.

JOHN P. ROYD AND CO., Calle San Martin, 36

F. S. 1w.

Wet. 10. 10. 10.

A young Woman, fully trained, offers her services as a Wet Nurse. Apply, Calle Recoquista, No. 101. F. S. 3p.

A Furnished Apartment To Let, at No. 203, Calle de Maipu. F. S. 6p.

Just landed, ex J. Taylor From G. Taylor

A Lot of Port Point Battery, in Tins, in superior condition. SUPER and BURL, 162, Calle Decena. F. S. 8p.

Wanted,

A situation as House Poan, by an Irish man; he can also take charge of boys and can drive a wheel. Good references can be given.

Adress X. Z. Standard Office.

Household and Domestic.

A steady Woman, wants a situation in either of the above capacities. An English-Irish preferred. Address M. N. Standard Office. F. S. 8p.

