

I have been led by the interest of Resch's collection to digress beyond the limits which the exact subject of this paper would have imposed. I hope to return in another paper to that subject, and consider the theory which Resch bases upon the facts which he has collected.

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

STUDENTS of nature who are also Christians, have a special interest in the pending controversies respecting the Pentateuch. The methods of critical dissection now applied to those books, referring as they do so much more to external form, which may be accidental and perishable, than to substantial reality, necessarily appear somewhat superficial and unscientific to men accustomed to deal with unquestionable or verifiable natural facts.

Should their result be to discredit, even for a time, the testimony of the early books of our Bible, the consequences may be serious to the progress of science as well as to the higher interests of society in general. To science these books have been of inestimable value, as establishing in the popular mind a broad basis for scientific work. Their distinct testimony to the unity of nature, as the product of one design, to the unity of man, to the progressive development of the creative work, and to the regulation of all things by invariable law, has emancipated the human mind from tendencies the most hostile to true progress. From want of this influence in bygone times, and even yet in certain places, the scientific study of nature has been hampered on the one hand by ecclesiastical bigotry and by pagan superstitions, and on the other by popular dis-

turbances and extreme revolutionary movements. Past experience warns us that even the present generation may see all science swept away except that which is immediately promotive of national wealth, or of the arts of defence and destruction. This may happen either at the hand of a reckless democracy or of a brutal bigotry; but it can never happen so long as the Bible is a household book.

Another aspect of this matter touches a higher plane than that of natural science. Many of the more advanced Biblical critics are not ashamed to attribute fraud and even conspiracy to the authors of the early books of the Bible, and yet these critics profess to attach to these forged documents a certain religious value. Such moral obliquity is a two-edged sword, cutting every way against the interests of society, and must have a potent influence in favour of those causes of moral disintegration which science and humanity have so much reason to dread.

The reflex influence of these ideas on Christianity itself is also most serious. The Old Testament constitutes the historical foundation of Christianity, on which Jesus and His disciples built their whole system of belief, and to the genuineness and validity of which they bore the most decided testimony. If this foundation be removed, the teaching of Christ and the Apostles may become of as little value as would that of the priests and scribes who are alleged to have palmed a fictitious Deuteronomy on good King Josiah.

These considerations are at least sufficient to justify a close if friendly investigation and scrutiny of the results of higher criticism. It may be added that the Bible is a book full of references to natural facts and to those problems relating to the early history of man which belong to the domain of archæology, and that in our time the pick and spade of the excavator, the measurements and observations

of the topographer and geologist, the collections of the zoologist and botanist and the study of ancient monuments and inscriptions have thrown a flood of light on previously obscure portions of Holy Writ.

The scientific worker may thus claim the right, however humbly and tentatively, to study for himself from his own point of view these ancient records, and to place before the world, at least in the form of suggestions for inquiry, such points as strike his attention in his reading of the Old Testament, however trifling and unimportant they may seem in the estimation of literary specialists. This, as a student of nature and the Bible, I propose with all humility to do.

I am not unaware of the evils that threaten humanity from agnostic evolution, and that this has been too much fostered by scientific men; but the advanced evolutionists and the advanced critics have long since united their forces, and true Christianity and true science are now face to face with both. It is not necessary, however, to take a pessimistic view of the situation. The observation and study of fifty years have shown me the rise and fall of several systems of philosophy and criticism, and the Word of God still abides and becomes wider in its influence.

It may be useful in the first place to define the terms employed in the heading of this article.

The term physical may be taken in the broad sense of what is termed physiography, as including all natural facts, or facts relating to natural things; questions therefore of geography, of physical features, and of physical changes which may have occurred in the places referred to in the Bible. If, for example, in the narratives of Eden, of the Deluge, of the Exodus, or of the Cities of the Plain, we find references to natural conditions existing at an early date, which have passed away and have been forgotten, we may obtain indications of the dates of these narratives;

just as if, in annals relating to southern Italy, we should find that the writer had no knowledge of Mount Vesuvius, but only of its predecessor, the tree-clad circle of Mount Somma, we should know that he had lived before the year 79 of the Christian era, and might still believe this even if we found in the writing certain substitutions for obsolete words, or interpolated notes.

In regard to archæology and history, we may have similar evidence. An event stated or a person referred to in one record only, may remain uncertain, or may be accepted with some reserve on the testimony of a single witness; but a coin, an inscription or a writing of an independent author, may at once carry such event or person into the domain of certainty, and would sweep away a host of doubts that might have been conjured up by apparent inconsistencies or defects in the original document.

In any case it cannot be denied that such evidence, whether physical or historical, deserves consideration, and this is all that I shall ask; though for simplicity I may use, as a working hypothesis, the supposition that the ancient Hebrew leader Moses was an actual personage, and that he may have written or edited books to which tradition has attached his name, and of certain portions of which he is in the documents themselves explicitly stated to have been the author.

The first of our illustrations may be grouped around this idea of the personality of Moses, and will refer principally to the Book of Genesis and the earlier part of Exodus.

We need not attach much importance to the objection taken to the story of the infancy of Moses, on the ground that there are other old legends of infants committed to the waters for safety. Even if the ancient Assyrian king Sargon had been similarly preserved ages before Moses, and even if Jochebed had known the tale, the only fair inference

would be that it may have given a hint of which she availed herself. But there are in the story of Moses certain coincidences, in the nature of the oppression, the places where the Israelites were employed, and the two midwives, with some recent discoveries in Egypt, which deserve notice in this connection.

We owe to the labours of Prof. Flinders Petrie¹ the excavation of a town now called Kahun, in the Nile Valley, near the entrance to the Fayoum. It was a temporary group of mud tenements erected for the labourers, mostly slaves and captives, assembled in a gang for what the French in modern Egypt would have termed a *Corvée* or forced labour, for the erection of a brick pyramid for Usurtesen II., a Pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty, and who may have lived a thousand years before Moses. Under the floors of the huts of these poor people were found numerous skeletons of infants packed in common boxes. Whether these babes died from neglect and carelessness, or were purposely destroyed, we do not know; but the latter is not improbable in the circumstances, and, if so, it would afford a more ancient instance of the policy of the Pharaoh of the oppression, who, if he was the great Rameses, had more ample means than his predecessor Usurtesen to carry out forced labour on a large scale. Prof. Petrie's original account of the buried infants of Kahun is in the following graphic terms:—"Many new-born infants were found under the floors of the chambers, and, strange to say, usually in boxes which by their forms were made for other purposes. In short, unlucky babes seemed to have been conveniently put out of the way by stuffing them into a toilet case or clothes box, and digging a hole in the floor for them. I fear these discoveries do not reflect much credit upon the manners and customs of the small officials of the twelfth dynasty."

¹ *Illahun, Kahun, and Garob*, 1890.

We read that the Hebrews were employed in building two store-cities or arsenal fortresses, Pithom and Rameses. The site of Pithom, near the eastern end of the Wady Tumilat, has been definitely ascertained by Naville. That of Rameses was probably at the western end of the same valley, where it opens on the Delta, the distance between the two places being thus about thirty miles. It would seem that two gangs were employed simultaneously at these places, no doubt lodged in mud huts and guarded by soldiers to prevent escape. This accounts for the two midwives, for the Egyptians were systematic even in their oppressions, and there would be an official accoucheur for each gang, whose duty it would be to save alive or to destroy the children born in the *Corvée*, as might be directed from headquarters. Thus the whole proceeding of Pharaoh might have been in accordance with very ancient precedent, though of a kind more appropriate to foreign prisoners than to people like the Israelites, long naturalized in the country. Perhaps it was this circumstance that excited the compassion of the midwives, and perhaps it was the gratitude of the Hebrew mothers and their friends that was the means employed by God to "build them houses." These incidental points render it probable that Moses was born at Rameses, rather than at Pithom, as the Court is more likely to have been at the former place, and the river of the story was either the eastern branch of the Nile or the canal flowing from it through Wady Tumilat, the land of Goshen. We may also infer that Jochebed and her husband were actual labourers in the *Corvée*, and therefore subject to all the bitterness of "hard service" to which their people were subjected. It is curious also that discoveries published in 1891 in respect to another instance, far separated in time and place, now for the first time enable us fully to understand these quaint incidents, which would not have occurred to any but a contemporary annal-

ist, and are stated by him as matters of course without a word of comment. There could not surely be a better illustration of the antiquity of the story.¹

That a child ushered into life in circumstances so unfavourable should exercise so important an influence in the world, is in itself a marvel, or would have been so had it not led to his adoption into the royal family of Egypt, and in the palmy days of the great nineteenth dynasty, and probably in the reign of one of the most illustrious of the Pharaohs, Rameses II. It is true that attempts have been made to fix the date differently, but the recent discoveries of Naville at Pithom seem definitely to settle the date of the building of that city, as in the reign of the great Rameses; and not only its inscriptions but its structure, and its bricks, some with and some without straw, tally with the Biblical account. Moses may thus be identified with the Osarsiph of Manetho (though some regard this name as belonging to Joseph, or as arising from confounding him with Moses, a not unnatural mistake), or with the Arisu or Areos of the great Harris papyrus, names which represent a Semitic leader of rebellion in the troubled times which succeeded the reign of Rameses II. and closed the nineteenth dynasty. This papyrus, a historical document written in the reign of Rameses III., testifies that at the close of the three or four short reigns after the great Rameses, occupying in all about twenty years, an emigration from Egypt took place, and that there was a time of anarchy, followed by a new dynasty inaugurated by the father of Rameses III.

The Hebrew and Egyptian records thus concur in the fact that great disasters occurred at the close of the nineteenth dynasty, and probably in the reign of Siptah, its last king, the regency of whose queen Ta-user, and his unoccu-

¹ The reference to the "birth-stools" in Exodus i. 16 is another incidental touch of ancient Egyptian rather than Hebrew customs.

piet tomb usurped by a succeeding king, testify to his disastrous and untimely end.¹

The first and most important fact here for our present purpose, is that the period to which the Hebrew lawgiver is thus assigned, is that of the culmination of Egyptian art and literature, and is marked by a similar degree of enlightenment in Babylonia, Phœnicia, and southern Arabia.

We are only beginning to understand the height of civilization to which Egypt and other ancient countries around the Mediterranean had attained even before the time of Moses. Maspero and Tomkins² have illustrated the extent and accuracy of the geographical knowledge of the Egyptians of this period. The latter closes a paper on this subject with the following words: "The Egyptians, dwelling in their green, warm river-course and on the watered levels of their Fayoum and Delta, were yet a very enterprising people, full of curiosity, literary, scientific in method, admirable delineators of nature, skilled surveyors, makers of maps, trained and methodical administrators of domestic and foreign affairs, kept alert by the movements of their great river, and by the necessities of commerce, which forced them to the Syrian forests for their building timber, and to Kush and Pun for their precious furniture-woods and ivory, to say nothing of incense, aromatics, cosmetics, asphalt, exotic plants, and pet and strange animals, with a hundred other needful things." The heads copied by Petrie, from Egyptian tombs, show that the physical features of all the peoples inhabiting the surrounding countries were well known to them, as well as their manners, industries, and arts. The papers of Lockyer³ have shown that long before the Mosaic age the dwellers by the Euphrates and the Nile had mapped out the heavens, ascer-

¹ See as to this, Kellog's *Stone Lecture*, 1877.

² Papers on the Lists of Thothmes III. at Karnak.

³ *Nature*, 1892-3.

tained the movements of the moon and planets, established the zodiacal signs, discriminated the poles of the ecliptic and the equator, ascertained the laws of eclipses and the precession of the equinoxes, and, in fact, had worked out all the astronomical data which can be learned by observation, and had applied them to practical uses. Lockyer would even ask us to trace this knowledge as far back as 6,000 years B.C., or into the post-glacial or antediluvian period ; but however this may be, astronomy was a very old science in the time of Moses, and it is quite unnecessary to postulate a late date for the references to the heavens in Genesis or in Job. In geodesy and allied arts also, the Egyptians had long before this time attained to a perfection never since excelled, so that our best instruments can detect no errors in very old measurements and levellings. The arts of architecture, metallurgy, and weaving had attained to the highest development. Canalization and irrigation, with their consequent agriculture and cattle-breeding, were old and well-understood arts ; and how much of science and practical sagacity is needed for regulating the distribution of Nile water, any one may learn who will refer to the reports of Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff and his assistants. Sculpture and painting in the age of Moses had attained their acme, and were falling into conventional styles. Law and the arts of government had become fixed and settled. Theology and morals, and the doctrine of rewards and punishments, had been elaborated into complex systems. Ample materials existed for history, not only in monuments and temple inscriptions, but in detailed writings on papyrus. Egypt has left a wealth of records of this kind unsurpassed by any nation, and very much of these belongs to the time before Moses ; while, as Birch has truly said, the Egyptian historical texts are, "in most instances, contemporaneous with the events they record, and written or executed under public control." There was also abundance of poetical and

imaginative literature, and trêatises on medicine and other useful arts. At the Court of Pharaoh correspondence was carried on with all parts of the civilized world, in many languages, and in various forms of writing, including that of Egypt itself, that of Chaldea, and probably also the alphabetical writing afterwards used by the Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Greeks, but which seems to have originated at a very early period among the Mineans, or Punites, of south Arabia.¹ Education was carried on in institutions of various grades, from ordinary schools to universities. In the latter, we are told, were professors or "mystery teachers" of Astronomy, Geography, Mining, Theology, History and Languages, as well as many of the higher technical arts. A college song, of earlier date than that of Moses, which has been preserved to us,² shows indeed that these higher institutions did not condescend to the mere mechanic arts, but were intended to prepare their students for public life and for the more learned professions.

This knowledge was, of course, not diffused among the servile population, though even slaves were sometimes educated as scribes; but then we are told that Moses had the advantage of studying in the highest colleges of the country, and so of being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and of obtaining access to all the literary treasures of the temple libraries, while he would also have the benefit of any ancient lore in the Chaldean script which Jacob may have brought from Canaan; and in his sojourn in Midian he might have access to the Minean letters and literature. I may remark here, in passing, that it would now seem that the language and theology of the book of Job can be better explained by supposing it to be a portion of Minean literature obtained by Moses in Midian, than in any other way. This view also agrees better than any

¹ Discoveries of Glaser, summarized by Sayce.

² *Records of the Past.*

other with its references to natural objects, the art of mining and other matters. We may have occasion to return to this question.

We may thus easily imagine that a man of ability and energy, having such opportunities, would be more widely and deeply cultivated, not merely than his contemporaries among the Israelites, but than any other Hebrew between the time of Rameses II. and that of Solomon. The literary productions of such a man are not to be judged of by any arbitrary theory of development taking place in a rude pastoral people. It is true generally, though by no means universally, that rude nations do not produce great literary works. Still the exceptions to this, even in early English and Anglo-Saxon literature, are noteworthy. But in the case of Moses he was intellectually a product of the ripened civilization of Egypt, naturally a man of power and genius, and, may we not add, spiritually a man very near to God. In contrast with this, the results of modern criticism of a certain type attribute the noble works which bear the name of Moses to unknown men living in times of comparatively little culture, when such writings were little needed, and leave nothing worthy of Moses or of the great and critical period in which he acted.

We should not however adopt exaggerated notions of the supposed rudeness of the Hebrews at the time of the conquest of Canaan. The Book of Exodus indeed affords good evidence of the existence of an impulsive and ignorant element among the emigrants from Egypt, and forty years of desert life while they might train in endurance and self-denial, and perhaps in more pure and simple manners, could not be favourable to progress in art and literature. It is surprising with what avidity the occurrence at the site of Lachish of remains of rude huts overlying the ruins of the old Amorite city has been seized on by a certain class of writers as evidence of the rudeness of the Israelites in

the time of Joshua. It really indicates nothing of the kind. The conquering Israelites were an army living in tents, and probably in no condition immediately to rebuild Lachish. They may have occupied its ruins with a temporary garrison or may have allowed the fugitive Amorites to return to the old site. But in either case we should expect the first buildings erected to be no better than those found by Petrie. The fact only marks the entire destruction of the town and the occupation of the site by people of few resources, as would be the case with the Amorites themselves after the burning of their city and the capture of their flocks and herds.

To return to the time of Moses, he may have had other sources of information not accessible to his Egyptian fellow-students. The discoveries at Tel-Loh¹ and elsewhere in Babylonia, have shown that there existed in the Chaldean plain, before the time of Abraham, a primitive civilization equally high with that of the early Egyptian dynasties, and, like it, deeply imbued with the idea of perpetuating personal history and national annals. The inscriptions on the statues of the ancient king Gudea are remarkable examples of this. It is thus in every way probable that the tribe of Abraham carried from the East records in the cuneiform character inscribed either on clay tablets or on prepared sheep-skins, and these would certainly be preserved and added to in the time of Joseph, if we may judge from the very numerous biographical sketches which have been obtained from Egyptian tombs. Such Semitic literature, if it existed, would certainly be accessible to Moses, as well as the family traditions which he might learn orally from his mother, and it would naturally be most interesting to him to compare these with Egyptian history and mythology.

¹ By Sarzac, noticed in *Journal Society of Bib. Literature, Quarterly Statement Palestine Exploration Fund and Records of the Past.*

Do not all these considerations eminently qualify Moses to be the historian of the primitive world, and is it possible to point to any other name in Hebrew literature having the same breadth of view or depth of information as the royal scribe of the nineteenth dynasty. Would not any writing of his be in advance of the men of his time, and would it be wonderful if it failed at first to leaven their minds, and if it should stand up through the ages as a light towering above that of all the chroniclers and prophets of later times, whose minds were less cultivated and more occupied with their immediate surroundings? I refer now to the man, not to the question of his Divine inspiration.

We may thus easily picture to ourselves the boy Moses, indoctrinated by his mother, who was also his nurse, in the traditions of his fathers, in their greatness in the time of Joseph, and their cruel bondage under the existing government; and no doubt taught also their simple ancestral faith, so different from the complex polytheism of Egypt. With these feelings strong within him, he enters the schools and colleges of Egypt, and as he drinks in the learning of that wonderful land compares it with what he has learned in his maternal home. Later he regards the whole matter in a practical light, and thinks that by his hand his people may be freed. He finds them unprepared; but as an exile and an older and wiser man, believes himself the commissioned agent of God for their deliverance, but, chastened by experience and by the Divine spirit, prepares to teach them in a plain and popular form those rudiments of history and those prophetic destinies which he has so long and painfully studied, along with that better and purer faith which had sustained Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their long and eventful lives. Hence, according to a theory which seems to agree with all historical facts and to be thoroughly consistent in itself, arose the book of Genesis.

We have considered the personality of Moses and his

environment in Egypt with reference to the probable nature of his literary productions : but another element enters into the question. The task assigned to him was the liberation of a nation of serfs and their transference to a new region, physically different from that in which they had been born and nurtured. In connection with this he had to provide for them a new religion, and a political and social organization different from that of their Egyptian lords, or rather he had to revise and modernise old institutions and to develop them into a system suitable to the changed conditions of the people. To succeed in this it was necessary to arouse a religious enthusiasm sufficient to cause the Israelites to break entirely with Egypt and enter into a new life. In later times we have seen something similar effected on a far lower plane, in the great uprising of the Arabian tribes under Mohammed. What the Koran was to the Arabs the Book of Genesis may have been to the Israelites. Without any elaborate argument, but by a series of simple statements, it erected a monotheistic religion and converted into creatures of the one God all the objects which the heathen are wont to worship, and reduced to merely human forms heroes and demigods. It then asserted the Divine commission and promises given to Abraham and the patriarchs, and exalted them as the chosen friends of God, and the fathers of a chosen people. It thus stirred up the people with the enthusiasm of a new and pure religion, with the memories of former greatness, and with the promise of a great and glorious victory over their oppressors and the hope of a new and better country. It placed the original relations of the Israelites and Egyptians on the historic and memorable standpoint of the administration of Joseph. Could anything have been better fitted for the then existing crisis of the national affairs of the Hebrews, or more likely to lead to the practical facts of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan ? Was there ever a time in the

history of the people when such a book was so likely to have been produced? Thus Genesis stands before us a great and masterful politico-religious tract for the time of Moses and the mission he had to fulfil, and fits into no other place in the Hebrew history. If it has outlasted its immediate occasion and has become the foundation of the religion not only of Israel but of the whole world, the lower reason may be found in its wonderful power combined with childlike simplicity, and in that world-embracing scope which provides for the blessing of all nations; the higher reason in the divine wisdom bestowed by God on his servant Moses, who more than any other Hebrew prophet was like unto the heaven-descended Son of man whose advent he foresaw.

But the personality of Moses appears in the Pentateuch in another way, much as that of Julius Cæsar appears in his Commentaries. There is no formal biography or laboured eulogy, such as might have been expected from later and inferior men, but a gradual development of character, appearing incidentally, here and there, from the beginning to the end. He appears first as an educated man, in the prime of life, strong and self-reliant, and fired with an ambition to be the deliverer of his people. Failing in the rash and impulsive attempt, he sinks into an obscure and quiet life in pastoral Midian, which may, however, have been a time of thought and study, and of learning in that ancient literature at the time existing in Arabia. Roused from inactivity by the vision of the burning bush, he is now diffident and full of distrust of himself, strongly impressed with the difficulty of his great mission, and scarcely reassured by the promise of Divine support. As he enters on his work we find him bold and resolute in the presence of the new Pharaoh, to whom he must have appeared almost as the apparition or "Ka" of a royal prince of the last generation, raised again from the dead; but in presence

of his own people depressed and bowed down by their unbelief and timidity, and constantly retiring from the king's obstinacy and the people's fears to the presence of God, from which he returns with renewed strength. It has been well said of him that to the people he was all God, to God nothing but the people; his own person and interests were nowhere. This grand self-abnegation appears through all his life, in the patience, forbearance, and kindness with which he led Israel like a flock, and in his willingness that he himself should perish if Israel thereby could be saved. Even the sad and pitiful visitation of his one sin of temper at Meribah by exclusion from the promised land, while a confession of infirmity, is a testimony to the high moral plane on which he moved.

The law which he is said to have given is in harmony with the man. It has of late been customary to speak of the harsh and cruel edicts of the law of Moses as unworthy of God. But what of the lofty morality of the decalogue, the merciful provisions for the poor, for strangers and for domestic animals; of the social and sanitary provisions which, according to recent statistics, still give the people who practise them an advantage in the struggle for existence over the people of the most civilized Gentile nations? Jesus Himself is here the best apologist for Moses, when He says of one of these laws, "It was because of the hardness of your hearts"—because they were not fit for better. In the case of that very law, that of divorce, the frightful laxity that has crept into some modern nations shows that they also are unfit as yet for the better law of Christianity. It is scarcely necessary to refer to the *Lex talionis*, the law of slavery and other enactments tending to limit evils which could not be altogether removed.

The end of Moses in the Pentateuch is unique, like his life. Excluded from the long wished-for Canaan, he sings, beyond Jordan, that glorious death-song, the poem of all

the ages down to the time when Christ shall bring into His rest the last sufferer from the persecutions of this evil world. After this last utterance, which even the hardest of the critics are scarcely disposed wholly to wrest from him, he sinks into that mysterious burial whence no relic-worshipper can extract any shred for superstitious veneration, and in connection with which no one can establish a shrine or place of pilgrimage.

Can it be supposed for a moment that such a career could have been imagined or patched together by Shaphan the scribe, or Hilkiah the high priest, or later and more obscure writers, especially if they were men of the moral character attributed to them by critics? The argument here is of the same character with that which convinced John Stuart Mill, that there must be a foundation of contemporaneous history underlying the life of Christ in the gospels.

Two objections have been taken to this argument. One is, that in the life of Moses there are many miracles, and that these prove a mythical element and later origin. Modern science has, however, removed the old objections to miracles which used to be discussed by metaphysicians and theologians; and a special consideration of those attributed to Moses shows, as we may see in the sequel, that they come within the range of physical possibility.

Another is, that while the Egyptian theology dealt largely and very precisely with a future life and resurrection, these elements do not appear in the teaching of Moses. Jesus, however, here is again the apologist of Moses, and shows that the belief in immortality and a future state is implied even in referring to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹ Still the doctrine of immediate retribution prevails in the Mosaic teaching. This, on the theory of Mosaic authorship, may be attributed to two reasons: one of a

¹ Matthew xxii. 32.

lower, and the other of a higher order. The Egyptian doctrine of a future life, in the time of Moses, had degenerated into a system of priestly absolution, which he seems to have been determined to discountenance as an abuse. Besides this, it seems to be implied in the Mosaic system that all Israel, as chosen of God and as professing faith in Him, is a holy people whose future happiness is guaranteed, but who are, nevertheless, subjects of Divine chastisement in this life. This is in some sense Christian doctrine as well. The Christian may believe his future inheritance sure, yet he knows that "whom God loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." This is the kind of faith by which, in all ages, martyrs have been animated; and as we see in the New Testament itself, such faith is less likely to expatiate on pictures of heavenly bliss than to be occupied with the stern duties and responsibilities of the present. Such faith would be appropriate to the Mosaic age rather than to later times.

It is also to be observed that a new religion, arising in Egypt, would, from the standpoint of the critic or that of the "natural man," be likely to conform to Egyptian usages, especially in externals, while we should expect very strong contrasts in point of doctrine. Thus these peculiarities in the Mosaic religion agree with its probable origin in the time and place assigned to it, and not in any later period, when the Jews were more in contact with the nations of Asia.

The manner in which the writer of Genesis deals with the material at his disposal, demands a separate consideration.

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